

SERMONS,

NOT BEFORE PUBLISHED,

ON

VARIOUS PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

BY THE LATE

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P R E F A C E .

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It is now nearly six years since a collection of Doctor GRIFFIN'S Sermons, in connection with a Memoir of his Life, contained in two octavo volumes, was given to the public. As might have been anticipated from the rank which the author, while living, held among the first preachers of the age, these volumes have been received with expressions of the highest approbation, on both sides of the Atlantic; and they constitute an imperishable monument of the splendour of his genius, and the warmth and depth of his piety.

It having been extensively known that the Sermons already published were only a part of those which the author had prepared for the press, the friends of Dr. GRIFFIN have been frequently solicited to issue another volume; and it is in compliance with these solicitations, as well as in accordance with the known design of their venerable relative, that they now offer this additional selection to the public. Meanwhile, they propose, at an early day, to issue a second edition of the Life and Sermons already before the world, in a style to correspond with the present volume. It is scarcely necessary to add, that these Discourses, like all the author's productions, are characterized by great strength and beauty and originality of conception, by the most impressive views of Divine truth, and by a sublimity of pathos and an all-pervading unction, which have rarely graced the American pulpit or the American press.

W. B. S.

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SERMON 1.

THE UNCERTAINTY OF HUMAN LIFE.

ECCL. ix. 12.—For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.

ONE of the most lamentable effects of the fall is the incorrigible aversion of men to think of death. There is a strange stupidity in this matter which at first seems hard to be reconciled with the faculty of reason. The most solemn calls of providence, instead of rousing men to these reflections, frequently harden them the more. It is an ancient aphorism, that every man thinks all men mortal but himself. The cause of this unwillingness to think of death is easily explained. Such reflections cross our attachment to a world from which death is soon to sever us. They awaken our fears of a judgment to come, and force upon the mind unwelcome thoughts of God. A conviction that we are not prepared to die, or serious doubts on the subject, will clothe death with terror and make us recoil from the contemplation of it. Rather than encounter a realizing view of death, and engage in a serious preparation to meet it, men will hazard all consequences. Instead of wisely making God their friend, and thus rendering the thoughts of him delightful as the thoughts of a Father, and a view of death pleasant as a view of everlasting life; they will turn the subject from them and leave God to be their enemy, and content themselves with putting their enemy and their ruin out of view as long as they can. But while they disbelieve, their destruction is at the door. They are like soldiers marching up to the battery of an enemy with their eyes and ears closed, and dreaming of safety because they neither

see nor hear the motions of the foe. Death will come, however much a stranger it may be to our thoughts; and it will come with double ruin for having been kept out of view so long. It may come suddenly, like the convulsions of an earthquake which at dead of night buries whole cities in ruin. These reflections are suggested by the solemn words I have read: "For man also knoweth not his time; as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them."

"*Man also knoweth not his time;*" that is, he is ignorant of the time of his death and the time when overwhelming calamities may come upon him. When all is at rest in his house,—when stillness reigns in his apartments, and sleep sits quiet on the lids of his family, the silent arrow of death may pierce the wife at his side or the children in his bosom. He may be stripped naked in one day like Job; or in the midst of his dreams of earthly happiness he may open his astonished eyes in the world of spirits.

"*As the fishes that are taken in an evil net,*"—while they are wandering securely, or sporting among pearls, or rushing together for food, little thinking of being suddenly drawn up in the concealed net.

"*And as the birds that are caught in the snare,*" while they are skipping sportively without apprehension, or are eager to pick up the grain which is spread to decoy them to death.

"*So are the sons of men snared in an evil time,*"—while they are sporting and feeding themselves, secure in conscious health, ignorant of the shaft that is festering in their breast.

"*When it falleth suddenly upon them.*"

While they are most secure the arrow of the Almighty reaches their heart. While they are saying, "Soul,—take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;" the word comes, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee." "When they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape."

It is indeed no misfortune but a happiness to men that a veil is cast over future calamities, provided they hold themselves ready for all events. And this is the use which wisdom imperiously requires us to make of this uncertainty. Be prepared for the worst, and then peacefully commit the keeping of all your interests to a faithful providence.

That "it is appointed unto men once to die," may be read in the countenances of all around us, and in the very ground on which we tread. Perhaps we scarcely step from our doors without treading on dust that was once animated with life. We are constantly walking up and down in the midst of graves, and moving over skulls which once laid schemes of ambition and gain. Our "fathers, where are they? and the prophets," did "they live for ever?" Where are now the people who first settled this town? Where are they who filled these streets and composed this congregation and church before we were born? They are swept away, and all that remains of them this side of eternity now sleeps in the womb of yonder consecrated ground. Where are some of those whom my eyes lately beheld in this assembly? But it comes too near.

Where are now the ancient empires of Assyria, and Babylon, and Persia, and Greece, and Rome? Where are the emperors, statesmen, philosophers, and bards of antiquity? Where is now the immense army of Xerxes, which seemed to darken Asia, and to sink with its weight the land of Greece? Where are the exhaustless hordes of barbarians which issued from the north to overwhelm the Roman empire? Where can

you find those stupendous monuments of human art, the glorious cities of Nineveh, Babylon, Palmyra, and Memphis? Where is now the dust which was attached to the souls that lived before the flood? Where are now the many millions who have filled the world with noise and contention, with fame and folly, for a hundred generations? Kingdom has trodden on the heel of kingdom, and nation has followed nation down to the land of forgetfulness. Their dust has long since returned to the common mass, and has perhaps lived and died scores of times. That which sat upon the throne has since sat upon the dunghill, and that which sat upon the dunghill has since sat upon the throne. Here is their dust, but where is their immortal part? Where are the many thousands of millions of souls that in different periods of time have escaped from dying beds, or from the field of battle? They have all stood before their righteous Judge and received their unalterable doom. Many of them have been transported with the joys of paradise for four and five thousand years, and have calmly looked down and have seen kingdom after kingdom moulder to decay, while they stood secure and unchanged in immortal life. Many of them have been in hell for more than fifty hundred years tossing from side to side, and crying day and night for a drop of water to cool their tongue; but in fifty centuries one drop of water they have never obtained, and never will through the endless ages of eternity. They have abandoned all hope of ever seeing good again. There is but one point to which they look forward, and that is the day of judgment, which they anticipate with indescribable horror, as though it was the beginning of their torment; the point of time when their scattered dust will be collected and raised,—when they must stand, soul and body, before the judgment seat of an almighty enemy. Never did guilty mortals, appalled with bursting thunder or trembling at midnight earthquakes, apprehend the final judgment with so much terror as the damned constantly do. They know that their guilt will then be laid open before an assembled universe, and that their punishment will be unspeakably increased.

It is not only "appointed unto men

once to die," but the time of their death is altogether uncertain. Death may look in at your windows this night. You may faint and die before you leave your seats. The arrows of death which are flying around us may strike you at any time and without a moment's warning. And if any of you should be lodged under "the clods of the valley" before another Sabbath, it would be no more than has often happened. You hang over the grave by a thread on which the flame has seized, and you may look every moment to fall to rise not again "till the heavens be no more." "Good God, on what a slender thread hang everlasting things." Could the veil be drawn from eternity and discover to your astonished eyes the infinitely glorious or dreadful consequences depending on the present life; could then the veil be drawn from the many agents which are constantly striving within you to keep in order your complicated machine, and discover to you the many critical junctures which are daily occurring, which, without making you sensible of it, bring you within a hair's breadth of death; could the veil be also drawn from the course of nature around you, and disclose the dangers among which you walk by day and sleep by night; could you thus have a view of your hourly exposures and of the eternal interests at stake, you would start from your dream like a man awoke in a burning house, and flee for your life,—ah whither? whither but to the arms of Christ? Were a man literally suspended over the eternal pit, *in full view of it*, only by a brittle thread, what horrors would seize him. Yet many hang over hell by as slender a thread, and are as easy as though no danger threatened. Unbelief keeps them secure at present, but when they once fall, they can disbelieve no more.

These things are not said for the purpose of exciting needless alarm, but to call you, my dear dying friends, to examine the ground on which you stand, the end for which you were sent into the world, the use you have made of the talents intrusted to you, the solemn account you must shortly render, and whether or not you are prepared for a sudden death.

On what ground then, my beloved friends, my dying charge, on what ground

do you stand? Have you secured your future peace by a title on which you can confidently rely? Is there no defect? no doubt? On what then is your confidence built? On your innocence? Has your life been always such as a holy God can approve? Have you never incurred the sentence, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Is your confidence built on the presumption that there is no future state, or no future punishment? Then it is built on the presumption that there is no God, or at least no God of justice, and that all the proofs of divine revelation are a blank, and the hopes of the wise and good in every age have been delusions, and only the wicked have been in the right. O plunge not into eternity with brains tuned with such madness as this. Is your confidence built on the mercy of God without a Saviour? But God out of Christ "is a consuming fire." Nor reason nor revelation can discover any mercy for the finally impenitent. Is your confidence built on Christ? Take care how you build on this foundation "wood, hay, stubble." If it is a confidence not to be disappointed, it will be attended with deep repentance, with supreme love to God, with humble dependence on the atonement and righteousness of Christ, with habitual devotion, with abandonment of the world, and with a general change of life. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are past away, behold all things are become new." Have you experienced this change? "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Without holiness "no man shall see the Lord." "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha." "If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." "If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

I cite these divine maxims as criterions by which you may decide your present state. And I add another. Have you that temper which is fitted to relish the holy joys and employments of heaven? the holy society and truths of heaven?

If you have, then you will relish God's people and word and Sabbaths on earth, more than you relish the world. If you have not, then you could not be happy in heaven if admitted to the place: you have no preparation in your souls to enjoy any happiness that is provided for men beyond the grave.

By such a line the word of God divides this assembly into two parts, and every person in the house falls on one side or the other. "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Where then, my friend, dost thou fall? If death should arrest you this night, as perhaps it may, are you prepared to go? Are you prepared to enter the eternal world and give up an account of your life? Are you prepared to have every action, word, and thought scrutinized by omniscient purity, and retribution administered by almighty justice? Were a messenger from the world of spirits now to enter this house to announce your eternal doom; say, child of death and sin, could you calmly hear your sentence? Say, thou who art walking in the dark over a thousand apertures opening into eternity, are you prepared to hear your doom? Say, thou who hast a soul which must live to all eternity in heaven or hell, are you prepared to burst into eternity and know the worst? Poor, impenitent, prayerless sinner, are you ready to appear before God with all your guilt upon you, and to arm an infinite enemy against you? Consider, I beseech you, the end for which you were sent into the world. By all the love which a minister ought to bear to the people of his charge, with whom he expects soon to appear before God; by all the future sensibilities of your immortal souls, by all the mercy of a pleading Saviour, I do beseech you to awake out of sleep and to fix your eager eyes on these specific points: for what end did God send you into the world? for what end did he endow you with these Godlike faculties and invest you with these heavenly privileges? what is the work which he assigned you on earth? was it to pursue your own objects and forget him? Can you believe that infinite munificence laid out so much expense and care upon a world, and placed immortal creatures in it, for no higher

end than this? Your Bible tells you *no*; the conscience which God has placed in your breast tells you *no*; the very stones in the street almost tell you *no*. You were sent into the world as the servants of God. You received all these talents with a command to occupy till he shall come. He is infinitely worthy of your love. He has a perfect right as your Creator and Lord to bind you to this service by laws. And by laws he has bound you to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might;" and, "whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do," to "do all to the glory of God." This was the end for which he sent you into the world. And now I must press the question with all the earnestness of anxious friendship, How have you answered this end since you have been in the world? Have you set before you God's glory as the great object, and his commands as the rule of your life? Have you delighted in communing with him in the family and closet, and taught your children to love him as their dearest friend? Or have you neglected him and gone after the world, for twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years? Have you been so long in his vineyard and done no part of the work for which he placed you there? Have you received so many mercies from God, and lived so long in his world, and breathed his air, and never once sincerely thanked him? And now the time draws near when you must return from the vineyard to tell your Lord what you have done and what you have left undone. And what will your account be? Let your soberest reason be brought to decide this question, What must your account be? Suppose you are called to judgment to-night, what must your account be? I pray you not to turn this question from you. Look into your hearts and lives. What have you ever done for God? that is, with a sincere desire for his glory? What have you ever done against him? These things will shortly be examined in a court from which there is no appeal. If human entreaties could avail I would kneel and clasp your knees. By the joys of those that sleep in Jesus, and the pains of those who have no God, I adjure you to consider that when you have

once plunged into eternity, there is no coming back to make a second trial. If you have rushed into the presence of God with sins unlamented and guilt unpurged, all is gone, eternally gone, without recovery or redress. Ten thousand years must you cast back your anguished eyes to privileges you once enjoyed, to calls you once rejected, to entreaties you trampled under foot. And O the thought that you came so near to heaven and fell short at last, will double the weight of your damnation. Eternal ages will roll away with no other employment for you but to "mourn at the last when" your "flesh and" your "body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof."

"And Moses and Aaron came in unto Pharaoh," after repeated judgments had assailed him in vain, "and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, How long wilt thou refuse to humble thyself before me?" If ever there was a time for this expostulation to be repeated in this assembly, it is the present. Judgment after judgment from the Almighty is coming upon us by day and by night. The arrows of God strike us dead without warning. The flames are commissioned to seize our dwellings in the midnight hour and to devour human life. The cries of widows and orphans and houseless families touch our hearts on every hand. And yet who has repented of his sins? Who has turned unto the Lord? Who is sighing and crying for the public and private sins that have drawn down these judgments upon us? Pharaoh-like, when one judgment comes, we harden ourselves and wait for another. And another will probably come if we cannot be brought to repentance by what we have already suffered. God has certainly some great controversy with this people; and it is high time for us to search for the Achan in our camp. He has shown us that he is strong, and that it is unsafe to anger him. There is some great sin that is yet unrepented of. Search, I pray you, your hearts and your houses for this Babylonish garment that has offended heaven. Do not, like Pharaoh, be too proud to relent. You remember how it fared with him: God forbid that we should

harden ourselves until a similar destruction overtake us. Standing in my place as a messenger of an offended God, I call on those who tremble at his word, to go forth in one body and "weep between the porch and the altar, and say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach." Let those who still justify their sins, remember that they yet have bodies that can die, and families that can be smitten, and houses that may be consumed. Yes, and they have souls that can be lashed with eternal plagues. I call upon every one that hears me to humble himself under the mighty hand of God, and to cry on his bended knees day and night, "O thou sword of the Lord, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? Put up thyself into thy scabbard; rest and be still."

I can now appeal to heaven and earth that I have warned you. And now if the last convulsions seize you this night, say not, as your eye-balls roll in death, that you were not warned. If you are suddenly caught away to the tribunal of God, plead not there, while shaken with the frowns of your Judge, I was not warned. And while you are crying to rocks and mountains to cover you, curse not your minister for suffering you to go to hell unwarned. But why do I say thus? You *must* not go; you *shall* not go if prayers and entreaties can stop you. Do return and have mercy on yourselves. Put me not off with excuses. When the sword of the Almighty is at your breast, it is too late to talk of a more convenient season. This proneness to procrastination has destroyed more than the sword and the pestilence. It is the common highway to destruction. Few leap into perdition at once: they reach it by the gradual course of delay. They all mean to reform at last, presuming on the future aids of that mercy which they now abuse. But that mercy is not always at their command. It is just with God to withhold in their extremity those influences which in better days they rejected; and so they die as they have lived. Those of you who wish for salvation ought to begin before you leave your seats. O that God would shake this house and fill it with the solemnity of the last judgment. Amen.

SERMON II.

SET THY HOUSE IN ORDER, FOR THOU SHALT DIE.

A NEW-YEAR'S SERMON.

2 KINGS xx. 1.—Thus saith the Lord, Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live.

WOULD to God that every worldly care might be banished from this house, that it might be to us as solemn as the curtains of our dying bed, and that for a little season we might feel that we must die. A message has come from the eternal world, to me, to each of you, "Thus saith the Lord, Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." It is with trembling that I bring the message to you. I tremble under a sense of its awful import. I tremble lest it should not be delivered in a skilful and faithful manner. And I tremble lest it should fail to produce the desired effect on you, the dear people of my charge. Alas, what reason have I for such a fear. I have, in my feeble manner, (though in the best manner I was able,) seconded the efforts of my paternal colleague; and we have pressed you with all the arguments and entreaties which anxious concern for your eternal welfare could suggest. But ah, how little does it avail. Perhaps there never was a season since the Gospel was preached to this congregation, when its effects were so little felt as at the present time. Did I know, my dear hearers, in what new method I could, with better effect, address you this day,—what arguments or persuasions, hitherto untried, the Holy Spirit would bless to your conviction, my sad heart would gladly seize them and present them to you in all the eagerness of anxious love. Had I but one prayer to offer, it should be, that this message may produce on you the same effect that it did on the good Hezekiah.

One great reason that the entreaties of heaven have so little influence to arrest men in the pursuits of ambition and the world, is that they do not realizingly believe that they shall ever die. Could a deep sense of this solemn truth take possession of their minds, our ex-

postulations would then gain admission to their ears, and perhaps to their hearts. Away then every unbelieving thought, and leave us for a little season to reflect on our approaching fate. It will be but a few days, (for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it,) when weeping relatives will follow to the grave every person in this assembly. But a few days and the voice of your minister shall no more be heard in this sacred place; another will succeed; but he may not find one of you present to hear his awakening tones. You may be where an angel's voice would not break your slumbers, where nothing shall make you hear till the trump of God shall sound. Where are they who formerly used to hear the Gospel in this congregation? Their seats are filled by others, and you must seek your fathers among the cold "clods of the valley,"—where your children will presently weep as they read the inscriptions on your monuments. Often, in the solemn dusk of evening, they may stray among the graves, and pointing to a decayed monument may say, There lies our ancestor, long since mouldered to dust. On his bosom sleeps a favorite child, and around him are gathering the last remains of his house. A tear and a sigh may escape *them*, but strangers will tread upon your dust with the same indifference with which you walk over the graves of those who died a century ago. And soon it may be unknown on earth that you ever existed. A new generation will occupy your places without a thought of you, while your spirits will be either rapt in the vision of God and spreading their wings on the air of paradise, or shrieking with tormented ghosts and pouring on the ears of hell the horrid tones of despair.

"It is appointed unto all men once to die." Neither youth nor vigour nor

piety nor usefulness can avert this fate. "One dieth in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul and never eateth with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust and the worms shall cover them." In the full tide of health, in the midst of our jocund pleasures, our ambitious pursuits, our long calculations for worldly happiness, still an hour hung with black and covered with weeds, is before us all. Unless we are cut off by a sudden stroke, each one of us, however unused to suffering, however our vital energies may have formerly resisted disease, each one of us must endure pain, must feel the attack of our last sickness, must be thrown upon a dying bed. An anxious pulse through all our frame shall beat the time to death's approach. A burning fever, panting lungs, racking pains, shall gradually loosen the bands of life. Do we boast of a vigorous constitution? This will only render the struggle still more severe. We must all endure pain enough to break the cords which hold the soul confined, and by a fearful disruption it must be torn from its vital seat. Whether this shall be by a sudden rack of pain or by more gradual and wasting sickness, yet the event is unavoidable, and we *must* meet it. But whether more gradual or sudden, it will require a fearful conflict to drive the soul from its beloved tenement; and this conflict we must endure, until we can no longer bear it,—until we faint and die. No degree of piety will exempt us. Our "fathers, where are they? and the prophets," did "they live for ever?" This is a terror to nature; but there is one thing which can extract the sting of death and support and cheer the soul under its approach. This is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. This made the martyrs triumph and hug the stake around which the fires were kindling. This, though it cannot repel, will render death more welcome than our bridal hour. Look between the curtains of a dying saint; mark his prospects glistening in his uplifted eye. True, his feeble flesh pants and languishes; but he knows that his pains will not endure for ever. His weary soul shall soon rest upon a Sa-

viour's bosom. Go into the next apartment, and behold the distorted features of a dying sinner. He has done with the world; he has done with pleasure and health; he is trembling and tossing under a struggle with the king of terrors. O for the repose of a single hour. But repose has fled. There is no more rest for him in this world. He is sliding down a slippery hill into eternity; and nothing can check his course. O for a little rest, he cries. He tries one posture and then another, but finds no rest in either. My God! and is there no pillow on which he may rest a moment beyond the grave? Is there no repose for him any more through the ages of eternity? "The silver cord" is "loosed,—the golden bowl" is "broken." He opens his eyes among tormented ghosts. I hear him cry, O to return to a dying bed. I would hug it as a bed of down; I would welcome it like heaven.—My soul turns from the horrid scene and cries, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

My beloved hearers, one more year has run its course; one more period of time is now with the years beyond the flood. A new epoch reminds us with what silent, rapid speed time steals along. We are all one year older,—one year nearer to the eternal world, and have one year more to answer for. We imperceptibly grow old and approach our dying hour without being aware how rapidly we advance. The boy, the youth, the man, is looking *forward* to life, until he suddenly awakes from his dream and finds his life is chiefly spent. This I can attest by melancholy experience. I have been looking *forward* to life till now; but this day, this very day, measures to me just one half of three-score years and ten. The illusion has now vanished, and I am at length convinced that my life is not before me but behind me,—that I must look back to find it rather than forward. Doubtless there are others in the house whose life stands nearly at the same point. I cannot resist the propensity I feel to offer a few thoughts to them. You have probably, my dear friends, been involved in the common delusion of men, and have till now been calculating that you were young, and that the principal part of

life and its enjoyments was before you. But how stands the account? Fifteen years more and you are fifty, and must probably begin to feel the infirmities of age. Little can you promise yourselves after that period. In addition to the commencing decays of nature, you must expect to find the companions of your youth thinned around you, and probably breaches made in your domestic relations which will change the appearance of the world and render it a solitary scene to you the rest of your days. You may possibly reach the summit of four-score years; but really you have little prospect of *enjoying the world* more than ten, fifteen, or twenty years longer. The season of enjoyment has been chiefly spent before you were aware. Is it not time to begin to make provision for another world? "Thus saith the Lord, Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live."

It is my wish to preach this day as a dying man to dying men. I am, I think, in some measure sensible that I must shortly appear with you, my dear hearers, at the bar of Christ. I therefore shall address you as a collection of people about to enter the world of spirits. I will speak to you in some such sort as though I was standing by your dying bed. "Thus saith the Lord, Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." I pray that you may now hear, and that you may hereafter feel and act, as people who are about to die. There are two points which it is here proper to consider.

I. What views and feelings naturally possess a man who is conscious that his end is near:

II. What measures he will take to set his house in order.

I. What views and feelings naturally possess a man who is conscious that his end is near. If his mind has an ordinary share of sensibility, he will dismiss his worldly cares and turn his thoughts to the contemplation of eternity. He is no longer interested in a world he is so soon to leave. The calculations and pursuits of men, their joys, their griefs, their disappointments, their success, their hurry, their hopes, their fears, all appear as idle as the sports of children. The world is lighter to him than a feather. Neither losses nor disappointments nor prosperity

has power to affect him. You see him not pressing from business to business in a rage to be rich. You see him not stretching after preferment. His pride is reduced. You see him no longer assuming haughty airs, no longer fretted at every supposed neglect. Meekness and gentleness mark his deportment. No longer can unbelief or the world hide a prospect of death or seduce his thoughts from God. He looks death in the face. He turns his anxious eye to explore eternal objects. He raises an earnest look to heaven. He ardently betakes himself to prayer and to reading his Bible. All his anxiety is to prepare for his approaching fate. You all perceive that these are rational exercises for a dying man; why then not for you? It is to dying men that I am speaking. I can say to you all, "As the Lord liveth, and as" your "soul liveth, there is but a step between" you "and death."

II. Let us consider what measures a man will naturally take to set his house in order, who, with proper views, is conscious that his end is near.

1. It would be natural for him, as an honest man, to wish to settle all his accounts. This might be necessary to secure his creditors and to prevent insolvency. My dying friends, allow me to press it upon you to lose no time in looking over your long and complicated account with your Maker, and get it settled before you die; for as surely as it is left to be settled after death, you will prove everlasting bankrupts. I fear there may be some that hear me who never seriously considered that they had any account with their Maker. This is a sad mistake. God has a long and heavy account against every man. In looking over this account there are four points to be particularly considered. First, what is due to God for his own glorious perfections, as the most holy, just, and good,—as the infinite Majesty of heaven and earth, the rightful Sovereign of his creatures, who has strictly commanded every man to love him with all the heart and soul. Secondly, what is due to God as your Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, and Redeemer, for your reason and health, your food and raiment, your friends and possessions; for his mercies, which have been "new every morning" and repeated every moment,

through a long succession of years. God, your Lord and Master, your Creator and Preserver, has sent you into his world to labour for him. He has given you faculties of soul and body; he has given you time and the means of grace, and many opportunities of doing and getting good: and all these talents he has strictly commanded you to "occupy" till he shall "come." Imagine not that you were sent into the world to serve yourselves. No, you were sent, like servants into a vineyard, to labour for your Master. So many years have you been in the vineyard, and now your Master is about to call you to account; and what account are you prepared to render? What have you ever done for your Maker? This is the *third* count which you are to examine. What have you ever done for him who has given you all these talents? I ask not whether you have led moral lives, from the mere influence of education or natural principles. I ask not whether you have done acts of charity, or contributed to support the Gospel, from similar principles. But I ask what you have ever done from a sincere regard to the glory of God and from a tender love for his Church and for the souls which he has made. If you have done any thing in this way, it is well; but if nothing, enter it thus in the account and remember it. Remember that for so many years you have lived in God's world and had the use of his talents, and have never employed them at all in his service. It is a fearful conclusion. But it will be of no use to deceive yourselves. The *fourth* count which you are to examine is, what you have done *against* God, in thought, word, and deed. In thought. How many vain thoughts, how many proud, envious, revengeful thoughts, how many hard thoughts of God and his government, how many unseasonable thoughts, as worldly thoughts on the Sabbath or wandering thoughts in prayer, how many selfish feelings, how much idolatry, worldly-mindedness, and unbelief. Examine also your words; for "every idle word" shall be brought into judgment. How many vain words, how many deceitful and false words, how many profane or irreverent expressions respecting God or the Bible, how many angry or defamatory words. Examine also your actions. How many

unprofitable actions which only wasted precious time, how many unjust actions, how many undutiful actions towards parents, how many unkind actions towards husbands or wives, how many unfaithful actions towards children and friends, how many improper actions towards superiors, inferiors, enemies, domestics, the poor. How many of the ten commandments have you broken? and how frequently? How *many* sins in thought, word and deed have you committed in the course of twenty, forty, sixty years? *One* sin deserves everlasting fire, and how many millions have you committed? Ah, my friends, if the sentence has gone out that this year you shall die, I fear the accounts of some of you will be found in wretched disorder. Are you prepared for judgment? You are just about to be called to an awful account by your Maker, and are you prepared? How stands the account with your God? Is it settled or is it not? If not, settle it, I beseech you, without delay. Loaded as you are with debt, you must be cast into prison unless your Surety undertakes for you: and he never will do this unless you earnestly apply to him by faith. Go to him and engage his intercession. Rest upon him as the only hope in a dying hour. Delay not; your breath is departing;—the next hour may be too late.

As dying men it becomes you to settle all your accounts with your fellow creatures, and not leave them to be settled at the day of judgment. If you hold grudges against any, or suppose they hold grudges against you, come to an explanation. Forgive and be forgiven, that you may die in peace with all men. Have you defrauded any, whether by downright knavery or hard dealings, make restitution as soon as you are able. Have you defrauded your families by withholding pious instructions and examples,—by neglecting to pray with and for them,—hasten to repair the injury in the best manner you can. *Hasten*, for the time is short.

2. A dying man, in setting his house in order, would be desirous to dispatch all important, unfinished business, which could not be accomplished by others after his death. So do you. There is much to be done of the great business of life which another cannot do for you after your decease, and which, if you do not

hasten to dispatch it, must be left undone to eternity. How far you have completed the business of life, you will judge for yourselves. This business is to subdue the passions, to learn the character of God and the way of life through his Son, to obey his will, to promote his kingdom, to advance the present and eternal interests of men, to acquire the Christian graces, to catch the notes and learn the praises of heaven. How much of this vast business remains to be done? Is it *half* finished? Is it even begun? It is to be feared that some of you have lived thirty, forty, and fifty years in God's world, breathing his air and living on his bounty, without even beginning the great work for which he sent you into the world. And now you are just about to be called out of the world, and still have all this momentous business to perform. And perhaps you are still asleep, and do not intend to awake till some future day. Had a dying man so much business on hand, and of such a nature that he could attend to it, with what anxious haste would he set about it. Sinners, awake and hasten for your lives. Pious parents, awake. You will soon be called from your children: whatever you do to fit them for heaven, you must do quickly.

3. It is common for dying Christians to call their families around them and impart to them their final counsel. Thus do ye. While you are walking on the brink of the grave, and eternity is opening upon your sight,—while about to take leave of your dear families, to resign them into the hands of strangers, to grow up, it may be, without any friend to form them for heaven,—call them, O call them quickly around you, and with all the commotion of pity, warn them, plead with them, and press them into the kingdom of God. Look into the streets; behold men all around you about to launch into eternity, and many of them into everlasting fire; and have you no dying charge to give them? Yes, cry unto them and press them until your breath fails. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work nor device nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."

4. It is customary for men, when settling their house in order, to make their

wills. I have no advice to give as to the disposition of your worldly estate. But I solemnly charge you to bequeath to God your immortal souls with all their faculties, and your bodies, to sleep in his arms, in expectation of a joyful resurrection.

5. It is not uncommon for people, when they view their end approaching, to prepare their shroud, and make every provision for their funeral obsequies, that nothing may be left to be done in the distress and confusion of the mournful day. And sometimes they prepare beforehand a vault to receive their remains. And I pray God that you may all make such full preparations for your latter end, that when the time comes, you may have nothing to do but to die, and find that you have prepared a resting place in the vaulted heavens, for your repose after the struggles of a dying bed.

Dear *youth*, on whom the flush of health is shed, in whose veins the tide of life rapidly flows, boast not yourselves of youth and bloom. That youth and bloom will soon decay. Those smiling eyes will be suffused with tears; those active limbs will move no more. While yet the morning of life is bright upon you, come, like dutiful children, and dedicate the first fruits of your years to your heavenly Father. It will be an offering of sweet incense to him. Secure his favour before "the evil days come" and "the years draw nigh when" you shall "say, I have no pleasure in them." For know, dear youth, that neither your fondest hopes nor a parent's tears can avert from you the stroke of death. In all your sportive prime, a message from the eternal world salutes you: "Thus saith the Lord, Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live."

Ye *middle aged*, it is high time for you to begin your provisions for another world. You have probably traversed more than half your course. Should I address each one of you by name, I should tell you that the chance is greatest that you will never see the end of twenty years. Ay, my friends, the companions of my course, who are pressing on with me to the eternal world, how long shall business and ambition steal your hearts away, and no preparations be made to meet your God? Pause

one moment in your hurried career ; step aside with me from the din of the shoudering crowd ; I have a secret message to whisper in your ear from the King of kings : " Thus saith the Lord, Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live."

My *aged* hearers, it seems needless to announce to you the approaching event. You cannot doubt that it is at the door. I approach you with reverence ; but coming in the name of such a Master, I must not hesitate to deliver his message to you also. My venerable fathers, one by one, " Thus saith the Lord, Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live."

To all who are mortal, this message,

ponderous as eternity, is addressed. O let it not be delivered in vain. Were its weighty import felt, what a solemn scene would this house present. The general inquiry would stand speaking in every eye, " What must I do to be saved ?" Ah, then believe me. Believe not me, but believe the eternal God that sent me. O be persuaded, be entreated, (as though my hands clasped your feet,) not to rush to judgment unprepared. It will be a dreadful scene. Turn, turn, and have compassion on your precious souls. I earnestly pray that not a person may leave the house without this message ringing, *as the voice of God*, in his ears, " Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live."

SERMON III.

WHAT CHRIST DESERVES FROM GOD AND MAN.

REV. i. 5, 6.—Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

THIS was the exclamation of the beloved disciple, who had lain on his Saviour's bosom, who had seen him die, who had just sunk at his feet in Patmos, and who was then rapt by the inspiration of God. With what inexpressible emotions did such a man, at such a time, utter this bursting praise. Could the veil of unbelief and the rock of insensibility be taken from our eyes and hearts, we could utter it with the same emotions.

" Jesus is *worthy* to receive
Honour and power divine."

And the time is coming when " every creature—in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them," shall be heard saying, " Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." This

beloved apostle, in the view which he took, saw and felt that Christ was worthy, not only of all gratitude and praise from the redeemed, but of all " glory and dominion" from God. His wish, as expressed in this burst of feeling, was, that he might be honoured by the obedience and adoration and thanks of all holy creatures, and by the kingdom and inheritance conferred by the Father. I am ready to think that this church, who have so often seen him on the cross, will echo this wish from the bottom of their hearts : and in order to lead your thoughts where such a wish would carry them, I will consider,

I. What Christ deserves from God ; and,

II. What he deserves from the redeemed.

I. What he deserves from God. And here I am not certain whether the term

deserves is well applied. Viewing him purely as Mediator, holding an office under God, (without reference to his original equality with the Father, or any claim which he may be supposed to have as one of the eternal Persons in the Trinity,) his title rests solely on the promise which God made to the obedience that he performed while a servant under law and bound to obey. Considering him simply in this light, he could, in strictness of speech, *deserve* nothing from the Father; that is, he could not as a servant add any thing to God and lay him under obligation upon the principle of commercial justice; as when a man has done a day's work for another and has a just claim for wages. No creature or subject can lay such an obligation upon God. "Who hath first given to him and it shall be recompensed unto him again?" Gabriel has no other claim than that which rests on a gratuitous promise. And Jesus, viewed as a mere servant under law, could establish no other. All that his obedience could do, was to render him a fit object of God's approbation, and a fit subject of a reward intended to encourage obedience, but *due* on no other ground than that of a promise sovereignly made. If we go back to the time when the covenant of redemption was formed, and consider him as one of the original Persons in the Trinity, standing on an equality and contracting with *him* who in the economy of redemption is known as the Father;—if we can consider those two Persons of pure Godhead as so far two that one can have a claim on the other; and if the *second* Person in the eternal Godhead, (I call him so for want of another name, though *second* belongs to the scale of redemption,)—if the second Person in the eternal Godhead can be supposed *so far interested in the rewards of the Mediator*, (for all the rewards are conferred on the Mediator,—a character wholly formed by the covenant of redemption,) as to have a *claim* to them *in his own proper and original personality*; then the second Person may *deserve* from the first all that good which to the Mediator is a reward, just as one man may deserve from another what is due to him by a fair and equal contract. But these are points too deep and mysterious for us to pronounce

upon. It is enough for us to know that the rewards are all conferred on the *Mediator*, once the servant, now the Vicegerent of the Father, who, as holding the rights of the Godhead, is acknowledged in them all as the original Proprietor and Giver. "*Ask* of me and I shall *give* thee," is the tenour of all the promises to the Son. Viewing the matter in this light, we cannot place the claims of the Mediator on any other ground than those of Gabriel, and must rest them on a sovereign promise made to his obedience. And when we speak of his *deserts* or *merits*, we must mean only his fitness for rewards which express the Father's approbation, and his claims to them on the score of a divine promise.

Such merits the Redeemer has completely made out. His unvarying obedience under circumstances so difficult and self-denying; his acting out the perfect love required in the divine law, under all the abuses and insults of his murderers; his submission to the Father's will while sweating blood in the garden; his yielding to such dreadful agonies of body and soul for so many hours without one impatient feeling or recoiling wish; are altogether such an exhibition of obedience as makes heaven and earth amazed,—such as never was and never again will be made in any part of creation,—such as was fit to constitute a title to all the inheritance of the Son of God.

This *is* the ground on which his inheritance is conferred. In that memorable account of the inheritance of the Son of God and Heir of all things, contained in the first chapter of Hebrews, the ground of the whole is expressed in these words: "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; *therefore* God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." For one *under law* to love righteousness and hate iniquity, is to *obey*. The whole then is awarded to his obedience. Some other parts of this chapter, as throwing light on his inheritance, I will quote. "God—hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir of all things:—who, being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of

his power, *when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high*; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath *by inheritance* obtained a more excellent name than they: for unto which of the angels said he at any time, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?*—Of the angels he saith, *Who maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire; but unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*” Here *the inheritance by which Christ is raised to the title and honours of the Son of God*, is made to include his exaltation to the kingdom. All this is again expressed in the Epistle to the Philippians: “Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became *obedient unto death*, even the death of the cross: *wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name *which is above every name*, [to wit, the name of the Son of God;] that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,—and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is *Lord* to the glory of God the Father.”

In his inheritance are included all the positive blessings ever intended for Adam’s race in both worlds; whether those which are extended to mankind indiscriminately as adapted to a state of probation, or those which are offered and promised and conferred as a gracious reward, or the sovereign gift of regeneration to the elect. All issue from God-head as the reward of a perfect obedience; all are given to Christ for the use of man; all are held by a mediatorial claim, and drop upon our world as a part of the mediatorial estate. Not a salubrious breeze, nor a delightful prospect, nor a pleasant relation, nor a crumb of bread, but belongs to the mediatorial estate, and comes to us because first given to Christ. In this sense all are grounded on the righteousness of the Redeemer, and in no other sense come to us through him, and in no other sense can be asked for his sake.

In his inheritance is included the highest visible throne in heaven, with all the personal glories which surround him there, and universal dominion, accompanied with the submission and worship and thanksgiving of all holy creatures.

So far as the power of enjoyment and the right of control imply *possession*, he possesses the whole universe, and certainly has authority to press every thing into the service of his Church. As elsewhere so on earth, he is the only God that governs. All the power that is ascribed to God in the preservation, supply, and government of the world, and in the production of new generations of creatures, is exclusively exercised by the Mediatorial King. He said after his resurrection, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” The apostle speaks of him as “upholding all things by the word of his power.” He was the God of the Old Testament, and has been the only Governour from the beginning. It was he that appeared in Eden; it was he that appeared to Abraham, and said, “I am the Almighty God;” it was he that appeared to Moses in the burning bush, and said, “I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” It *must* have been he, for “No man hath seen God, [meaning the Father,] at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” It was he that went before Israel in a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, and was tempted or provoked by the rebels. Hence the warning of the apostle: “Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted and were destroyed of serpents.” In speaking of the Father in the first chapter of Hebrews, the apostle says, “Unto the Son he saith, [quoting from the forty-fifth Psalm,] *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.*” He then quotes the language of the inspired David to the God of the Old Testament, (who of course was no other than the Mediatorial King,) as the continuance of this very address of the Father to the Son. “And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up and they shall be changed; but thou art the same and thy years shall not fail.” Whoever looks at the hundred and second Psalm, will perceive that these words were addressed by David, under

the Spirit of inspiration, to the God of the Old Testament,—the *only* God known as such: but here the apostle declares that they were addressed by the Father to the Son. As the Father had the *original, undelegated* claim to the Spirit, what is said by the authority of the Spirit to the God of Israel, the Mediatorial King, is here alleged to have been said by the Father to the Son. The Son then must have been the God of the Old Testament.

In his inheritance is included the Church itself,—the seed to serve him,—and the whole body of the elect before their conversion, together with the ways and means necessary to bring them to the knowledge of the truth and to conduct them to heaven; in short, the whole assembly of the redeemed in heaven and earth. His Church is one day to fill the whole world; and to all the nations then on the face of the earth, he has a covenant claim. He has received by charter “the heathen for” his “inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for” his “possession.” Every conversion is in pursuance of the promises made to him, and a part of his stipulated reward. Every effusion of the Spirit is this on a larger scale. Every mission to the heathen is a partial fulfilment of the covenant made with him. All this mighty movement on earth is the promised reward of the Sufferer of Calvary, and is brought about on purpose to give him a glorious triumph in the world where he obeyed and died. Who will not contemplate revivals and missions with new interest after this is known? *Let them proceed.* Let him have his kingdom who died for wretched men. If all others sink, let the glorious Son of God be honoured. Go forth, ye heralds of the cross. Arise, ye nations, and “crown him Lord of all.”

This leads me to consider,

II. What he deserves from the redeemed. The ground of his claim against them is his dying for them and purchasing for them an inheritance. It is true that his obedience to his Father's law, as it constituted his excellence, (his *whole* excellence, inasmuch as it involved all the love that struggled in his heart,) lays claim to the complacency and supreme respect of all creatures. But the special claim which he has against

the redeemed, is founded on the amazing love he bore them, and the unspeakable benefits he procured for them by bearing their sins and purchasing their inheritance. He loved them to such a degree that, rather than they should perish, he came down to all the humiliations of the manger and the pretorium; he endured that awful agony of soul for the greater part of four and twenty hours; and for six hours, with his life unbroken within him, he hung suspended on the torturing spikes. All this to raise them, not from trifling calamities, but from everlasting fire, and the fury of rending passions, and the company of raging devils, and from infinite despair. He came down to all the submission and toil of a servant, that by the most difficult and self-denying obedience he might purchase for them the blessings of this life, and glory for ever enduring and for ever increasing. This was *love*. This was conferring benefits on a scale worthy of the Son of God. If ever obligations were created by kindness, here are obligations as ponderous as the universe and as endless as eternity. And now what do the redeemed owe to their Deliverer?

1. They owe him love and gratitude and praise. They owe it to him to feel just as the beloved disciple did when his soul went out in this burst of affection: “Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.” They owe it to him to feel just as the redeemed in heaven do when they sing that new song: “Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood,—and hast made us unto our God kings and priests.” Among all the objects which engage our daily attention, the Saviour of the world ought to stand pre-eminent. We ought to ponder upon his infinite excellence in descending so far, in doing and suffering so much, to support the energy of a holy government and to snatch a world from death,—to hold out to view “the image of the invisible God” irradiated as by a thousand suns,—to fill the universe with the knowledge of the glory of God, and to give complete and everlasting empire to holy

order. We ought to ponder upon his immeasurable tenderness and compassion towards a wretched race, towards a world of enemies, towards the tigers who hung him on the spikes and laughed at his agonies. We ought to ponder upon him as the only ground of pardon, as the only ground of our present and eternal comforts, as having received, (as his own reward and his own estate,) the whole sum of good intended for us in both worlds. We ought to ponder upon him as the most exalted, the most holy, and the most compassionate King, raised up to suppress all insurrections, to quell all disorders, to subdue all his enemies, and to extend a sceptre of righteousness over a composed and peaceful kingdom;—raised up “to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins,”—to penetrate the mountains after the lost sheep, and to bring them home upon his shoulders rejoicing,—to gather the lambs in his arms and carry them in his bosom,—to extend the shield of protection over his people, to take care of all their interests, to supply them with every comfort, to support them when weary, to cheer them when faint, to wipe the tear from their cheek, and with a tenderness which another never felt, to carry forward and complete their salvation. This wonderful Personage, who is the grand subject of the Old Testament and the New, who fills the whole field of vision, (not indeed so as to hide God the Father behind the Mediator, but in a way to present the only face in which God is seen,)—this glorious Sufferer, Saviour, and King, ought to be the object of our highest love, gratitude, and praise. The dearest earthly friend should give place to him. It was not too much when he required us to *hate* father and mother and life in comparison with our love to him. And as to *gratitude*, no attentions of the kindest mother can put in their claims by the side of his. The highest gratitude that ever throbbed in the most affected heart, should make him its aim and scope. Every hour of the day, as often as the mind has leisure to direct an eye to him, this gratitude ought to spring forth. And *praise*, sweet as the breath of love, and deep as the consciousness of our woes, and loud as the echo of his fame, should sound through the earth. The strain

should be prolonged, and die away at last on our faltering tongue, only to burst with new raptures in another and better state.

2. We owe it to him to believe in him and to embrace him, to approve of the way of salvation by him, and to accept him for our Saviour. Not to do this is to do all in our power to make it true that he died in vain. To do this is to give him, as far as we have influence, all the reward which he ever sought. Surely after the Son of God has descended to the manger and the cross for our salvation, it is the least that we can do to allow him to be our Saviour.

3. We owe it to him to escape from sin and to obey all his commands. One principal end of his mediation was to save his people from their sins; and if they refuse to escape from sin, they counteract his great design. The happiness which his benevolence sought for them, is that which is bottomed on holy order, and connected with a union to him in character and heart; and if they refuse to be like him, they frustrate the very end he had in view. In reward of his labours in our service, he is made King of Zion, with authority to exercise dominion over all creatures: and how ungrateful for us not to submit to an authority thus acquired. If *God* will make him a King for what he has done for us, will *we* refuse to own him for a King? Will we deny him that dominion which is his recompense for laying down his life for us? After all the benefits which the Son of God has conferred on us, will we not render him the respect of our obedience? Has he not deserved this at our hands? After all the miseries which our sin has caused him, will we still roll it as a sweet morsel under our tongue? Has not Calvary furnished a lesson to wean us for ever from sin? Can we see the anguish which it cost his holy soul,—can we see its horrid nature as there depicted,—can we hear the firm determination of God to punish it as there pronounced,—without fleeing from it as from a pestilence? without panting with insatiable desires after universal holiness?

4. We owe it to him to rejoice in the kingdom which he has received, and in every thing which brings forward the grand consummation when he is to reign

over all the earth. What friend of Immanuel, after following him through his poverty and toils, and trembling at the insults and tortures which he endured from men, does not rejoice that he has found a throne? does not leap for joy at the decree pronounced when he escaped from Pilate and the Jews and rose from the sepulchre, "Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.—Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession?" Who does not rejoice to know that on this earth where he wandered an exile, not having "where to lay his head," he is yet to reign the beloved and universal Monarch, and with a splendour of dominion which no potentate ever before attained? Not the splendour of Persian gold and Indian gems, but the splendour of immortal love and holiness waving their triumphs over sin and misery subdued. Under his benignant sceptre I see the wretched prisoners burst their chains and walk forth disenthralled and redeemed. I see the throb of misery quelled and composed, as water quenches the flaming brand. I see the triumphs of the new-creating Spirit changing the face of the valley of death, and pouring upon anguish and despair his lights and his consolations. I see the wretched Hindoo leaving his religion of obscenity and blood and coming up to the dignity and blessedness of a worshipper of Jehovah. I see the poor African dropping his greaves to lay hold of the skirt of Christ. I see the South Sea islander mounting the scale of existence from the neighbourhood of vegetative life to a standing among immortal spirits. I see the poor Jew dropping the veil and tearing the rock from his breast, and weeping as he looks on Him whom his fathers pierced. I see, from nation to nation, the angry passions hushed, the rancour of the heart extracted, the empire of crime broken, the sword beaten to a plow-share, the night of ignorance dispersing, pardons every where sweeping away the sentence of death, and the general moan of misery changed to universal exultation and praise. These are the fruits which every where grow up under the tread of a Saviour's feet. These are the triumphs of the Redeemer's reign. Who that sees these things

in prospect, does not rejoice that the kingdom was given to Christ? Who that has any other than the heart of a devil, does not rejoice at this mighty movement which is taking place on earth? does not shout for joy at the sight of every new mission sent to the heathen? Go, ye messengers of Christ, gather to him the promised seed from the wilderness; enlarge his kingdom among the children of the forest, and translate his praises into tongues which never before contained his name. While ye go, my soul shall thank you and rejoice; yea it shall leap for joy that he who wore the platted thorns is to wear the many crowns.

5. We owe it him to devote ourselves to his service, and to consecrate all that we are and have to the promotion of his kingdom. "Ye are not your own," said the apostle, "for ye are bought with a price." "Ye are bought with a price, be not ye the servants of men." That is, have but one master; be not in subjection to the opinions and customs of the world; attempt not to serve God and mammon; keep your eye single; have but one ultimate end; remember that you are not your own, but belong exclusively to him who purchased you with his blood. O what a sacred bond would a deep sense of these words impose. "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." If a man has bought a criminal from prison and from death that he may be his servant, how reasonably bound is that man to devote all his time to his benefactor, and never to feel himself his own. Had it not been for the bitter sufferings of our divine Master, we should have been spending all these years in hell. Surely then we are not our own but his. And nothing that we call our own is ours. "*Holiness to the Lord*" should be inscribed on every thing that we are or have. Our only business on earth should be to promote his kingdom and glory. Our time and talents should have no other appropriation; our exertions should have no other aim; all our habits and expenses and amusements and business and calculations should be brought under this law; every particle of our property should be disposed of in a manner which we conscientiously believe most calculated to honour Christ, and should be held ready

to be given up without a struggle as fast as he calls for it, even to the uttermost farthing. We should rack our invention to contrive ways of doing good, and be constantly occupied in this study and work, as far as health will permit. We should be sure to bring to pass as much as possible every day. And when we find a clear opportunity to do or give something to promote the kingdom of Christ, we should rejoice in it more than in great riches. This is certainly the least that can result from feeling ourselves not our own but bought with a price: and all this we manifestly owe to him who left the heaven of his glory to die for us on a cross. Say, ye deemed of the Lord, is this too much? Ask John, while that burst of gratitude

is breaking from his heart, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood,"—and would he say that I have placed the standard too high? My brethren, we have divided the interest with Christ long enough. Hereafter let him have the whole. Let us look through our hearts and families,—through our neighbourhood and world,—and see what we can give or do for his kingdom, and cast in our prayers, our efforts, our property, our all, to advance that great and only interest of the world. And when that kingdom shall be completed in heaven, we shall find enough in it to constitute our eternal portion, without the husks which we gave for its advancement. Let that be my portion, and let sinners take the rest. Amen.

SERMON IV.

BY WHOM SHALL JACOB ARISE.

Amos vii. 2.—By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?

THIS was an appeal to the heart of God at a time when the judgments of heaven were bringing the chosen people to ruin. "When" the locusts "had made an end of eating the grass of the land" and were about to fall upon the corn, then said the prophet, "O Lord God, forgive, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small? The Lord repented for this: It shall not be, saith the Lord." When the fire was let loose to consume the earth, the prophet again interceded; "O Lord God, cease, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small? The Lord repented for this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord God."

"By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?" This is a question which might well have been asked in every age which the Church has yet seen. Her numbers have always been small in comparison with the ranks of the wicked. Near two thirds of the world

are pagans; a fifth part are bending at the tomb of Mahomet; and only a sixth part are nominally Christian. Of that sixth, by far the greater part are buried under Greek and Romish darkness. And even in Protestant countries, to how small a compass is the true Church reduced. The men of the world swarm on every hand, while few are on their way to Zion. How small a proportion in every city, in every village. Amidst the countless multitudes of nations, languages, and tongues, the Church, to this day, is but a drop in the ocean.

And she is weak as well as small; wholly incompetent to her own salvation; with no strength commensurate to the difficulties and enemies she has to encounter, and no ally this side of heaven.

When we look abroad over the world we behold a race of men dead in trespasses and sins, given over to the dominion of the selfish passions, chained

down in ignominious servitude to the world; whom no motives can conquer, no means reclaim. To form such beings into materials for building up the Church, they must be made to undergo a thorough and wonderful transformation. Who shall accomplish this mighty change? Who shall turn back the current? Who shall drive back Jordan to its source? Easier to make any other change in the dispositions of men. Far easier to make the coward brave or the miser liberal. No two states of the natural affections are so far apart and so opposed to each other as supreme selfishness and holy love. Nothing against which native selfishness is so rancorously fixed as God and his holy law. You may turn demons into seraphs as easily as by your own power you can mould men into saints. And yet if Zion arises there must be as many such transformations as the number of her sons.

The transformation must not only be begun, it must be continued and perfected. After men are set out in the heavenly course, they still have to contend with their original corruptions, and with a world full of objects fitted to inflame them. All these corruptions and temptations stand in the way of the growth of the Church. And then there is another world full of enemies, deeply practised in their arts, urged on by demoniac malice to obstruct the salvation of God's people; who spread snares through all their way, and having learned the various avenues to their hearts and all their weaknesses, watch incessantly to undo them. ●

Besides all these innate difficulties and invisible foes which every individual Christian finds in his way, the Church as a body has to contend with a world in arms. Every natural man is her foe. If not a foe to the social and civil order which she subserves, at least an enemy to the real spirit which constitutes the Church. The whole bent of the natural heart in every age and country, in every family and individual, is against it. The pagan and the Mahometan raves; the Jew gnashes his teeth; the papist reduces the whole to rites and forms, and contends for the privilege of doing this with fire and faggot; the Socinian embowels religion and presents nothing but a garnished corpse. The men of the

world with one heart are arrayed against this heavenly stranger. All the aims of ambition, all the lust of wealth, every appetite and passion which reaches after pleasure, is her foe. The habits, principles, and calculations of the world are her enemies. Even "the friendship of the world" is deadly hostility. The civil arm has beaten her down with fierce and bloody persecutions. Courts have excluded her, or taken her in only to corrupt her. Learning has sought to change her nature and mould her into an easy thing to favour the pride of intellect and the epicureanism of science, and to leave the selfish heart still to reign. In a war against the genuine spirit of religion,—against its self-denial and its soul humbling doctrines,—all other enmities are swallowed up,—all other rivals are compacted into firm allies. Herod and Pilate bury their animosities here. All corrupt sects which in various ways have perverted the Gospel, when pure religion takes the field will coalesce into the firmest alliance against her. The combinations of wealth, learning, and power; the obstinacy and artifices of disputers; the substitution of other natures under her name; the prejudices and the passions, the arts and the arms which assail her; constitute a phalanx more formidable than was ever arrayed against any other cause.

Nor is there any need of this outward pressure to keep religion down. Leave man to himself for a single generation, and with all the means of civilization and grace, the Church would become extinct. Were she as prosperous as in the days of her primitive glory, the withdrawal of the Spirit from one generation would banish her from the world. All that has been gained in past ages is nothing without a continued operation. The process must be repeated upon every generation.

And now with all this task before us to raise up children to God from the stones of the street, against all the resistance of two worlds, we may well exclaim, "By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?" Our strength is wholly incompetent to preserve the Church a single hour, to add one to the number of her sons, to produce a religious impression on a single heart. If no other

helper is found, we must sit down in tears and give up all for lost.

Such are the complaints which befit every period of the world. But our text was uttered in a time of special discouragement,—in a time when religion was at its lowest declension, and when the hand of God was stretched out, not to revive his work, but apparently to bring the Church to ruin. It will be in exact accordance with the spirit of the text to apply it to a day of declension and judgment.

When we look abroad on the community and see errors and dissipation and vice abound in every form; when the children of the streets who can scarcely walk, are filling the air with the names of the eternal God; when the idea of a change of heart and of experimental religion is hooted from society; when sinners are groping their way to perdition through darkness that may be felt, as stupid as though they had no souls; when our poor children are coming forward among dangers like these, and most of them are on their way to eternal death; is it not high time for every one to cry out with trembling and tears, “By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?” By whom *can* he arise? He is fallen, and there is none to lift him up. He is brought low by his own sins, and has no strength to help himself. He is fallen in the midst of his enemies, and has no ally this side of heaven. By whom shall he arise? By whom shall our children be awakened and brought to salvation? Who shall remove this dreadful stupidity from the people? We inquire who? but no one answers. We search through the world and find no arm competent to the task. Must we then sit down in despair? Must we give up these immortal souls to eternal death? Must we resign our children to everlasting woe?

The everlasting God is our hope. On him our eyes fix when every other helper fails. It was God that began this great work. He laid the plan in the ages of eternity without the aid or counsel of creatures. He selected the Church for his own favourite interest, for the chosen means of spreading his glory before all worlds. From the beginning to the end of time he is pursuing this object with no dependance on any but himself,—resting no issue on the self-determining

power of man. In propelling the mighty machine, his hand is behind every wheel to originate the first motion. Every man has his interest, in which his heart is wrapt up, and in attention to which he finds his chief employment. The Church is God’s interest; and in managing her concerns and making all things subservient to her advancement, he finds his principal occupation from age to age. For this purpose he created the heavens and the earth; for this purpose he preserves and governs all things; for this purpose he brings about all the changes in the natural and moral world. This is the core of all the works of God. For this ages revolve; for this empires rise and fall; for this the world has stood and all its operations have been carried on for six thousand years. God has no other interest on earth,—no other end for which he preserves and governs all. This is the grand interest on which his divine eye is immoveably fixed. Whether seasons revolve or empires rise or fall, this is the only object which he has in view. This is the only interest of the world. This interest God has not committed to men; it is his own, his only portion. He has taken it into his own hands. He has set himself down to manage it himself. If it does not succeed, it is because he has not sufficient skill and power.

In this character God is determined to be acknowledged. The great end which he proposes to himself in all his works, is to bring out to view the riches of his nature, that creatures may see and acknowledge him as he is, and for ever enjoy him. That his works may be understood to be such a manifestation of himself, his fixed design is to be known and acknowledged as the first cause of all things. It is the natural course of unbelief to put him out of view. Ignorance has gone after its thousand deities. Learning has stopt at second causes and paid its devotions to nature. All this atheism God is resolved to confound. He is determined to be acknowledged as the author of all things, but especially as the author of salvation. This is his best and greatest effort to spread abroad the glories of his nature, to reveal to creatures what he *is* and what he is *to them*, to unite them to him in the most perfect love, gratitude, and

confidence,—in the sweetest and sublimest communion. Of this great work he is fixedly determined to have all the glory. Of this glory he is the most jealous of all. This he will not *give* to another nor *divide* with another. He is resolved to be acknowledged as the sole author and finisher of the whole.

For this reason he studiously constructs the dispensations of his grace in a way to convince his people that it is "not by might nor by power, but by" his "Spirit" that the Church is enlarged. Was he careful, in the demolition of Jericho, so to shape the means that his hand alone should be acknowledged? Did he use the same care in the conquest of the Midianites in the days of Gideon? and in the overthrow of Goliath by a stripling with a sling and a stone? Much more care has he taken to secure all the honour to himself in the business of man's salvation. The whole scheme is obviously designed "to stain the pride of" human "glory" and to attach all the honour to his throne. Among other expedients for this end, he has committed the Gospel to "earthen vessels,"—to poor, feeble, sinful men, who, so far from being able to save others, have no power to help themselves. The word in their polluted lips is made "mighty—to the pulling down of strong holds." And when the captives are released under hands incapable of breaking their own chains, they cannot doubt to whom they owe their deliverance. To make his own power more visible in this select thing, he interrupts the order of second causes and goes in the way of supernatural operations. He allows difficulties to increase, as he did on Carmel when he would prove himself the God of the rain; and when the sacred fire descends, it consumes the wood and the stones and licks up the water in the trench. He leaves his people to come into great straits, as he did at the Red Sea. He sets impassable mountains on either hand and lets a pursuing enemy thunder in their rear; that in the moment when they give up all for lost, he may open a passage through the sea. He leaves sin and error to abound,—darkness and strife to overspread a region,—and makes the hope of his people to fail, just before he appears in his glory to build up Zion. And all this to render

his interposition more manifest, and to put his people to the greatest distance from ascribing any part of the glory to instruments. His voice is constantly heard from the highest heavens, saying, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man and maketh flesh his arm." He detests the system of drawing in a crooked worldly policy to support his magnificent cause. He would lead his people forth with both their eyes fixed on the heavens, saying as they go, "My soul, wait thou *only* upon God, for my expectation is from *him*."

This is the proper attitude in which to stand when our anxious souls inquire, "By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?" To this then we have come: our only hope is in God. I know that not another soul will ever be converted in this congregation unless it be accomplished by the power of God. Let all other dependencies be given up; the Church must rise by God alone. There is no other helper; there is no other hope. This is our consolation in the darkest times. We never wish to see the Church in any other hands. We never wish her to have any other protector, any other ally, or that any other should share in the glory of her salvation. We know his love. We have heard him say, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." In all ages his faithfulness has been made to appear. He has "been our dwelling-place in all generations." Abraham trusted in him and was never forsaken. David always found him a friend in time of need. Daniel and the three children were not abandoned to their enemies. Thousands have acknowledged, When father and mother forsook me the Lord did take me up. Why need we look for any other helper, for any other substantial and faithful friend? "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

In the dark times of Pharisaical pride and Sadducean blasphemy, Simeon and Anna, as they waited for the consolation of Israel, often inquired, "By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?" When they pressed the infant Saviour

to their heart, the question was solved: "My eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of thy people Israel." The Waldenses, shut in among their native mountains during the long papal night, often inquired, "By whom shall Jacob arise?" God answered them in his august providence. They saw him come. They saw the thrones of judgment set. They saw spiritual Babylon arraigned. They saw those great Reformers like angels flying through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to every nation. Our fathers, when they hid themselves in woods and secret chambers for the sake of worshiping God, often inquired with breaking hearts, "By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?" God prepared his own answer. He opened to them this beautiful land; he raised up churches through all this howling wilderness; and on this ground erected one half of Zion. In this day of blasphemy and rebuke, we may look abroad upon the sepulchres of our fathers and the wide spreading ruin of our offspring, and ask with streaming tears, "By whom shall Jacob arise?" The God of our fathers will presently answer. These temples and streets shall be full of prayer and praise. Already is his hand brushing away the darkness from a thousand lands. The signs of better days are springing up through all the earth. I hear him say from the fleecy cloud on which he is riding through the world, "The day of vengeance is in my heart and the year of my redeemed is come."

But we return and look upon the ruins still around us and our tears flow afresh. We raise a beseeching look and cry, "By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?" Well then, my dear brethren, you know what you have to do. Amos urged this question in the form of an intercession to move the heart of God. This is *your* remedy. "Arise, cry out in the night; in the beginning of the watches pour out" your "heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up" your "hands towards him for the life of" your "young children that faint for hunger in the top of every street."

But mark the order in which the prophet proceeds. His first prayer is for

pardon: "O Lord God, *forgive*, I beseech thee: by whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?" He prostrated himself like David, and acknowledged the sins of his people and sued for pardon, before his intercession could avail. He saw sin to be at the bottom of the trouble, and therefore concluded that the pardon of sin must be at the bottom of the deliverance, and prayed for that in the first place. Whatever calamity we are under, the pardon of sin should be first and most eagerly sought. Till this is obtained no intercession will avail. "We have transgressed and have rebelled," said the captive Church; "thou hast not pardoned;—thou hast covered thyself with a cloud that our prayers should not pass through." When a church has long been praying for a revival of religion, and has not been heard, it is because God has not pardoned. Cast yourselves then on your faces, my beloved brethren, and humble yourselves in the deepest dust, for all your coldness, ingratitude, and neglects. Prostration is your first duty, and the first step towards deliverance. This done, besiege the throne of grace with many tears. And take for your encouragement the success marked in the context. Twice the interceding prophet pleadingly inquired, "By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?" Twice "the Lord repented," and said, "It shall not be." Twice a stop was put to the judgment by making supplication to the Judge. Thus Moses stood in the breach and turned away wrath from Israel. Thus Elijah proved that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Could you, with deep humility and deep dependance, go forth in a body, and pour your fervent cries into his ears, the blessing of hundreds ready to perish might come upon you. "The Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear." He might pour down such a flood of blessings that there would not be room to contain it. You would have no longer to say, "By whom shall Jacob arise, for he is small?" Your sighs would be turned into songs. And will you lose the blessing when it

is brought so near? Will you be poor when it is so easy to become rich? Will you leave at your door, despised, all that a God has to give? "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

S E R M O N V.

THIS IS NOT YOUR REST.

MICAH ii. 10.—Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted.

THE land of Canaan was called a rest. "Unto whom I swore in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest." It was given to Israel after their wanderings for four hundred and seventy years, (from the time that Abraham left "Ur of the Chaldees,") as a permanent retreat from the world, where they might rest "under the shadow of the Almighty." But it was given on condition of their faithful obedience. That obedience they had failed to render. In the preceding verses the prophet had reproached them for their merciless oppression,—in our text he pronounces their doom. "Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted" by your sins. You shall find neither contentment nor continuance here. One trouble shall succeed another, until you are swept away and removed to Babylon. Perhaps another idea may be added. Since the land is polluted and your doom is known, it is no longer *lawful* for you to seek a rest here. Arise and depart, for to rest in this place after you are forbidden to stay, is pollution. Some have thought that the address was made to the *oppressed*, and was intended for a word of consolation. Arise and depart from this land of oppression: ye shall find relief in another country. Comfort your hearts, for the time of your deliverance is at hand. Tremble not at a removal to Babylon, for nothing but violence and injustice awaits you here.

It is allowed by commentators that these words may be properly applied to

the state of men in the present world. And I see not why they may not be applied in *all* the senses that have been mentioned. Let us expand them in the three-fold form.

First, this world would have been a rest had sin never entered it: but since it is polluted, there is neither contentment nor continuance here,—neither solid happiness in the enjoyments it offers, nor an abiding city in any of its domains. It is no longer our permanent abode, but our passage to another country; our inn, but not our home.

Secondly, to attempt to rest in the creature after God has commanded us to give it up, is sinful. To rest in a connexion with unrighteous men,—satisfied with a world corrupt through "divers lusts,"—is still more polluted. We are called upon to "come out from among them and be separate," and to keep ourselves "unspotted from the world." From resting in the creature,—from resting in corrupt associations with worldly men,—we are called away.

Thirdly, through the selfish passions and oppressive conduct of men,—through the numerous troubles which beset this vale of tears,—the pilgrim can find no rest on earth. It is a relief to think of departing to that world where "the wicked cease from troubling," and where "the weary" are "at rest." How cheering the sound, "Arise ye and depart." Come, my children, enter into your everlasting chambers. Escape to that "rest" which "remaineth" for "the people of God."

From these different views we may consider ourselves called upon to turn our backs on the world and to set our faces towards heaven, by all the following considerations.

I. That this is not our *home*.

II. That the world cannot *satisfy*.

III. That an attempt to rest in it is *sinful*.

IV. That no alliance can be formed with the men of the world without *hazard of pollution*.

V. That no rest can be found in a world full of *injustice and oppression*. Nor yet,

VI. In a world inundated with the floods of *affliction*.

I. This is not our home. Our life is "as an hand-breadth." "Man that is born of a woman is of few days.—He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not." In the morning he looketh forward to life as a little eternity; but before he is aware his head is covered with the frost of age, and he is tottering on his withered limbs. And then when leaning upon his staff and counting the graves of the companions of his youth, he can feelingly pronounce, that life "is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." It is transient "as a tale that is told." It is "as a dream when one awaketh." Regular and rapid, like the waves of the sea, one generation sweeps off another into the gulph of oblivion. Where are they who filled the world with noise and strife, with fame and folly, half a century ago? and where, half a century to come, will be those who now fill the whole circle of human vision? Before they are aware their places will be vacant, to be filled with another generation as transient as themselves. Thus passes off the glory of the world. And where does the wave sweep them? Into that state of consciousness being which is never to end,—which is fraught with bliss or agony beyond the imaginations of this infant world to conceive. Through fields of light or through floods of fire, they will look back to the time when they spent a few moments on a little particle of dust called earth, which, millions of ages since, has sunk in the general conflagration. Even then their eternity will

be but just begun. And when, from that remote point, they remember how attached they once were to this world, how they regarded it in a sense as their final rest, and placed it higher than that eternal state, how will they stand amazed at their folly. This is but the threshold of your being, and all before you is a boundless eternity. Why then are your affections lingering here? Why are your calculations bounded by the present world? Had not sin entered, this world might have been your happy home for many years, till exchanged by a translation to the empyreal heavens. But since the tragedy of Eden brought death into the world, how vain to linger, for a resting place, about these mortal shores. A voice from heaven breaks in upon our frenzied dreams, "Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest."

II. The world cannot *satisfy*. Never were the things of the world intended to fill the human mind. In the original formation of man he received a capacity which nothing but God could fill; and though by the fall he lost his relish for God, the same capacity still remains, and all creation cannot fill it now. While his mind remained pure however, he was able to *enjoy* the good things of the world to a perfect degree. No restless longings, no perplexing care, no throb of envy, no collision of interest, no pang of disappointment, hung around the pursuit or possession of worldly good. His mind, kept in order by the dominant love of God, held the creature in its proper place, and could enjoy, without mixture, all that it contained. But since the creature assumed the place of God, it has become, as all idols must, an instrument of pain. Withered by the curse of God and sought with inordinate desire and expectation, it turns to unsavoury ashes upon the palate, plants thorns of disappointment in the heart, and proves its name and its nature to be, "Vanity and vexation of spirit."

Many minds, broken loose from their centre, have wandered in search of rest in the creature; but none have ever found it. Wealth says, It is not in me; honour and pleasure say, It is not in me. Instead of rest there is wretchedness whenever the attempt is made. The man who surpassed in wealth, as he did

in wisdom, all the other kings of Israel, had the fairest opportunity to try the experiment. He drained the creature to the dregs; and when he had drunk it off, he wrote upon the goblet this label for the admonition of future ages, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." The most effectual way to turn the sweets of creature comforts into wormwood, is to seek to draw from them, what must be derived from God alone, the supreme happiness of an immortal mind.

Thus sin and the curse have ruined that enjoyment of the creature which was originally intended. Why then search for satisfaction where it is not to be found? "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" "Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted."

III. An attempt to rest in the creature is *sinful*. The first command is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." To make a god of any thing, is to set the heart supremely upon it and to attempt to rest in it as a chief source of happiness. To love "the creature more than the Creator" and to look to that for our chief comfort, is to idolize the creature, and is a breach of the first and great command. Hence the declaration, "If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him." We may value the creature for the purposes for which it was given us; but there is not a man on earth who does not love the world too much. The chief current of selfishness sets this way: for inordinate self-love chiefly consists in overvaluing the happiness which results from the gratification of worldly propensities. While selfishness remains, the love of honour, wealth, and pleasure will hold too high a place in the heart; and we shall seek them with undue desire and reckon on them too much as essential parts of prosperity; our minds will too earnestly cleave to them and be too distracted with care about possessing them. This it is to rest in the creature; and this, in whatever degree it is indulged, is idolatry. It is the ruin of worldly men, and it is the besetting sin of Christians themselves. The only cure for it is to give a larger proportion of the heart to God: and this can be effected only by deep contemplations of God and earnest applications to him for the Spirit. The

evil consists in overvaluing our own separate happiness, in seeking a gratification which does not make a part of the general prosperity of God's kingdom, in searching for it out of God, in detaching ourselves from the universe and building ourselves up as a unit. Until men have taken an everlasting leave of the world and shut themselves up in a convent or in hell, the love of the world is the principal way by which they stray from God,—the principal affection which takes the place of love to him. It is the great road to perdition: or if the gate of hell is shut by the grace of God, it is the great road to darkness, temptation, and distress.

To attempt then to rest in the creature is to seek a guilty rest. It is to lie down in pollution. Wherefore then are your heart-strings so intertwined about the world? Why cast yourselves down to sleep in the jakes? "Arise ye and depart, for this is not your" lawful "rest, because it is polluted."

IV. No alliance can be formed with the men of the world without *hazard of pollution*. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." A great part of the feelings, opinions, conversation, and customs of the world are opposed to the genuine spirit of the Gospel. They are such as are dictated by a heart under the supreme dominion of selfishness, unrelieved by any thing better than the social affections and the faith and conscience of devils. Under the refining light of religion and science, the coarser excrescences may be lopped off and the form may be polished. Even an attitude may be taken to protect some of the general principles of Christianity. But after all, the life and soul of religion is excluded, and that with more overwhelming influence than though this garnished body had never been baptised. This is the world in its most imposing shape. In all other forms it is the open enemy of all religion, if not of all decorum. With such a world what alliance can be formed without polluting our minds and hazarding our salvation? A voice from heaven says, "Come out from among them and be ye separate,—and touch not the unclean thing." Ye "are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." "The friendship of the world is enmity with God: whosoever

therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." I know an attempt is sometimes made to prove that the character of the world is changed by the introduction of Christianity, and to render a considerable part of the Bible inapplicable to the present day. But this arises from sheer ignorance of the character of man and the nature of regeneration. All who remain the *world* in distinction from the true Church, are the same in heart as though no Gospel had been sent. If they do not love God supremely, they are supremely attached to themselves, and of course are his enemies. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will *hate* the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and *despise* the other." "He that is not with me is *against* me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Those then who have not been raised to the supreme love of God, remain as fully his enemies as though no Gospel had been given to men. Those of course who are the world in distinction from the Church, retain still the character ascribed to the world in the New Testament. With that world it is hazardous to form any alliance. Conformity to them is death. Heaven itself has said, "Be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Why then are you resting on the opinions of worldly men? Why are you so eager to catch their smiles? Why yielding yourselves up to those habits of pleasure which their practice has sanctioned? Why reaching after associations with them to the neglect of humble Christians?

V. No rest can be found in a world full of *injustice and oppression*. The collisions of selfish passions keep the world in a flame and drench it in blood.

"My ear is pained,
My soul is sick with ev'ry day's report
Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.
There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart:
It does not feel for man.

* * * * *
Lands intersected by a narrow frith,
Abhor each other. Mountains interposed,
Make enemies of nations, who had else,
Like kindred drops, been mingled into one."

Not nations only, but individuals in all the departments of life, act out this detestable temper. The complaint of the prophet may be applied to every age:

"Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother; for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbour and will not speak the truth." In a world where selfishness forms the supreme law,—where love is an exotic, thinly scattered and of feeble growth,—where hard-hearted hate and hard-handed oppression repel and crush and grind the feeble,—where churlishness and envy and rivalry and jealousies sever the bands of social life,—what rest can be found? But there is a world where rivalries never come, where selfish passion never sours, where envy and oppression and war can never enter, where a man finds a brother in every one he meets, where justice and honour and love and tenderness govern every heart, every action, every feature and look. Why will you linger so long among scorns and abuses? Why cleave to this hard-hearted world as though your feet grew to the soil? Come away, ye lambs of Christ, from the jaws of the lion and the bear, and enter into the heavenly fold. Will you seek to rest among enemies when there is such a world of tenderness to receive you? "There" your "best friends," your "kindred dwell, there God" your "Saviour reigns." Will you choose this for your home, where your timid spirits have only to tremble and weep? Turn your backs on this den of thieves, and enter the portals of that blessed city where all is the sweetest harmony and love.

VI. No rest can be found in a world inundated with the floods of *affliction*. Ever since sin entered, this world has been a vale of tears, a house of correction, to break stubborn spirits to submission, to drive wayward children to obedience by the rod, to humble the proud, and to discover God's severity against sin. It is appointed us "through much tribulation" to "enter into the kingdom of God." "In the world" we "shall have tribulation." This is the suffering time of the Church,—the wilderness through which they must pass to the heavenly rest,—the long, tiresome desert full of serpents and enemies, and in which is no water. Here "moth" corrupts and "thieves break through and steal." Here they have to drag about

a weak and aching body. Here their heart-strings are often broken in the dying chambers of their friends.

"Why should this earth delight us so ?

Why should we fix our eyes

On these low grounds where sorrows grow

And every pleasure dies ?"

Are we confined to this ? Has infinite love provided nothing better ? Has God prepared no habitation in his wide domains more worthy to be the object of our aspiring hopes ? Lift up your eyes and see.

"There is a land of pure delight

Where saints immortal reign ;

Infinito day excludes the night,

And pleasures banish pain.

* * * *

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood

Stand drest in living green :

So to the Jews old Canaan stood,

While Jordan roll'd between."

Why then should we wish to continue here ? Why should we thrust ourselves down among the briars and thorns ? Why are we so unwilling to go away to everlasting peace ? Do we not know that these afflictions were introduced by sin ? The world is full of trouble because it is unclean. This argument too is pressed home by the same voice from heaven. "Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted."

To these arguments drawn from the text, it may be added, that Christians themselves are distressed with many sins. And will you seek a rest among your own pollutions ? Before you lies a world of everlasting purity. Will you not arise and reach after that ? Here the face of your heavenly Father is but little seen, and you are frequently called to mourn an absent God. But there you will see him face to face without an interposing cloud to eternity. Will not this thought break your slumbers ? Will you not from this hour take your hearts and hopes from earth and lodge them in the heaven of heavens ? You do not belong here : you are citizens of another country. Break loose from this enchanted ground. Direct your eye immoveably towards your inheritance, and press towards that glorious mark. Soon will you be far away from earth and enter among the glories of the upper world. Forget your idols, forget your father's house, and bend all your thoughts to immortality. And then your "light affliction which is but for a moment," shall work for you "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Amen.

S E R M O N VI.

S U B M I S S I O N.

2 KINGS xx. 19.—Then said Hezekiah unto Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken.

SOMETIME after the miraculous destruction of the army of Sennacherib, king of Nineveh, who had come up against Jerusalem, Hezekiah was brought low by disease, and the sun was carried back ten degrees as a gracious token that he should recover. This wonderful change in the heavens was probably noticed by the astronomers of Babylon. Merodach-Baladan, who had begun to aspire to that dominion which a few

years after was transferred from Nineveh to Babylon, knowing the hostility which existed between the Ninevites and the Jews, and learning the reason of that strange phenomenon in the heavens, wished to cultivate the friendship of a prince whom he regarded, not only as an enemy to his rival, but as one whom the God of heaven delighted to honour. Having heard of the sickness and recovery of Hezekiah, he sent am-

bassadours to him, with "letters and a present," "to inquire of the wonder that was done in the land." The good king, elated by this attention from a remote and distinguished potentate, was weak enough to make a display before the ambassadours of all the wealth of his kingdom. In this matter "God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart:" and the trial proved that "his heart was lifted up." In this thing "Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him:—therefore there was wrath upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem." The prophet was sent to say to him, "Behold the days come that all that is in thy house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord. And of thy sons which shall issue from thee,—shall they take away, and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon." This was the humiliating and distressing message to which the penitent king made the reply in our text; "Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken." He "humbled himself for the pride of his heart," and with a chastened and subdued spirit, consented that the will of the Lord should be done. Here was submission: here was a glorious triumph over a selfish heart: here was, what every creature ought to render, a cheerful and absolute subjection to the empire of eternal rectitude and love. Shall I call your attention to the holiness and happiness of such a temper, and to the universal obligation on mankind to offer this homage to their God and King? In doing this I will,

I. Explain precisely what the temper is; and,

II. Consider the holiness and happiness of it, and the universal obligation on mankind to exercise it.

I. I will explain precisely what the temper is.

It is a temper of universal and absolute submission to the will of God. There is a *forced* submission,—a yielding because we cannot help it; but this is not the thing required. There is an acquiescence in the will of God when that will sends prosperity; but this is only a consenting that another should make us happy. The only true sub-

mission is that hearty acquiescence in the will of God which arises from supreme love to him. The reason why the wicked do not submit, is that they love themselves and their own enjoyments most. While such a temper continues, they must of course value their own gratification more than the divine pleasure, and approve of the will of God only so far as that will is tributary to them. This selfishness is the root and core of all rebellion. The only cure, the grand catholicon, is that heavenly charity, the fruit of a new creation,—that pure and wonderful benevolence, which actually loves God better than ourselves, and wishes above all things that his will may be done;—that a will which is benevolent and wise in all its acts, and which constantly seeks the best good of the universe, may prevail, whatever becomes of us. This is pure and supreme benevolence. This is the very spirit and life of true religion. This is the only spirit in the world that *can* produce universal and absolute submission to the will of God; and this cannot fail to do it. When our own wishes and interests are less dear to us than that universal interest which is wrapt up in the divine will, what can tempt us to unsubmission? what is there for us to oppose to that will? what interest have we to maintain against the wishes of God? But so certain as we love another interest better than that which the divine will protects, we shall set up that interest against God, and resist whenever he lays his finger upon it. True submission then is the necessary effect of supreme love to God, and can arise from no other principle. It cannot for a moment be separated from it. It is the most certain test of supreme love; the want of it excluding all claim to that affection, the existence of it decisively supporting that claim. If we love God better than all other objects, we shall, for the time being, submit to him under every circumstance; if we love another object better, we shall rise up against him when that object is taken away. The submission then for which I plead, arises from a supreme attachment to the divine will. It is a noble conquest over selfishness, (the great disease of fallen man,) and a benevolent subjection of our own wishes

and interests to the will of the wise and holy Guardian of the universe.

In these remarks I do not confine my views to that submission which is produced by a sudden effort in the crisis of some great calamity, nor to that which yields under evils more common, but serious enough to be denominated trials. I have reference *chiefly* to that *habitual* delight in God which, in the thousand things of daily occurrence, is satisfied with his appointment, rather than with any arrangement which our wishes could have suggested;—to that humble, sweet, subjected spirit which goes through each day rejoicing in the government of God,—delighted to see the universe safe under the shadow of his throne,—satisfied to be, with all our interests, in his hands,—contented with the crosses and derangement of our plans which he appoints, be the instruments who they may,—and generally, which carries about a choice that God should decide all events.

This submission is to be distinguished from that morbid inactivity and aversion to care which, retiring from exertion, leaves God to be the only agent in the universe;—which puts off burdens upon him just as the indolent shift them off upon each other;—which, instead of exerting a dependant agency with an eye fixed upon an overruling providence, leaves God to perform both his part and ours. *That* may be called submission to a providential dispensation, which really is indolence shrinking from an effort to change the posture of affairs. Submission does not exclude a fetch of thought, a change of plans, a resort to various expedients, a laying of the mind down to invention, a course of vigorous and long continued exertions to avert an evil and to secure a good. It *does* imply a diligent use of all appointed means to obtain what God has commanded us to seek; for submission comprehends obedience. The opposite is rebellion. It is an essential part of God's plan, and for his glory, that creatures should obtain good by their own activity; otherwise there would be no use for their immortal powers. This activity he has therefore enjoined. "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord," is the Christian's motto.

II. I am to dwell a little on the holiness and happiness of such a temper, and the universal obligation on mankind to exercise it.

To love the righteous will of God, in which are balanced all the interests of the universe,—which is perfectly wise and benevolent and right;—to love that will better than our own interests, and to subject our interests and wishes to that; *must* be holy if any thing is holy,—must be pure and sublime benevolence. How generous and noble is the temper. How infinitely superior to the littleness and meanness of a selfish spirit. And it is precisely what God commands. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment." "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." No one can doubt, after reading these texts, that God requires supreme love from all his rational creatures. If then holiness consists in obeying God, it consists in rendering him that supreme love which will produce the submission in question. What can be holiness, what can be goodness, if it is not subjection to the will of eternal wisdom and benevolence? What temper in the universe *can* be better than that sweet and heavenly charity which subjects all our wishes and interests to that will? which is more anxious that a will should be done which protects the best interests of all worlds, than for any personal gratification? This is the very essence of that benevolence which comprehends in itself all the right feelings that can exist in any world or relation. In its operations and fruits it is the complete sum of all moral excellence. It cannot fail to bring forth all that is lovely and right. It is itself the seminal principle of all.

This submission to the will of God, so far as it operates, necessarily excludes all evil passions and conduct. For instance, it excludes all discontent. For one who knows that the providence

of God is universal, and extends to the most minute events, and who is willing that the will of the Lord in all things should be done, and delights in that will more than in any thing which that will can take away; what ground can there be for discontentment? If events are crossing to his feelings, still his supreme desire is gratified, for the will of the Lord is done; and though he may suffer, he would by no means change a single circumstance about which the divine will has been clearly expressed. This it was which taught the apostle "in whatever state" he was, "therewith to be content." The slightest feeling of discontentment shows that the submission is not perfect. We may be dissatisfied with an arrangement which it appears to be in our power to alter, and about which we have an agency still to exert, because the divine will is not yet expressed. Thus the disciples did not cease their entreaties and say, "The will of the Lord be done," until they had exhausted arguments to dissuade Paul from going to Jerusalem. But when the pleasure of God is known, a particle of discontentment evinces a want of submission. With proper resignation, we shall feel, under any cross event, that we have nothing to do, in mind or body, but to use the means which God has appointed to remove or support the evil. A ruffled mind, we shall know, is not one of those means. We may still suffer, as under the loss of a near friend or under bodily pain; but one may sweat blood without discontentment so long as he can say, "Not my will but thine be done." Submission will exclude every feeling of undue anxiety. In looking forward into the wide expanse of futurity, or in contemplating the issue of any particular event, the Christian knows that nothing can happen but what the will of God appoints. While that will engages his supreme regard, how can he be anxious? He may be concerned and careful about *doing his duty* in the use of proper means to prevent what he deems an evil; but with entire submission to the divine will, how can he be anxious about the *event*? All such anxiety proves that his submission is not perfect. Submission to God will exclude every angry and every impatient feeling towards

men. There is a holy indignation against the wickedness of others which will still remain; but all malevolent resentment and impatience, (which arise from an unwillingness to have our own interests assailed,) will give way when it is considered that, whoever are the instruments, God has appointed the trial. As soon as the heart is thus reconciled to the personal suffering, all resentment against the instrument will cease. Thus David, when Shimei cursed him, said, "Let him alone and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him." Every angry passion then,—every impatient feeling,—proves that our submission is not complete. It follows of course that submission will exclude every complaining word, every angry or bitter word, every impatient word. When all discontent, anger, bitterness, and impatience are banished from the heart, they will leave the lips; "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Every complaining, angry, bitter, or impatient word, then, proves that our submission is not complete. Submission will cure all distrust of God. In every case of distrust we suspect God of not being sufficiently attentive to our interest. *That* is plainly setting up our interest against him. The subjection of our interest to his will, is an effectual remedy against all this. Submission will cure every inordinate desire after wealth, honour, pleasure, friends, ease, or whatever else we regard. An inordinate desire is an unsubmissive desire. The two phrases are, in morals, perfectly synonymous. Simply to desire these things is no sin; the evil consists in desiring them disproportionately,—in desiring them more than the honour of God, or at least raising them so near to a level with God as to obstruct an entire subjection to his will. This being the definition of inordinate desire, it is plain that submission is its precise and only cure. Submission is an effectual cure of all envious feelings towards our neighbour. Those distinctions at which envy grieves, are of God's appointment. Complete submission to his will will do all the uneasiness away. Every envious feeling proves that our submission is not complete. Submission will prevent every unlawful assault upon our neighbour's person, influence, or good

name. All these acts are attempts to change, by means which God has forbidden, that posture of things which God in his providence has appointed. Submission to his will would prevent all this: it would leave with God all those changes in the condition of men which we ourselves are not permitted to make. A remarkable instance of this fruit of submission occurred in the life of David. When he found Saul asleep, Abishai's advice was to kill him: but David answered, "The Lord shall smite him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall descend into battle and perish: the Lord forbid that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed." On the same ground submission will prevent every resort to unlawful means to secure an object. By forbidding the use of unholy means, God has manifestly required us to submit to those evils which we cannot remove without such means. If then we are submissive to his will, we shall never make such a resort. It follows of course that submission will exclude every falsehood, and I may add, every transgression. The temptation to transgress is a desire for some object which we cannot obtain without going counter to a divine precept. Where the object is placed in this predicament by the providence of God, it is plain that submission to providence will take away all motives to transgress. I add finally, that submission, so far as it extends, must quench every evil passion, and thus extinguish the inward fire from which all outward eruptions proceed. If it suppresses every inordinate desire, every feeling of discontent, all distrust of God, every motion of impatience, anger, bitterness, and envy, every feeling which sets up a private interest against God, what is there left that can be pronounced evil? The heart is cleansed at once of every thing that pollutes or offends, and is made entirely subject to the empire of eternal purity and love. Thus submission to the will of God, so far as it goes, excludes every thing that is morally evil, and is the essence of that sublime benevolence which includes every thing that is holy and good. Nothing is necessary but this principle to tranquilize the universe. If the whole rational creation are submis-

sive to the will of God, all are brought together and harmoniously united in one rule of action, in one supreme motive, in one single will,—and that will nothing less than the will of infinite rectitude and goodness. Is not this a universe complete in order, beauty, and happiness?

Thus the *holiness* of this temper appears. And its *happiness* is no less evident. Submission to God, as we have seen, excludes all those uncomfortable passions which make the wicked like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. It clears away every thing that can agitate or corrode the mind. And as its very life-blood consists in supreme delight in the will of God, it has always the happiness of knowing that its dearest object is safe;—that the ground of its highest exultation and joy is secure;—that the will of infinite wisdom and benevolence will in all things be done. This is the grand relief for all the miseries of man. It not only subdues great calamities, but gives a pleasant form to the numberless circumstances which hourly arise, and spreads a brighter hue over the whole web of life. Instead of all things going wrong, every thing falls out as it should do. The happy Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, when asked "what sort of weather he thought it would be on the morrow," replied, "It will be such weather as pleases me,—because it will be such weather as shall please God." That man was happier than a prince. O the serenity and tranquillity of the mind whose will is thus swallowed up in the will of God.

And in respect to the *universal obligation*, who can doubt that this is precisely the temper in which all moral agents ought to unite? The very definition of moral agents is, that they are under obligation to feel and do right and to avoid wrong. But in the temper under consideration, all the right feelings in the universe are involved, and by it all the wrong feelings in the universe are excluded. If then there are any such beings as moral agents, they are under obligation to exercise this temper. If rational creatures are not bound to feel thus, rational creatures are not moral agents; and then there is no such thing as moral obligation, no such thing as

right and wrong, no ground for praise or blame, no foundation, but in a mistake, even for those emotions of resentment and gratitude which we feel towards our fellow men. If you revolt from these conclusions, you must go back to the full admission that all men are under indispensable obligations to yield unlimited submission to God. Is he not our rightful King, and are we not his subjects? Is not his will perfect? Has not the Creator and Proprietor of all things a right to govern his own world according to his own pleasure? Has he not a right to extend his control to those numberless circumstances which rise up in our daily course? Has he not a right to come into our enclosure, our family, and touch those interests which we have been most accustomed to consider our own? Why should we fret against the dispensations of providence? They are all the dispensations of God. His care extends to the smallest matters. He puts nothing out of his hands. Those things which vex us from hour to hour, were as really appointed by him as the ordinances of day and night. Why should we be disquieted by their occurrence? The will that appoints them is perfectly benevolent, and has nothing for its object but the best good of the universe. It is infinitely wise, and cannot fail to select the best means for this end. Is it not our duty to love supremely him who is supremely lovely? Has he not fastened this duty upon us by the whole strength of his authority? Has he not expressly said to each one of us, *Thou shalt* love the Lord thy God with all thy heart? And are we still loving our little conveniences better than him? Are we still setting up our petty interests in opposition to his will? Under all the appointments of his providence from hour to hour, and in respect to the most minute circumstances, we are bound to own him as our sovereign King from whose will neither there is, nor do we wish there should be, any appeal. *That* will make us proof against the vexations of disappointment and the uneasiness of desire. *That* will spread a heavenly calm over our minds, and render us serene and happy under every change of life.

This is the religion of the Old Testament and the New. Under the severest

trials this resignation has all along been exemplified in the history of the Church. "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord," said Job when all his children and possessions were destroyed. "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?" was his language when covered with one tormenting ulcer from head to foot. When the two sons of Aaron were swept from the earth by the vengeance of God, "Aaron held his peace." When the message came, denouncing the utter destruction of Eli's house and the death of his two sons in one day, Eli answered, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." When David was driven out from his royal city by the revolt of his kingdom and the rebellion of his son, he said to Zadok the priest, "Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again and show me both it and his habitation: but if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." When Hezekiah heard that most humiliating denunciation, he said, as in our text, "God is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken." When the Church was driven from her burning cities to Babylon, her language was, "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" When he who was set for our example sweat blood, he said, "Not my will but thine be done."

In more general and common matters, the same acknowledgment of God and the same resignation to his will have all along been exemplified. A general acquiescence and joy in his government have always distinguished his true servants. All down the ages they have sung, "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof." Even in that part of his government which is directed against the wicked, they have solemnly acquiesced. "Let Mount Zion rejoice, let the daughters of Judah be glad, because of thy judgments." When John saw in Patmos the fall of spiritual Babylon, he heard a voice saying, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for God hath avenged you on her." He then reports: "After

these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia ; salvation and glory and honor and power unto the Lord our God.—And again they said, Alleluia : and her smoke rose up for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped him that sat on the throne, saying, Amen, Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.” Such was the animated jubilee which was held in heaven over the destruction of spiritual Babylon.

Such is the religion of the Old Testament and the New ;—not an imaginary submission in a case existing only in supposition, but a real, habitual submission under events and trials actually occurring ;—not a submission excited only now and then by some awakening ca-

lamity, but a practical and steady acquiescence in the divine government ;—not a submission yielded only in view of the merciful issue of events, but a holy approbation of the final destruction of the wicked. This is the religion of the Bible. Nothing short of this will be accepted of God. This is the religion which sound reason approves as the only homage due to the Sovereign of the world. This is precisely the religion which will unite and bind and harmonize the universe. This is a religion worthy to be the service of a God. Possess this religion, my dear hearers. Exercise it in profound, absolute, universal submission to the divine government : and it shall be well with you in ages yet to come, when the hopes of the wicked shall perish. While they eternally pine to see a God reigning without their consent, you will have a preparation for never failing joy ; and under the shadow of that throne which your suffrages have supported, you shall repose in everlasting safety and blessedness. Amen.

SERMON VII.

AWAKE THOU THAT SLEEPEST.

ERH. v. 14.—Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

To a man who believes that the soul is immortal,—that God has placed us in this world and given us all our talents, that we might labour for him,—that he has positively commanded us to act with a reference to his authority and glory in all that we do, and watches continually to see whether we obey him or not, and that on our conduct depends an eternity of happiness or wo ; to such a one it must be evident that mankind in general are sunk in a deep sleep. Though after breathing a few times here we are to enter on an endless duration in another state,—with the greater part of men, where one thought is bestowed on

eternity, a thousand are scattered upon the world. How many live without prayer. How many scarcely think of God from day to day. It cannot therefore be uncharitable to consider the mass of the people, compared with the wakefulness which such infinite interests require, as sunk in a profound slumber. Unless this slumber is soon broken, they must sleep the sleep of eternal death. Every Christian therefore ought to do his utmost to disturb their repose,—to rouse the attention of men just about to plunge into eternity. I beseech you, my brethren, to help me by your prayers while I endeavour to awaken those

who are slumbering on the brink of the eternal pit. In this attempt I shall,

I. Search for the cause of the stupidity.

II. Apply some arguments to remove it.

I. I am to search for the cause of the stupidity.

The *proximate* cause may be comprehended in these two words, ignorance and unbelief. The *remote* cause is opposition to God and his truth. Were not the heart opposed, no man, with the Bible in his hands, could remain ignorant of truths which claim to have so important a bearing on his eternal destiny. Truths which relate to their temporal interests all men are eager to acquire, because they love the world. How comes it then to pass that multitudes neglect to study the Scriptures, and remain almost as ignorant of the first principles of religion as the heathen? Whence is this but because they do "not like to retain God in their knowledge?" The true cause is assigned by the apostle Peter: "For this they *willingly* are ignorant of." If to such a cause their *ignorance* is to be ascribed, much more their *unbelief*, whether it consists in downright infidelity, or in the denial of a part of revealed truth, or only in the want of a realizing sense. This unbelief is every where in Scripture ascribed to blindness and hardness of heart, and is held up as an enormous sin, to be punished with eternal death. The cause of ignorance and unbelief then is the opposition of the heart to God and his truth; and the causes of all the stupidity which fills the world are ignorance and unbelief. Some men are willingly ignorant that any thing is necessary to their justification but a few good works growing out of mere natural principles. Ignorant of God and his law, ignorant of their own hearts and of the Gospel way of justification, they dream that they shall be accepted for actions outwardly good, though they continue to make a god of this world,—though even their outward religion has little or nothing to do with devotion. Wholly overlooking the duties required in the first table of the law, and performing the duties of the second table from mere natural principles,—wholly overlooking the two grand requisitions of the Gospel, repent-

ance and faith, and making no account of Christ otherwise than as an instructor, they call themselves Christians because they do not rob and murder, and because they sometimes give their money to the poor. Under the stupefying influence of this ignorance, they see nothing to disturb them as long as they behave as well as honest and humane infidels. Totally blind to the real character of God and to their own hearts, they are incapable of any other compunction or alarm than what arises from some irregularity in their outward conduct towards their neighbour. When such an alarm is felt, it is only for them to change their conduct and all is a dead calm again. These Christian pagans, though they are as idolatrously attached to the world as the young man in the Gospel, and less moral than he,—though they plainly do not love to pray or to think of God, and could not be happy in heaven if admitted to the place,—still persuade themselves that they either are, or for their good works shall be prepared for heaven before they die. Thus fortified by sevenfold ignorance, they can no more be awakened to contemplate their condition with alarm than the pagans of the wilderness. It is perfectly in character for *them* to slumber. It is not strange that they should sleep. It would be wonderful if they should awake,—if they should ever awake till they open their eyes in everlasting burnings.

But there are men who are not baptized pagans, who are respectable for their knowledge of Christian truth, who yet are asleep. The cause with them is unbelief. Not speculative infidelity, (they have a doctrinal belief of every important truth,) but a want of a realizing sense. I am not now arraigning them for the want of saving faith. They could not sleep if they had a realizing sense, even without the love, of the truth. Without that love they could not indeed be Christians, but with a realizing sense of only a few leading truths, they could never sleep again. If, for instance, they realizingly believed that they had an eternity to spend in heaven or hell; if they believed without a doubt that there is a God of infinite purity and justice, who created them that they might serve and glorify him, who has them entirely in his hands, and be-

fore whom they must shortly appear in judgment; if they realizingly believed one of these truths, they could never sleep again. If they realized that they are sinners, and that one sin against an infinite God deserves eternal death; if they fully believed that even now they lie under the sentence of death eternal; if they believed that the Son of God in great compassion died for their redemption; if they believed that they must be born again or never see the kingdom of God; if they believed that their dearest friends without regeneration must lie down in everlasting sorrows; if they verily believed that they shall see with their own eyes a falling universe, the dead arising, the earth on fire, three worlds assembled at the bar of Christ with themselves and their children; if they realizingly believed *one* of these truths, they could never sleep again. What then if they believed them all? But they do not believe. The perfect composure with which they fold their arms and go on singing and sporting to the grave, testifies that they do not believe. Their understanding assents to these awful verities, but they do not realizingly believe them. The intrepidity with which they march to the gate of death without lifting a prayer to heaven, proves that they do not realizingly believe even that there is a God. There is solemnity enough in any one of these truths, if fully realized, to interest and agitate and completely occupy a rational soul. The man who can live as the multitude live, does not realizingly believe one of them all. There is no other way to account for the stupidity of men who have any tolerable degree of knowledge, and who are sporting on the edge of the eternal world,—about to give up a guilty soul into the hands of God, without a prayer and without an anxious thought. Having thus detected the cause, I am,

II. To apply some arguments to remove the evil.

I recognise before me the children of my Father's family,—“bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh,”—whom I covet for my eternal companions,—with whom I long to fly through the upper spheres, and expand with them as eternity expands. But my hopes are repressed by the apprehension that many of them are

still without God in the world, and still asleep in this fearful state. With feelings far different from those of an enemy, I will make one more attempt, my dear hearers, to rouse you to a view of your condition. And O may that Spirit whose office it is to raise the dead, give effect to the call.

I wish you to consider that these awful truths are as much realities as though you were now overwhelmed with a sense of their importance. Neither the ignorance nor the unbelief of man can change eternal truth. God is as holy, as awful in majesty,—he is as much your Creator and Preserver and Master,—he as much holds your destinies in his hands,—as though you were now lying at his feet and beseeching him not to cast you down to hell. It is as true that you are destined to live for ever in happiness or wo, as though you now stood amazed in view of your future destinies. It is as certain that you have sinned and do deserve eternal death, and are actually condemned to that infinite misery, as though you were now trembling and quaking under a sense of your guilt. It is as much a reality that the Son of God died in pity to redeem you, as though your inmost heart-strings were vibrating with gratitude and praise. It is as certain that in a few days you will be in heaven or hell, as though your whole souls were trembling under the awful apprehension. It is as certain that without holiness you cannot see the Lord,—that you must all be born again or never see the kingdom of God,—as though you were crying out in agony, “What must I do to be saved?” What would it avail if all the people in America should disbelieve that the sun will ever rise again, or that spring time and harvest will ever return? Can the soldier annihilate the enemy by marching up to the battery with his eyes and ears closed?

What mean any of you, my dear friends, to rest in ignorance? what mean any of you to sleep in unbelief? Those truths which, if ignorance and unbelief were removed, would overwhelm you, are as much realities as though you were sinking under their crushing weight. Why then will you dream your lives away? Is it *ignorance* that excludes conviction? you ought to arise and

search the Scriptures with more anxiety than you would dig for "hid treasures." No difficulties in the way of finding the truth should discourage you. If it cost you the unremitting labour of years, it would be pains well employed. You must answer to God for the use you make of his holy word. That you have had the Bible in your hands from your childhood, is a talent for which you must account. You ought not, you must not remain ignorant of God's revelation. It is distraction for any to remain heathen in a Gospel land. With all the leading doctrines so clearly revealed, you ought not to rest a moment while a doubt remains respecting any fundamental truth. You have the same means with others; why should you remain ignorant while they are informed? Give no sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids till you have found what the word of God reveals. If your knowledge is competent and it is *unbelief* that excludes conviction, then I beseech you to call into action the powers of a rational soul and cast yourselves for help on God. If there is a God,—if you are destined to live unnumbered ages hence,—if you deserve eternal death and need a Saviour,—if Christ has died for you,—if you must be born again;—if these things are so, what means this indifference? If they are not so, why do you speculatively believe them? "How long halt ye between two opinions?" Either turn infidels or fall under a deep conviction of truth. Between these two points nothing but inconsistency and madness can find a place. You say that you *cannot* realize. My dear friends, what hinders? Does *God* prevent? Do *angels* prevent? *Can devils* prevent? Nothing prevents but your own wicked hearts, that hate to feel the truth and love to divert themselves with the world. Those wicked hearts God forbids; and his authority has the same right to control them as to forbid external crimes. In our text you are positively commanded to awake out of sleep, and even to arise from the dead;—not only to be deeply convicted, but to be truly converted. This God commands, just as he commands you to abstain from theft and murder. He makes no allowance for any pleaded inability, and solemnly declares, "He that believeth not shall be damned." If then

God is reasonable, it is your indispensable duty to realize these solemn truths, and you have no excuse at all for neglecting to awake out of sleep.

Why then, my dear hearers, do you not drop every rival concern and come up to a realizing sense of the eternal truths of God? Consider, I beseech you, how you will feel when you enter the eternal world and find all these representations realities; when you shall find yourselves in the presence of a sin-hating and sin-avenging God,—in the hands of One who abhors your sins infinitely more than you do eternal pain; when you shall find those things to be everlasting truths of which you used to hear with so much indifference; when you shall see the unspeakable grandeur of that Sovereign whom you now treat with contempt; when you shall behold the nail-prints in the hands and feet of him whose blood you now trample in the dust; when you shall look back to the Sabbaths and sermons and seasons of prayer which solicited your attention on earth; ah what remorse and anguish will overwhelm your souls. O my hearers, awake before that awful day arrives. You *mean* to awake. You do not calculate to be eternally wretched. Self-love and the great deceiver whisper you that you shall yet escape. Thus thought millions who are now in hell. None of them intended to be lost. But they put off religion hoping for a more convenient season, until they awoke in everlasting burnings. My hearers, if you ever mean to awake, awake now. The longer you sleep the sounder you sleep. The longer you live without religion, the less likely that you will ever possess it. You are waiting for God to change your heart; and do you think that he will change your heart while you sleep? Did you ever hear of such an instance since the world began? And why do you not wait for him to feed and clothe you without a motion of your own? Why do you not wait for him to carry you in his arms from place to place without an effort to walk? You say you are waiting for him to *awaken* you, as none ever went forward till God roused their attention. That fact I do not deny, not only on account of general dependence, but from the wicked reluctance of sinners to awake, and from the

anodyne influence which an idolized world sheds upon them. But have you not an agency of your own which you are bound to exert, whether God operates or not? Are you no longer moral agents because you are dependent? Yes, you are as much bound to act as though you were uninfluenced by another. You must yourselves awake to anxious concern and earnest exertion, or nothing will ever be done. If God ever moves upon you, it will be to produce this anxiety in the first place. If this is not felt you must perish in your sins. Have you then immortal souls, and can you sleep? Is eternity suspended on a moment, and is that moment, (incomparably the most important in your existence,) consumed in guilty slumber?

Distracted sinner, you are sleeping in the presence of an offended God. While you are stretched at your ease, he stands over you and sees you every moment. In his hands you lie, and if he but turn them you slide to rise no more. If perpetual sleep has not sealed your eyes, open them this once and see where you lie. Then raise them to heaven and distinctly behold him who made you,—him who has mercifully sustained you and supplied all your wants,—him who in the tenderest compassion died that you might live,—him who offers you an eternal heaven and threatens you with an eternal hell; and when you have thus looked and pondered, then lie down to sleep again if you can. When you have thus penetrated into the presence of God and the Lamb, then lie down to sleep again if you can.

SERMON VIII.

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED ENDLESS.

Acts iii. 21.—Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

THIS was said of Christ a few days after his ascension from Mount Olivet. He had been received in a visible manner into heaven, there to abide until he shall come to effect the restitution of all things,—to recover the bodies of his people from the grave,—to complete the sanctification and salvation of the saints who shall be found alive on the earth,—to restore the honour of God by the explanations of the last judgment,—and to raise from the ashes of the demolished heavens and earth a new and most splendid universe.

This will be the close of that glorious work of restoration which was committed to Christ, and which was foretold "by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began." The prophets, in the most animated and impassioned strains, described the charming Eden which would grow up, under the hand

of Christ, from the briers and brambles of a world blasted by the curse of the Almighty. They spoke of the wonderful, the extensive, the complete restoration which would be accomplished under the reign of Messiah. They spoke of it with such ardour, such transport, and at the same time in terms so general, that some have supposed they could mean nothing less than the universal restoration of the human race and of devils too.

Now our text, in the most plain and pointed manner, fixes the *time* of that restitution of all things to which all the prophets alluded. It is to be at the second advent of Christ, and at no later period; that is, at the time he shall come to raise the dead and judge the world. "Whom the heaven must receive *until* the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the

mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Not a single prophet then, from the beginning of the world, ever spoke of a restoration after the day of judgment. That day of course is the time fixed upon throughout the Old Testament for the completion and termination of this glorious work. And the same time, we shall see, is fixed upon by all the writers of the New Testament. They make no mention of any restoration after the day of judgment, but expressly limit the "restitution of all things" by that event. The apostles and evangelists spoke of the restoration by Christ in terms as glowing and as *general* as did the prophets, and at the same time more definite and intelligible. They tell us of the "restitution of all things" at the second advent of Christ, and declare that it is the only restitution ever spoken of by any of the prophets since the world began. They tell us "that the whole creation," which now "groaneth and travaileth in pain together," "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God;" that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;" and that "death" itself, "the last enemy," shall be destroyed.

Now what I am first to prove is, that all these things, *whatever they mean*, will be accomplished at the resurrection and day of judgment, and at no later period. Our text settles it decisively that all the glowing account of the "restitution of all things" which is contained in the writings of the prophets, will be fulfilled at Christ's second advent, and at no later period. "Whom the heaven must receive *until* the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." In like manner the deliverance of "the whole creation" "from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God," is expressly fixed to the time of the resurrection. The passage is in the eighth of Romans. "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the *manifestation of the sons of God*, [to wit in the resurrection.] For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in

hope. Because the creature itself also shall be *delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*. For we know that *the whole creation* groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, *the redemption of our body*." This last clause fixes the time beyond a doubt. Thus "the creature," or "the whole creation," is to be "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God." And whatever this means, it is to take place at the resurrection and at no later period.

In like manner the time when "all" shall "be made alive" "in Christ," and when "death," "the last enemy," "shall be destroyed," is declared to be that of the resurrection. In the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, we find, *in the middle of a treatise on the resurrection*, this remarkable passage. "But now is Christ risen from the dead and become the *first fruits of them that slept*. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; [that is, by being raised from the grave.] But every man in his own order; Christ the first fruits, afterward they that are Christ's *at his coming*. Then, [after the judgment is past,] *cometh the end*, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is *death*, [and this of course will be destroyed in the resurrection.]—And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. Else what shall they do which are baptised for the dead, *if the dead rise not at all*? Nothing can be plainer than that the time when "all" shall "be made alive" "in Christ," and when "death," "the last enemy," "shall be destroyed," is that of the resurrection. "Then cometh

the end" of Christ's work of restoration, "when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to—the Father," having "put all enemies under his feet, the last" of which "is death," which will of course be destroyed in the resurrection. From that time Christ manages no part of the universe except his own redeemed Church in heaven. He restores no more: and as things are then left, so they will remain to eternity.

These are the only passages in the New Testament, that I can find, which can be construed by any to denote the wide extent of Christ's restitution.

From these passages two things are so plainly proved that no language could make them plainer. First, that all the texts in the Old Testament and New which speak strongly of the extent of redemption, and which seem to favour the idea of universal restoration, look no further than the day of judgment. Secondly, that there will absolutely be no restoration after that time. For then the end of Christ's work of restitution will have come, and he will have resigned the kingdom to the Father. Those therefore who are not restored at the day of judgment, will never be restored.

The question then respecting *universal salvation* is reduced to this single shape: Will all mankind, and devils too, be restored *at the day of judgment*? So far from this, the day of judgment is the very time to which wicked men and devils are reserved for punishment.

1. It is the very time appointed for the punishment of devils. "The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness *unto the judgment of the great day.*" Before the judgment they are only prisoners; then their public condemnation and execution will take place. It is in reference to that day that they now "believe and tremble." It was in allusion to that day that the Legion cried out, "Art thou come hither to torment us *before the time*?" John, in his vision of the last day, saw this long expected punishment inflicted. "And the devil—was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,—and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." "And death

and hell were cast into the lake of fire."(a)

2. The day of judgment is the time expressly fixed for the punishment of wicked men. "If God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment;—the Lord knoweth how—to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." "The heavens and the earth which are now,—are kept in store, reserved unto fire, against *the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.*"(b)

By repeated parables our Saviour taught us that he was going to heaven to abide till he shall return to judge the world and to punish wicked men. The parable of the pounds, the parables of the ten virgins and of the talents, which are included in a general description of his last advent, and which terminate with an account of the punishment of unfaithful servants and foolish virgins, clearly teach this doctrine.(c)

That Christ will, at his second appearing, judge the quick and the dead and render to all according to their works, is frequently urged as a solemn reason against unfaithfulness:(d) but what argument is there in this if all are to be acquitted in that day?

"If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment." This fearful looking for of judgment will fill men with terror when the prodigies which precede the last day shall appear. "There shall be—upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity,—men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth." "And then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn." "Watch ye therefore and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man."(e) Why should all this trembling seize a wicked world at

(a) Jude 6. James ii. 19. Mat. viii. 29. Rev. xx. 10, 14. (b) 2 Pet. ii. 4, 9, and iii. 7.

(c) Mat. xxv. 1—30. Luke xix. 11—27.

(d) 2 Tim. iv. 1.

(e) Heb. x. 26, 27. Mat. xxiv. 30. Luke xxi. 25, 26, 36.

Christ's approach, and why should an escape from the evils of that day be held up as the reward of fidelity, if no evils will then come upon the wicked?

We are often told that destruction shall in that day steal upon a thoughtless world like a thief in the night, as did the flood in the days of Noah, and the storm of fire in the days of Lot. After describing the descent of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and their rising to meet the Lord in the air, the apostle adds, "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them.—But ye, brethren, are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief.—For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." (f)

We are told that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel;—who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." Jude, having denounced some apostates, under the name of "wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever," adds, "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." (g) "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." "The hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." (h)

Our Saviour, having uttered the parable of the tares, which the disciples, with a strange slowness of heart to understand, requested him to explain, entered on the most plain and simple explanation possible, adapting himself to the capacity of children. "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom, but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the *end of the world*, and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire, *so shall it be in the end of the world*. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." In the same conversation he uttered and explained the parable of the net and fishes. The explanation is in these words. "So shall it be at the *end of the world*. The angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." And to show that his meaning was what the words literally imported, "Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord." (i) In the twenty-fifth of Matthew the process of the final judgment is circumstantially detailed, with the sheep on the right hand and the goats on the left. In the conclusion this sentence will proceed against the wicked: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.—And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." In the last three chapters of Revelation, where the grand conclusion is described, John gives us his vision of the final judgment. After the dead were raised and brought to the bar, the books were opened, "and they were judged every man according to their works.—And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Then follows an account of the

(f) Mat. xxiv. Luke xvii. 1 Thes. iv. 13—18, and v. 2—9.

(g) 2 Thes. i. Jude 13—15.

(h) Dan. xii. 2. John v. 28, 29.

(i) Mat. xiii.

New Jerusalem, of which it is said, "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.—For without are dogs and sorcerers and whoremongers and murderers and idolaters and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." At the same time John heard a voice saying, "He that is unjust let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy let him be filthy still." There are many more texts to the same purpose, but I think these must be sufficient.

You see, my brethren, that I have made no account of the terms *everlasting*, *for ever*, and *for ever and ever*, which are found in these passages. There is no need of these terms, for the proof is complete without them. The first class of texts which I have quoted plainly show that the strongest expressions in the Old Testament or New in favour of universal salvation, look no further than the day of judgment; that none of the holy prophets since the world began, nor yet the holy apostles, gave the least hope of any restoration after that period; but that the apostles plainly tell us that Christ's work of restoration will end and the kingdom be resigned to the Father at that time. Now then if the second class of texts had declared only that the wicked are reserved to the day of judgment to be punished,—that at the conclusion of the judgment they will go away into fire,—without adding either of the words, *for ever*, *for ever and ever*, *everlasting*, or *eternal*, the proof would have been complete. These words about which so much critical trifling has been employed by universalists, are by no means necessary to refute their doctrine. However, that the evidence of endless punishment might be abundant and overflowing, these other words are added, on which I will make a few observations.

If these words do not always imply an endless duration, yet they are the strongest terms for this purpose that our language affords. And those who are acquainted with the original languages, know that the corresponding words are the strongest for this purpose that can be found in Hebrew or Greek. If then the endless duration of future punish-

ment is not expressed by these terms, it *could not* be expressed in Hebrew, Greek, or English. These words, in all the three languages, are the most expressive that are employed to denote the endless duration of God and of the happiness of the saints.^(j) The duration of the happiness of the saints and that of the misery of the wicked are expressed by the same word in the same verse, both in the Hebrew of the Old Testament and in the Greek of the New. For instance, in the Old Testament we read, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." In the New Testament, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life,"—"life eternal" in our translation.^(k) I may add that the expression *for ever and ever*, which is applied to the punishment of men as well as devils,^(l) is the very strongest that could be employed.

These several words are indeed sometimes used to express a duration not absolutely endless; but even then they denote *the whole period of the existence of the thing* to which they are applied. For instance, was the priesthood confirmed to the seed of Phinehas for ever? It was confirmed to them as long as the priesthood should endure. Was the land of Canaan promised to the Hebrew nation for ever, on condition of their fidelity? It was promised to them as long as Canaan and the earth should exist; and after their restoration they will yet have it to the end. Was the throne of Israel given to the posterity of David for ever, on condition of their faithfulness? It was promised as long as the throne of Israel should endure, and in a higher sense promised to David's greater Son for ever. So when the wicked at the day of judgment shall be formally doomed by a judicial sentence to eternal punishment, they will be sentenced to suffer through the whole duration that will succeed the judgment; unless that duration is to be broken up into different periods. But

(j) Gen. xxi. 33. Dan. xii. 2. Mat. xxv. 46. Rom. xvi. 26.

(k) Dan. xii. 2. Mat. xxv. 46.

(l) Rev. xiv. 11, and xx. 10.

there is no hint in the whole Bible of any such division. All the promises and all the threatenings carry us only to the judgment, and there set us off in two different directions, to pursue our course through happiness or through misery without end. No one expression in the whole Bible touches the period beyond the judgment to break it into different ages. None touches it at all except the terms *for ever, everlasting, eternal, for ever and ever*, and the like; except also the last two chapters of Revelation, which decisively confirm the doctrine of eternal punishment. Not another sentence in the Bible looks beyond the judgment and the resignation of the kingdom to the Father. As a ship, after passing the capes and promontories, and leaving all islands near the land, finds itself in the wide ocean, with nothing to break or interrupt its course through the world; so the human race, having passed the successive ages of the present world,—having gone by the resurrection and the judgment and the resignation of the kingdom to the Father,—will find themselves launched upon the boundless ocean of eternity,—with no point or period before them to break or interrupt their course through all future existence. Hence the whole of that future life is spoken of as a *single age*, called “the age to come,” (or as it is in our translation, “the world to come,”) and “that age,” (or as it is in our translation, “that world.”)(*m*) When therefore it is said that the wicked shall be punished in that world *for ever*, the meaning plainly is, that they shall be punished while that world continues; and that will be to all eternity. It *must* be understood to mean this unless you can find texts which plainly divide the duration after the judgment into distinct ages: but no such texts can be found. The very idea of such distinct ages has arisen solely from passages which seem to promise universal restoration. But these promises, as we have seen, look no further than the day of judgment. They do not break the duration after the judgment into distinct ages. And therefore *for ever*, when applied to that duration, denoting, as it

must, the *whole* of it, means to all eternity.

There are yet many other texts which support our doctrine. But what other texts can be needful? What others do you require? Some, you perhaps may say, which directly declare that the punishment of the wicked shall never end. Well, even these you shall have. “If thy hand offend thee cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that *never shall be quenched*; where *their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched*. And if thy foot offend thee cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than, having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that *never shall be quenched*; where *their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched*. And if thine eye offend thee pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire; where *their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched*.”(*n*)

If the expression, “for their worm shall not die neither shall their fire be quenched,” be allowed, in a single instance, to mean *temporal* destruction, (*o*) it was yet a temporal destruction *final and irretrievable*. And if a phrase which originally expressed a final and irretrievable destruction of a temporal nature, is applied to express an eternal destruction which is final and irretrievable, it only shows that the former destruction was regarded as an emblem of the latter. Thus the final and irretrievable destruction of Sodom, which now lies irrecoverably sunk under the waters of the Dead sea, and will lie there till the end of the world, is “set forth for an example” of “the vengeance of eternal fire.”(*p*)

Besides these there is another class of texts which speak of sins which shall *never* be forgiven, “neither in this world neither in the world to come;” which speak of a state of apostacy which renders it “impossible—to renew” men “again unto repentance,” and in which they can find “no place of repentance” though they seek it “carefully with tears.”(*q*) This apostacy is

(*m*) Mark x. 30. Luke xviii. 30, and xx. 35. Eph. i. 21.

(*n*) Mark ix. 43—48. (*o*) Isai. lxvi. 24. (*p*) Jude 7. (*q*) Mat. xii. 31, 32. Heb. vi. 4—6, and x. 26, and xiii. 16, 17.

commonly called the unpardonable sin. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, our Saviour teaches us that between heaven and hell "there is a great gulph fixed," so that none can pass from hell to heaven. It is said of Judas, "Good were it for that man if he had never been born;" which could not be true if he is to be restored to eternal happiness. (r)

There are other texts and arguments which I might present, but I cannot think them necessary. Indeed these latter arguments were not necessary.

The objection that endless punishment is unjust, scarcely deserves an answer in such a discussion as this. We cannot measure the evil of sin, because we cannot comprehend the infinite claims of God, nor the boundless interests which it is the nature of sin to destroy. We are also an interested party, and our judgment is greatly biassed. But God knows. He only is able to fix the degree of punishment which sin deserves. We ought to bow to his decision, and

(r) Mark xiv. 21. Luke xvi. 24—26.

not oppose our short sighted, biassed reason to his judicial decree. But we may settle down on this, that as sinners have sought to destroy an eternal good, they ought to suffer an eternal evil.

Ah my soul, what a God must that be against whom to sin deserves eternal fire? What now thinkest thou of sin? What now thinkest thou of the redemption of Christ? What of his dying love? What of his stoop to rescue thee from eternal torment? Ah, what is sin? And wilt thou still roll it as a sweet morsel under thy tongue? My hearers, awake, and escape from that ceaseless wo which is in reserve for the ungodly. "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee." Christ presents an open way of escape wide enough for a whole world to go abreast. Will you not receive that Saviour which is offered to you without money and without price? Will you rush by such a friend and plunge into the eternal furnace? Ah how will you mourn at the last, when you look up and see that Saviour whom you cast away. I leave you to think of this.

S E R M O N I X.

HELL COMPOSED OF MATERIAL FIRE.

MAT. xxv. 41.—Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

WHETHER the wicked will be literally tormented with material fire, is a question of solemn import to us, who, together with all the relatives we have in the world, are soon to be fixed in one of the two great apartments of eternity. This is a question which, it is manifest, the Scriptures alone are competent to decide; and it ought not to be pre-judged by unassisted reason. The general opinion of the Jewish Church, as also of the Christian Church in all ages, has been that hell consists of material fire. Among the Christian fathers who advo-

cated this opinion, are found the illustrious names of Cyprian, Chrysostom, Jerom, and Austin. Among the critics of the middle ages were Estius and Luke of Bruges. And among the moderns I will select the names of Pool and President Edwards. None of the commentators or critics that I have had an opportunity to consult, have ventured to contradict this opinion; and it is certain that none can prove it false. But in a loose and skeptical age it is becoming fashionable, with those who think of religion seldom and then with dis-

gust, to deny, or at least to doubt, the truth of this opinion. I am persuaded this is one of the devices of Satan, to relieve men's apprehensions of the wrath to come: for if he can take away the expectations of real, elementary fire, he knows that no other idea of punishment which they can possibly form, will have equal influence to alarm and restrain. And that no other idea is equally terrible, is the very reason, and I think, the only reason which induces men to reject the doctrine of material fire. It appears too overwhelming to be believed; and therefore they think it cannot be true. But do they consider what a reflection on God this objection implies? It implies that the punishment in reserve for the wicked is far less than he has represented,—that he has raised frightful and false images to terrify mankind, as an imprudent nurse would attempt to frighten children. Retract this charge against God, by allowing the punishment to be as intolerable as fire, and every argument against material fire is removed. If it is as bad as fire it may as well be fire. No, you say, let it be as bad as fire, but let it not *be* fire. There you deceive yourself, and prove what was said before, that this one idea being removed, no other can be substituted equally alarming; and though in words you acknowledge the punishment to be as great as that of fire, you evidently are relieved by getting rid of this overwhelming thought. And this shows the skilfulness of Satan in prompting men to believe in some other species of torment. I call on reason here to triumph over feeling. I plead with reason that, to save the divine character, the misery must be allowed to be as great as that produced by fire: and what objection to the doctrine of real fire can reason then discover?

It must be allowed that the Scriptures speak of fire with as much plainness and directness as they could on supposition that the fire was real. If there *was* real fire it could not be more fully expressed. If it is not expressed it could not be in words. The account of the final judgment from which our text is taken, appears to be a literal account of that solemn process, with few or no figures mingled with it. And what gives our text decisive claims to a

literal construction, is, that it contains the *judicial sentence* which will be pronounced at the last day, as described by him who will be the Judge. A judicial sentence among men is always couched in the plainest and most literal terms, and never in the language of poetry. Had our text been a part of a poetic description, stating, in the language of a third person, that the Judge would sentence the wicked to fire, the necessity of a literal construction would have been more doubtful. But when it is declared by him who is to be the Judge, "Then *shall he say* also unto them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" every doubt ought to vanish. Can it be supposed that the Judge of the world, in so solemn an act as pronouncing a judicial sentence for eternity on millions of his creatures, will use highly-wrought figures, and sentence the wicked to fire when no fire is intended? or that the Judge would beforehand put into his own mouth, in so plain and positive a declaration, poetic language which will not be used on that awful trial? "Then *shall he say*,—Depart,—ye cursed, into everlasting fire." That *must* be the form of the judicial sentence; and the judicial sentence will not be expressed in the language of poetry.

The story of the rich man in hell appears to be a plain, literal account, with as few figures as could well be employed. And here again a similar reason pleads for a literal construction. The clause which speaks of fire is not the language of the historian, but of the tormented man himself. "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." Would the man himself, in the agonies of hell, employ poetic figures, and speak of a fire when no fire was there? Would he ask for water to cool his tongue, when no water was needed, and something very different was meant?

It cannot be concealed however that this is an account of a soul in a state of separation from the body. If therefore it proves the existence of material fire in hell, it proves that spirits are tormented with it while their bodies are in their

graves. Do you ask, How can a mere spirit be affected with material fire? I answer, as easily, if God so pleases, as if it had a body. He who can carry the sensation of fire to the soul through bodily organs, can convey it to the soul without a body. The devil and his angels, who are to be tormented in fire, are mere spirits.

We read that in the final advent of Christ, he "shall be revealed from heaven—in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God." (a) This fire, by which vengeance shall be executed on the enemies, Mr. Pool's Continuators tell us, is generally understood to be material, and to be the same fire as that which will consume the world, and which is spoken of by Peter: "But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." (b) *The perdition of ungodly men*, "is added," says Estius, "to show the principal use of this fire, which is to torment the wicked to eternity."

The destruction of the wicked is frequently represented in the New Testament by withered branches cut off and cast into the fire, unfruitful trees cut down and cast into the fire, chaff separated from the wheat and burnt, and the like. (c) The import of all these figures may be learnt from our Saviour's explanation of the parable of the tares. It was said of the wheat and tares in the parable, "Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." In the explanation of the parable our Saviour speaks in the plainest and simplest terms. "As therefore the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire, so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Having, in the same conversation, uttered another parable of

like import, he explains it by nearly repeating the same words. "So shall it be at the end of the world. The angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (d)

In the other passages of the New Testament in which the fire of hell is spoken of, it is represented either by the burning of Sodom, or by the perpetual fire which was kept alive in the valley of Hinnom. These two great images of hell I will particularly consider.

1. Of Sodom. We have the testimony of both Peter and Jude that the fire and brimstone which were rained down upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and which for a season converted that valley into a lake of fire, were intended for an image and specimen of hell. Jude says, "Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them,—are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Peter says that, "turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes," God "condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly:" and then adds, "The Lord knoweth how—to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." (e)

Accordingly, in the Revelation, the final punishment of the adherents of the church of Rome, (which is called Sodom,) (f) is represented to be in a lake of fire and brimstone, where the devil will be also confined; which Mr. Mede observes, is in allusion to the destruction of Sodom. "If any man worship the beast,—the same—shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet—and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." "And the devil—was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." Then

(a) 2 Thes. i. 7, 8.

(b) 2 Pet. iii. 7.

(c) Mat. iii. 10, 12, and vii. 19. John xv. 6.

(d) Mat. xiii. 30, 40—42, 49, 50.

(e) 2 Pet. ii. 6, 9. Jude 7. (f) Rev. xi. 8.

follows an account of the general judgment, at the conclusion of which it is said, "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." A little further on it is said, "The fearful and unbelieving—and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." (g)

2. The other example by which hell is represented in the New Testament, is the perpetual fire which was kept up in the valley of Hinnom, on the south of Jerusalem. In this valley the idolatrous Jews, before the days of Josiah, used to burn their children to Moloch or Baal. The place where they were burnt was called Tophet; some say, on account of the fire-stove in which the children were burnt; others say, on account of the drums which were used to drown the children's cries. From this place Isaiah drew an image by which to represent the destruction of Sennacherib and his army, and, as it is generally thought, to represent mystically the punishment endured in hell. "For Tophet is ordained of old; yea for the king it is prepared: he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood: the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." Josiah defiled this place and put a stop to the abominable practice of sacrificing children here. (h) He converted the place into a receptacle of all the filth of the city. All the offals and excrements of beasts slain for food or sacrifice, and the carcasses of beasts which had died of disease, were after this brought thither to be burnt. Criminals against whom the judges wished to deal most severely, were cast out into this valley unburied; and after their flesh had been consumed by worms and putrefaction, their bones were burnt here. For the purpose of consuming the different kinds of filth brought from the city, a perpetual fire was kept burning in the valley. On all these accounts, viz. on account of the abominable idolatry which had been practised here, the barbarous immolation

of infants, the extreme filthiness of the place, and particularly the perpetual fire which was here kept alive, the valley of Hinnom became the very phrase employed by the Jews to denote the place of future punishment. In the Hebrew tongue the valley of Hinnom is גֵּי הִנּוֹם, Ge Anem. After the captivity, when the Jews employed a corrupt dialect of the Chaldee for their common language, they called this valley, with a little variation, גֵּי הַנֶּמֶס, Ganem; and this became the word which they commonly used to denote the place of the damned. About three hundred years before Christ, the Old Testament was translated into the Greek tongue, and called the Septuagint. In this translation the Hebrew word גֵּי הִנּוֹם was rendered *Gaienna*. (i) But as the Greek was a living language and liable to change, in process of time the valley of Hinnom was called in the Greek tongue, *Γέεννα*, Gehenna. And this is the very word which is commonly used in the New Testament, (which was mostly written in Greek,) to denote the place of future punishment, and which is rendered in our translation, hell. Wherever the word hell is connected with fire in the New Testament, it is in the original *Γέεννα*, or the valley of Hinnom,—as in the following passages. "Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." "If thy hand offend thee cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than, having two feet, to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched; where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire; where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." (j) These

(i) Jos. xviii. 16. Septuagint.

(j) Mat. v. 22. Mark ix. 43—48. The same word is also used in Mat. v. 29, 30, and x. 28, and xviii. 9, and xxiii. 15, 33. Luke xii. 5. James iii. 6. But Hades is employed,

(g) Rev. xiv. 9—11, and xix. 20, and xx. 10, 14, 15, and xxi. 8.

(h) 2 Kin. xxiii. 10. Isai. xxx. 33.

words are supposed by some to be a reference to the last verse in Isaiah, where a similar expression is used, and where the fire mentioned is thought to allude primarily to towns burnt by hostile armies, and the worm, to that which feeds on the unburied carcasses of those who have fallen in battle. It is generally agreed that the worm in both places refers to that which feeds on unburied carcasses; and some of the best critics, with very good reason, suppose that our Saviour alluded to the worm which preyed on the carcasses of malefactors which were cast out unburied in Gehenna, or the valley of Hinnom. In consequence of that expression in the last verse of Isaiah, the Jews were accustomed to ascribe both fire and worms to hell, as appears from two verses in the Apocrypha. "The vengeance of the ungodly is fire and worms." "The Lord Almighty will take vengeance of them in the day of judgment, in putting fire and worms in their flesh; and they shall feel them and weep for ever."^(k) But unless our Saviour's expression was only a proverbial one in use among the Jews, I cannot doubt that he alluded to the worms, as well as fire, of Gehenna, or the valley of Hinnom. As damnation is called death, so here it is expressed by the death of a malefactor, whose body was cast out into Gehenna, as unworthy of burial, for worms to devour, and whose bones were afterwards cast into a perpetual fire.

Thus it seems that images and terms are taken from the lake of fire and brimstone in which Sodom was consumed, and from the perpetual fire kept up in the valley of Hinnom, in which the bones of the most atrocious malefactors were consumed, to denote that "fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries."

To all this it may be objected, that the wrath of God expressed in temporal judgments, is often in Scripture called fire, and the evil passions of men are called by the same name; so that

and is translated hell, in Mat. xi. 23, and xvi. 18. Luke xvi. 23. Acts ii. 31. Rev. i. 18, and vi. 8, and xx. 13, 14. In 2 Pet. ii. 4, Tartarus is used. And these are all the instances in which *I find* hell used in our translation of the New Testament.

^(k) Ecclesiasticus vii. 17. Judith xvi. 17.

after all the descriptions of hell which have been cited, there may be no other fire in that world than the wrath of God and the raging passions of the damned.

This objection, as it is the principal one that can be raised against our doctrine, shall be fully and candidly considered.

It is admitted that in the prophetic parts of the Old Testament, and in the Revelation of John, (both of which are couched in highly figurative language,) the wrath of God displayed in temporal judgments, is very often expressed by fire,—sometimes in reference to the fervour of wrath which the judgments denote,^(l) sometimes in more obvious allusion to their painful and consuming nature,^(m) and sometimes in plain reference to both.⁽ⁿ⁾ Sometimes this wrath^(o) and these judgments^(p) are plainly compared to fire; but more commonly the comparison is concealed and they are expressly called fire.

The wrath of God expressed in temporal judgments, as it is often called fire^(q) is also said to burn^(r) and to be kindled,^(s) and God himself is said to burn.^(t) Fire is used as an emblem of God incensed, and he appeared to the

^(l) Ps. xviii. 7—14, and exx. 4. Isai. xxxiv. 8—10, and xlii. 25, and lxiv. 2, and lxvi. 15, 16. Jer. xv. 14, and xvii. 4. Ezek. xxii. 18—22.

^(m) Job xv. 30, 34, and xx. 26, and xxii. 20. Ps. xli. 10. Isai. ix. 5, and xxiv. 6, and xxvi. 11, and xxix. 6, and xxxi. 9, and xlvii. 14. Jer. v. 14, and xi. 16, and xxi. 14, and xlix. 27, and i. 32, and li. 25. Lam. i. 13. Ezek. xv. 4—7, and xx. 47, 48, and xxviii. 18, and xxx. 8, 14, 16. Joel ii. 3. Amos i. 4, 7, 10, 12, 14, and ii. 2, 5, and iv. 11, and vii. 4. Nah. i. 10. Hab. iii. 5. Zech. iii. 2, and xi. 1. Mal. iv. 1. Rev. viii. 7, and ix. 17, 18, and xi. 5, and xviii. 8, 9, 18.

⁽ⁿ⁾ Deut. xxxii. 22. Ps. xxi. 9, and lxxx. 16. Isai. ix. 19, and x. 16—18, and xxvii. 4, and xxx. 27, 30, 33. Lam. iv. 11. Ezek. xix. 12—14, and xxi. 31, 32, and xxiii. 25, and xxiv. 8—13, and xxxviii. 18—22, and xxxix. 6. Dan. vii. 11. Amos v. 6. Nah. i. 5. Zeph. i. 18, and iii. 8. Rev. xix. 9.

^(o) Lam. ii. 3, 4. Nah. i. 6.

^(p) Ps. lxxxiii. 14—17. Isai. v. 24, 25. Ezek. v. 1—8. Joel ii. 3, 5.

^(q) Ps. lxxxviii. 21. Ezek. xxxvi. 5.

^(r) Exod. xv. 7, and xxxii. 10. Ps. lxxxix. 5, and lxxxix. 46. Jer. iv. 4, and vii. 20, and xxi. 12.

^(s) Num. xi. 33. Deut. xi. 17. 2 Kin. xxii. 13, 17. Job xix. 11, and xlii. 7. Ps. ii. 12, and cvi. 40. Jer. xlv. 6.

^(t) Lam. ii. 3.

prophets in vision with fire about him. (u) At Sinai he spoke out of the midst of fire when he gave his awful, "fiery law." (v) He appeared in a pillar of fire to defend his people against their enemies. (w) In allusion to the destruction he brings on the wicked, he is called a consuming fire. (x) He is represented as *coming* in fire when he comes to call nations to account and to punish them with temporal judgments. (y) A description of fire in heaven, is an emblematical representation of the wrath of God against men. (z) In like manner the wrath (a) and passions (b) and dissensions of men (c) are called fire, and *their* wrath is said to be kindled (d) and to burn. (e) Sin, which causes men to be consumed, is called fire; (f) so is a person or a nation which consumes another; (g) and so are those lighter temporal afflictions which, without issuing in the destruction of life, produce distress. (h)

I have examined about a hundred and forty texts which evidently, according to the opinion of the best commentators, speak of fire in some of these fore-named senses. But it is to be observed that they are found chiefly in the poetic and prophetic parts of Scripture; and, except those which are found in the Revelation of John, (which is highly mystical,) they are almost entirely in the Old Testament, which was written for the Church in its infancy, says little of a future state, and chiefly treats of blessings and judgments to be enjoyed or endured on earth. It is in general extremely figurative, and conveys spiritual truth by allusions to outward ob-

jects, and reaches the heart through the medium of the senses. In the denunciation of temporal judgments against the wicked, as well as in predictions of other worldly events, it speaks of these as types of still greater things to come. Its expressions are often too vast to be confined to the occurrences to which they primarily refer; and if you would find the complete fulfilment of its predictions and denunciations, you must look beyond the bounds of the present life. When God threatens to consume the wicked with fire, (meaning primarily some earthly judgments,) the complete accomplishment must be looked for in the eternal world. And not a few of these denunciations are of such a general nature as to carry evidence on their very face that they take into view the *whole* treatment which God will render to sinners. (i) If because the prophetic and figurative parts of Scripture speak of typical judgments under the image of fire, it is concluded that no threatenings of fire will ever have a literal fulfilment, then we have no evidence of a literal advent of Christ to judge the world, or of the resurrection of the dead, or of the glorification of believers. In the same language in which these events are foretold, other events which were types of these, and far inferior, were predicted. The coming of Christ to destroy Jerusalem, and afterwards to destroy Antichrist, was foretold in the same language as his final coming. (j) But because he did not *personally* appear in the destruction of Jerusalem, and will not personally appear in the destruction of Antichrist, we do not conclude that he will not personally appear at the end of the world. All the *signs* of his coming to destroy Jerusalem, were predicted in the same words as were the signs of his final advent. (k) But because these signs were not all *literally* fulfilled before the destruction of Jerusalem, we do not conclude that they will not literally occur before the day of judgment. In the description of his coming to destroy Antichrist, he is represented as coming in the clouds of heaven, in flaming fire, attended by his saints and angels, as

(u) Ezek. i. 4, 13, 14, and x. 2—7.

(v) Exod. xxiv. 17. Deut. xviii. 16, and xxxiii. 2.

(w) Exod. iii. 2, and xiii. 21. Deut. iv. 33.

(x) Deut. ix. 3. Heb. xii. 29.

(y) Ps. l. 3, and xcvi. 3. Dan. vii. 9—11.

(z) Joel ii. 30, quoted Acts ii. 19.

(a) Isai. vii. 4.

(b) Ps. lvii. 4. Prov. xvi. 27. Hos. vii. 6, 7.

(c) Prov. xxvi. 18, 20. Luke xii. 49.

(d) Gen. xxxix. 19. Job xxxii. 2, 3, 5. Ps. cxxiv. 3. Prov. xxvi. 21.

(e) Gen. xlv. 18, et alibi.

(f) Job xxxi. 12. Isai. ix. 18, and xxxiii. 11, 12.

(g) Num. xxi. 28. Judg. ix. 15. Jer. xlviii. 45. Obad. 18. Zech. xii. 6.

(h) Deut. iv. 20, as 1 Kin. viii. 51. Ps. lxxvi. 12. Isai. xxiv. 15, and xliii. 2. Zech. xiii. 9. Rev. xvi. 8, 9.

(i) Isai. xxxiii. 14, and lxvi. 24. Perhaps also Ps. xi. 6. Isai. i. 28, 31.

(j) Mal. iv. 6. Mat. xvi. 28, with perhaps xix. 28. 2 Thes. ii. 8.

(k) Mat. xxiv.

seated on his throne, with his saints and angels ministering unto him, as having "ten thousand times ten thousand" gathered around his tribunal to be judged, as opening the books, and so forth. (*l*) And because these predictions are not to have a literal accomplishment in the destruction of Antichrist, we do not conclude that they will not be literally fulfilled in the great antitypical event.

The raising of God's people from oppression to a state of prosperity, is described as raising the dead to life, and the future conversion of sinners is called their coming out of their graves. (*m*) And because these predictions have only a figurative accomplishment in the events which they primarily respect, is it concluded that no predictions of a resurrection will ever be literally fulfilled?

The raising of God's people to a glorious state in the Church on earth, is foretold under the image of taking them up to heaven, because the former was a type of the latter. (*n*) But because these predictions were only figuratively fulfilled in the typical events, is it to be inferred that Christians will never be literally taken to heaven?

It was foretold that at the destruction of Edom, all the host of heaven should be dissolved, that the heavens should be rolled together as a scroll, that all their host should fall down as a leaf falleth from the vine. (*o*) It was foretold that at the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the earth should be "clean dissolved" and be removed like a cottage; (*p*) and at the destruction of Babylon, that the sun, moon, and stars should be darkened, that the heavens should be shaken and the earth removed out of her place. (*q*) And because these predictions, in their application to the typical events, proved only figurative, shall none which speak of the antitypical dissolution and removal of the heavens and earth be literally fulfilled?

(*l*) Dan. vii.

(*m*) Isai. xxvi. 19, with xiv. and with Ezek. xxxvii. 1, &c. Rev. xi. 11, 15, and perhaps 18, and xx. 4, 5. Perhaps Dan. xii. 2, and according to Lightfoot, John v. 25—29. Hos. vi. 2. Rom. xi. 15.

(*n*) Rev. xi. 12, and perhaps 18.

(*o*) Isai. xxxiv. 4. (*p*) Isai. xiv. 19, 20.

(*q*) Isai. xiii. 10—14.

The restoration of the Church after the Babylonish captivity, and more fully at the introduction of the Christian dispensation, (because typical of greater things,) was predicted in such glowing language as this: "Behold I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind." (*r*) But because that prediction had only a figurative accomplishment in the typical events, are we never literally to see the new heavens and new earth as plainly predicted by Peter and John? (*s*)

So, because the wicked are threatened with fire in the present world, and the threatening is here fulfilled only in a figurative sense, must we conclude that the many plain descriptions of material fire in hell are not to be understood literally? As the passing of counterfeit coin, instead of proving that no genuine currency exists, proves that it *does* exist; so these images, borrowed from the dissolution of the heavens, the raising of the dead, and the burning of the wicked, and which are primarily used to denote far inferior events, instead of disproving, really *prove* the reality of those things from which these resemblances are drawn.

I would say further, that even in the times of the Old Testament, God gave the world solid proof that it was something more than metaphorical fire that would constitute his judgments upon the wicked. He poured a deluge of material fire upon Sodom and Gomorrah. He sent from his presence real fire upon Nadab and Abihu. On two different occasions he consumed the rebels in the wilderness with fire. (*t*) And on the two captains with their bands, who came to seize Elijah, he poured elementary fire from heaven.

I have thus given the question of material fire an imperfect, but I think a candid discussion. I have fairly spread before you the principal, and indeed as far as I know, the only plausible objection against the affirmative of the question, and have answered it at length. And I think the discussion leaves the opinion which was held by all the ancients, and

(*r*) Isai. lxxv. 17, and lxxvi. 22.

(*s*) 2 Pet. iii. 7, 13. Rev. xxi. 1.

(*t*) Num. xi. 1, and xvi. 35.

has been held by most of the moderns, undisturbed, viz. that hell consists of material fire.

And is there a world of real fire in which the wicked must for ever lie? The feeble reason of man deems it too much, and cannot discover the justice of such unutterable wo. But it is because that feeble reason has never discovered the ineffable dignity of the God whom sinners have insulted and sought to destroy. The awful majesty of God will appear in nothing more than in the greatness of the punishment inflicted on his enemies.

I shall not attempt to describe this punishment of the wicked; but the

great and pious President Edwards says, that their head and eyes and bowels will be as full of fire as a red hot coal; and that this rack of bodily pain, as unutterable as it will be, will be light in comparison with the agonies of the soul under a sense of the wrath of God.

O my God, "who among us" can "dwell with devouring fire? who among us" can inhabit "everlasting burnings?" Who of us are now bound to this eternity of fire? O God, arrest them in their course. Open their eyes to see where they stand, and pluck them, O pluck them speedily as brands from the burning.

S E R M O N X.

CHORAZIN AND BETHSAIDA.

MAT. xi. 20—24.—Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not. Wo unto thee, Chorazin, wo unto thee, Bethsaida; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

THERE is a God of justice as well as of mercy. In his treatment of our world he has manifested his mercy to a degree which makes some forget that justice is one of his attributes. But the two shall reign together. When mercy is abused, justice shall avenge its wrongs. After his compassions have melted over an obstinate race for the appointed time, he will show them that he has another name than mercy,—that he has an arm which wields the thunders,—which will break in pieces his enemies "like a potter's vessel." All this was illustrated in the mission, preaching, and miracles of Christ, connected with the subsequent destruction of the Jewish nation. After the Saviour had been among them and wept over them, and in vain employed his ministry to bring them back

to God; he let loose upon them the Roman armies, which overturned their cities, dissolved their civil and ecclesiastical state, and scattered the miserable remnant with a destruction unparalleled in the history of human woes. This destruction involved Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum; and to this our text primarily refers. I shall,

I. Explain the text.

II. Consider what was the sin of these cities, and whether the same is not chargeable upon some of us.

III. Show that they who reject the Gospel incur greater guilt, and will be crushed with more intolerable wrath, than the vilest of the heathen.

I. I shall explain the text.

Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum were cities of Galilee, situated on the

sea of Tiberias, otherwise called the lake of Gennesareth. As Jesus was brought up at Nazareth, Galilee was his home and the chief scene of his public labours; and these cities in particular, in which several of his disciples lived, were the theatre of "most of his mighty works." But they "repented not" that they "might believe." Between them therefore and certain heathen cities notorious for their wickedness, he instituted a comparison. Tyre and Sidon lay on the western border of Galilee and on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean. They had grown rich by commerce; and were not only polluted with the idolatry and wickedness common to the pagan world, but were distinguished for the sins attendant on luxury. As their territory bordered on Galilee, they had many collisions with the Jews, and were on that account held by them in marked abhorrence. Sodom was one of those pagan cities in the Vale of Siddim, which in the days of Abraham were, for their abominable wickedness, destroyed by fire from heaven, and buried, with the whole valley, under the waters of the Dead Sea; "set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Between these cities and the highly favoured ones on the sea of Galilee, our Saviour instituted a comparison, and pronounced the latter more obdurately wicked and exposed to greater punishment than the former. He declares that if Tyre and Sidon had enjoyed equal means, "they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes;" and that if Sodom had enjoyed equal means, "it would have remained" to that "day." We are not from this to conclude, contrary to the many and plain declarations of Scripture, that means alone will bring the less obdurate to repentance, or that the spiritual influence which accompanies means, is so stated and regular as to sink into one of the laws of nature. In other words, our Saviour did not mean to say that dispositions no worse than those of the Tyrians and Sodomites, would, under the influence of such motives as were addressed to the Galileans, be certainly inclined to true repentance, either by the self-determining power or by the uniform influence of the Spirit. Though, standing alone,

the words would bear this construction, such a meaning is clearly excluded by the general tenour of Scripture; and the words easily admit of another interpretation. For, first, it is doubtful whether our Saviour spoke of any other repentance than that natural sorrow, and those outward expressions of it, which in the cases of Ahab and the Ninevites procured the "lengthening of" their "tranquillity." Such an effect might be produced on less hardened sinners by the natural operation of means; and this was all that was necessary for our Saviour to declare in order to prove, (the only thing which he was aiming to prove,) that the Galileans were more hardened, and therefore more guilty, than the Tyrians or the Sodomites. This construction is favoured by the fact that he says nothing of the heart, but only of repentance "in sackcloth and ashes." Upon this supposition the meaning would be: Had the inhabitants of Sodom beheld these mighty works, they would have given such visible signs of repentance and reformation, that they would not have been publicly destroyed for an example to the world; and had the Tyrians and Sidonians seen these works, they also would have been affected and reformed. Or, secondly, if our Saviour meant "repentance unto life," then he must be understood as speaking after the manner of men, according to human probabilities. Such is the ordinary coincidence between the natural and supernatural order of divine operations, that means are much more likely to prove effectual with less stubborn sinners, than with those whose conscience is "seared with a hot iron." You must take into consideration the scope of the discourse, which was, not to settle any question respecting the powers of man and the work of the Spirit, but merely to show that those Gospel despisers were more obdurate and guilty than the worst of the heathen.

Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum were exalted to heaven in point of temporal prosperity and spiritual privileges. But for their abuse of these mercies they were to be cast "down to hell;" first, by that temporal destruction which was to be brought upon them by the Romans, and secondly, by the literal im-

mersion of their inhabitants in the lake of fire. Let us consider,

II. What was the special sin of these cities, and whether the same is not chargeable upon some of us.

The special sin of these cities lay in resisting the word and miracles of Christ, by refusing to repent and believe on him. In former ages he had sent his servants, but now he had come himself,—and by the holiness of his life, by the truths which he taught, by the miracles he performed, and by the fulfilment in him of many ancient predictions, he gave abundant proofs of his messiahship and removed all excuse for unbelief. He laid before them his heavenly credentials. He assailed them with the authority of the eternal God. He besieged them with the most tender and pressing calls. He preached in their synagogues; he healed in their streets; he brought his sacred presence into their houses. But they were too much in love with sin and the world to repent and believe on him. Their aversion to the holiness of his life and ministry closed their eyes upon the proofs of his divine mission. Some of them were stupid enough to remain infidels; others were speculatively convinced, but still disobeyed. None of them would quit their sins for a Saviour.

This was the sin of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. And is not the same sin chargeable upon some of us? Only two things are necessary to constitute the same sin; the presence of Christ and the rejection of his Gospel. As to the first, Christ is present among us in his word and ordinances, by his ministers and his Spirit. He is as really walking our streets as he did the streets of Capernaum. The voice which you hear from Sabbath to Sabbath is the voice of Christ. "He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me." His marvellous works also are before you, in his dealings with the nations according to the voice of prophecy, in his preservation of the Church, in his conquering and transforming power upon the hearts of men. That one so obstinately blind should ever see,—that one given up to selfishness and idolatry, should ever submit as a child to the government of a heavenly parent, and make his own happiness subordinate to

the glory of God, is as marvellous an exhibition of power as any of the miracles wrought in the streets of Capernaum. The continuance of the Church for eighteen hundred years by a constant succession of such wonders, presents to your view a mass of proof which the Galileans never had.

One of the two things then, necessary to constitute the sin of Capernaum, actually exists among us. And is not the other to be found? Do none in a Gospel land,—do none in this favoured town reject a Saviour? There are some unhappy men who with as much light as the Galileans possessed, deny that Jesus of Nazareth is the Saviour of the world. What can such people allege in extenuation of their infidelity, more than the infidels of Chorazin and Bethsaida could? They stand naked to all the tremendous woes denounced against that wicked people. And are there none else who reject a Saviour? What do they who deny his divinity, and believe only in a Saviour as different from the true as God is different from a creature? What do they who deny his atonement? Is not this precisely "denying the Lord that bought them?" But are there none who speculatively believe every essential truth and yet reject a Saviour? What is it to reject a Saviour? It is to neglect to make use of him as the Saviour of sinners. It is not to be subdued to repentance by his authority,—not to carry to him a broken heart to be healed,—not to reach forth to him as one appointed "to bring out the prisoners from the prison,"—not heartily to cast a guilty soul on him as the only ground of pardon,—not to be melted into gratitude and love by his unbounded goodness and mercy. Those who do not these things, do as really reject a Saviour as any of the inhabitants of Capernaum. However moral in their outward deportment or amiable in their social feelings, if they are not thus "with" Christ they are "against" him. There are no neutrals here. Selfishness, pride, idolatry, and unbelief, (the four cardinal sins of depraved man,) remain in full vigour. Could a line be drawn through this assembly, every unregenerate man in the house would fall on this side. The most amiable and moral among the

youth, who have not been "born again," would fall on this side. They are all living in the full rejection of Christ. Though they speculatively believe the Bible, though their external deportment is in some measure regulated by his laws, their hearts do not receive him. Though in certain views of his mercy they seem to love him, yet in his whole character they oppose and reject him. They reject him while, by his word and ordinances, by his ambassadours and Spirit, he is walking their streets, is performing his mighty works before their eyes and pouring his inviting voice upon their ear.

Is not this sin of Capernaum chargeable upon many in this once favoured town? (a) Time has been when more piety sanctified this ground than perhaps any other equal spot on earth. The town was planted by prayer and watered with pious tears. A long list of holy ancestors and eminently godly ministers shone here as lights in the world, and prayed for an unborn posterity with their dying breath. The Gospel which they loved and preached has come down to us. From our childhood we have "known the holy Scriptures." We have heard the word preached; we have stood in the place where prayers were wont to be made; we have seen a bleeding Saviour set forth in the consecrated elements; we have seen his wonders here displayed "in souls renewed and sins forgiven." Through Sabbaths, through dispensations of providence, through the tears of pious parents, we have heard his entreating voice. With all the dignity and compassion of a God he has been calling and working in our streets. With infinite authority he has been demanding our hearts. And yet how many of us have been nothing better than baptised heathen. Many are found among us who pour contempt on the doctrines of grace and laugh at the threatenings of the Almighty. Many reduce the Saviour, though not to a level with malefactors like the Jews, yet to a level with the creatures which he has made. At the very moment that Jesus of Nazareth is walking the streets of our Capernaum, there are found men daring

enough to make these streets ring with the names of the eternal God. Even children, when they ought to be at their evening prayers, are lisping out these dreaded names and burdening the air with their horrid oaths. And is not the sin of Capernaum found upon us?

III. I am to show that they who reject the Gospel incur greater guilt, and will be crushed with more intolerable wrath, than the vilest of the heathen.

The delegation of Christ is the greatest thing that God has ever done,—the most wonderful display of himself that he has ever made,—and has imposed the highest obligations on men. For so glorious a Personage to stoop so low to save a world of enemies,—to come down from infinite heights to labour and bleed and die for them,—bringing with him all the dignity and authority of the eternal God; and then to be rejected and treated worse than any other being; this is the wickedest act that ever was perpetrated in the universe. There is more of sin in this opposition to the person and kingdom of Christ, in this resistance of the Holy Spirit, in this struggle against light, in this deliberate and wilful contempt of divine authority, in this enormous ingratitude, than in any of the idolatry of Tyre and Sidon,—than in any of the brutality of Sodom and Gomorrah. The greater the talents committed to us, the greater are our obligations, and the greater the guilt of violating them. "That servant which knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." Though in point of natural depravity all are nearly on a level, yet those who live under the Gospel, have an opportunity to exercise their corruptions in a far more aggravated form. Hence they who for many years reject the Gospel, become more hardened than the heathen, and cannot be brought to repentance without a greater exertion of power. This is the precise sentiment contained in the text. Of course those who go down to death from a Gospel

(a) Boston.

land, will experience a more aggravated doom than the vilest of the pagan world. "Sodom," says one, "the stain of mankind, a city soaked in the dregs of villany; yet this hell upon earth shall have a milder hell at the last day of judgment, than unbelieving Capernaum." Yes, my hearers, those filthy creatures who surrounded the door of Lot, shall be kings and priests compared to those who have waded to hell through a Saviour's blood. The sin accompanying pagan darkness is comparatively nothing. "The times of this ignorance God winked at." But "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation and shall condemn it; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold a greater than Solomon is here." Other things being equal, the future misery of the wicked will be in proportion to the privileges they have abused. Every Sabbath, every sermon will sink them lower. Ten thousand times will they wish that they had never seen a Bible nor heard the name of Christ,—that they had been born and died in pagan darkness. The remembrance of sacred seasons in the house of God will fill them with eternal agony. They will "mourn at the last when" their "flesh and" their "body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction and my heart despised reproof."

Gospel despisers, especially if their privileges are very great, are particularly exposed to *sudden* destruction. It is an awful maxim of divine government, "He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Thus it was with those cities of Galilee. Thus it was with that whole generation of Jews who rejected a Saviour. Thus it was with the Egyptians in the days of Moses. Thus it was with the rebels in the wilderness. And thus it will be with many in these days who have been

visited with the calls of the Spirit, or live in places pre-eminently favoured with the divine presence. While some of this description are left to stand, like the blasted fig-tree by the way-side, only to ripen for a fiercer flame, many others, like the fig-tree in the vineyard, will be suddenly cut down. "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and some men they follow after." Some are punished here for an example to the world, while others are left to receive their whole recompense in a future state. But sooner or later it shall be more intolerable for all Gospel despisers than for the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah.

I tremble for this town. It has been exalted to heaven in point of privileges. Repeatedly has Jesus of Nazareth walked these streets with power and great glory. His miracles of grace were displayed here in the days of our fathers, and have been repeated in this generation; miracles as convincing as those which were wrought in Capernaum,—abundantly convincing to hearts not harder than "the nether millstone." And yet there are some who condemn all these wonders as the reveries of madness,—who with all this light deny the necessity of a change of heart, and scoff at the idea of experimental religion; and with hearts as bad as this, dream that they are fit for heaven without a change, and are even to be justified by their good works. All this in streets which have been often sanctified by a Saviour's presence. All this by the very graves of our sainted fathers.

And did you dream that God would let you alone? Did you dream that after all this abuse of the Gospel, he would leave you still in tranquillity? Did you hope to enjoy many happy years with the gay companions who make life merry in reproaching the doctrines and operations of the Holy Ghost? Indulge no such vain imaginations. What is it that you see and hear? Earthquakes, volcanoes, pestilence, wars. This is the day long since foretold, in which God was to arise "to shake terribly the earth." He is speaking loudly and intelligibly to the nations, to this land, to this town, to each of you. He has not done. He will speak yet again.

He will speak through your souls, and drive them trembling through your bodies to the pit, if you continue to reject his Son. It is too late for any sinners on earth to expect to spend happy years in carnal security. Those days are past. And now you must come in quickly and take shelter in the pavillion of the Most High, or be swept away by the rising floods. Those of you who have had the highest privileges stand in the greatest danger. Those of you who are connected with the pious and have resisted all their tears,—those of you who have been called by the divine Spirit and have stifled his convictions,—

you of all men stand the fairest chance for speedy destruction : and when you fall, you fall into deeper ruin than any others of Adam's race. By the mercies of God awake out of sleep. Haste, "escape for" your lives, "look not behind" you. While you linger the sentence of death proceeds. And then eternity must be spent in lamenting, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and" I am "not saved." Could a Saviour weep again, I think he would weep over you. And "why will ye die?" "Turn ye, turn ye," O my flesh and blood, "for why will ye die?"

S E R M O N X I.

HOLDING THE TRUTH IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

ROM. i. 18.—For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

ONE great object of the apostle in this Epistle, was to establish the doctrine of justification by faith alone through the righteousness of Christ, in distinction from justification by works. Having laid down this truth in the preceding verse, he commences his argument to support it in the words of our text. The course he pursues is to divide the world into two great classes, Jews and Gentiles, and to prove separately that they are sinners and under condemnation and in need of pardon, and not to be justified but by grace. He begins with the Gentiles, and enters on the argument as relates to them in the words I have read. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness." "*The wrath of God is revealed from heaven.*" It is clearly revealed to Jews and Christians in his written word and in the judgments which he inflicts on all nations; and it is *more obscurely* revealed to the

heathen by light transmitted by tradition or reflected from the Church, and by the dispensations of his providence. "*Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;*"—against all impiety towards God and all injustice towards man. By ungodliness in this place is generally understood sins against the *first* table of the law, and by unrighteousness, transgressions against the *second*. "*Who hold the truth in unrighteousness.*" By the plain revelation of God made to Noah and handed down by tradition to all his descendants, added to luminous exhibitions of God in the works of creation and providence, all nations had truth enough conveyed to them to leave them without excuse. This truth the heathen world are accused of holding in unrighteousness. The original word translated *hold*, sometimes signifies merely to *retain*, and sometimes to *restrain*, to *suppress*, to *hold as in prison*. They are said either to *retain* the truth in unrighteousness, or to *suppress*, re-

strain, or *imprison* the truth in unrighteousness. By unrighteousness here, I apprehend, is meant sin in general, as well against God as against man. John says, "All unrighteousness is sin." The converse of the proposition is true; all sin is unrighteousness. The Gentiles not only *retained* the truth and yet followed their idolatry and vices, but they *suppressed* the voice of conscience; they rebelled against the monitor within; they rose against their convictions and subjected them to their appetites and passions; they held the truth as a prisoner whose influence they feared; they shut it up in the dungeon of their own depraved hearts; they kept it confined as a dreaded and hated master now brought under their power.

Against whom is the wrath of God revealed? Against "men who hold the truth in unrighteousness." Where are such men to be found? In the text the charge is expressly brought against all the heathen nations. The wrath of God is then revealed from heaven against the whole heathen world, (while they remain heathen,) because they "hold the truth in unrighteousness." Is this the fearful state of the heathen? What then shall be said of the unrighteous under the full blaze of Gospel light? In a sense far more emphatic and awful, the wrath of God is revealed against all in a land of Bibles who hold the truth in unrighteousness. This is the point of view in which the declaration immediately concerns us. The object of this sermon will be to inquire, *who they are in a Gospel land that hold the truth in unrighteousness.*

This becomes to us a most solemn inquiry, because the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all such; and indeed wrath far more intense than is pointed against the heathen. Mark the expression even as it is applied to the latter. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men *who* hold the truth in unrighteousness." It is *because* they hold the truth in unrighteousness that wrath is revealed against their unrighteousness and ungodliness.

It becomes then a question of great and solemn concern, *who they are in a Gospel land that hold the truth in unrighteousness.* The obvious answer is,

All that are unrighteous or ungodly. It is plainly implied in the text that all who are unrighteous or ungodly even in the heathen world, where the truth is so little known, are guilty of this sin. The guilt of holding the truth in unrighteousness is obviously ascribed to all to whom ungodliness and unrighteousness are imputable. And even if the text had not been so explicit, it would have been evident from the nature of things, that the ungodly and unrighteous hold the truth in unrighteousness, *provided they know the truth at all.* There is no way to screen any ungodly man in a Gospel land from this charge, but by proving that he has less knowledge and less means of knowledge than the heathen.

The grossly ignorant and the infidel are by no means exempted. The ignorant are not more ignorant than the heathen; and the infidel, while in common with pagans he disowns the light which comes by Jesus Christ, possesses at least as much knowledge as they. He has all the light which they have, increased by reflections from the Revelation which he denies. Thus both the ignorant and the infidel possess competent knowledge to support the charge against them of holding the truth in unrighteousness. And they both fall under the charge in another sense. Both hold the truth *bound*, and prevent it from exerting its proper influence upon them. For in the first place, it is the wickedness of their hearts which prevents the truth from entering to produce knowledge in one case and faith in the other. Were not men depraved, they could not remain ignorant of God in a land of Bibles, nor infidels against all the decisive proofs which support the claims of Revelation. In the second place, those traces of divine truth which are actually made on the minds of the ignorant and unbelieving, are not suffered to influence them. They keep under their convictions. They refuse to obey even the truth which they believe. Thus they repress, restrain, and as it were imprison the truth in the dungeon of their own depraved hearts. Neither ignorance nor infidelity then free any who live under the Gospel, from the charge of that sin against which the wrath of God is revealed.

We are left at liberty then to return

to the former position, that all the unrighteous and ungodly in a Gospel land are guilty of holding the truth in unrighteousness. The only question which remains to be answered is, Who are the unrighteous and ungodly? The unrighteous are they who neglect the duties which they owe to *man*; the ungodly are they who neglect the duties which they owe to *God*. Let us consider these two classes separately.

1. The unrighteous are they who neglect the duties which they owe to *man*. Not only the murderer, the thief, and the robber, but the speculator, the man of hard bargains, the wretch who, unsatisfied with the profits of a fair trade, takes advantage of your ignorance or necessities to extort from you what belongs not to him. The foul-mouthed defamer, the backbiter, the tale-bearer, the stirrer-up of strife, is an unrighteous man. The liar, the deceiver, the man whose words are not a fair index of his heart, is an unrighteous man. The neglecter of the relative duties,—the husband, wife, parent, or child, who does not faithfully perform the duties resulting from these relations, is unrighteous. The man who does not in his general conduct treat all other men as he in similar circumstances could reasonably wish to be treated himself, is an unrighteous man. This is the golden rule. "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." The man who *habitually* violates this rule, in word or deed, towards a single individual of the human race, though he may treat all other men justly, is in the eye of God an unrighteous man. "Whosoever" habitually offends "in one point,—is guilty of all." Occasional slips the best may make; but these do not entitle them to the denomination of unrighteous. It is *habitual* character which gives the name, and habitual transgression in regard to a single object is sufficient. The man who is just to all men but one, and generally steals from him, is a thief. The man who speaks truth to all men but one, and generally lies to him, is a liar. So the man who does to all men as he would have them do to him, except to one individual, and habitually injures him in word or deed, is in God's sight an unrighteous man.

Thus far I have spoken of outward conduct only. But something more is necessary than outward conduct to fulfil the duties which we owe to man. *Love* is comprehended in these duties, and is the real soul of them all. To be righteous in the sight of God, we must habitually be free from malice and revenge and aspirings after precedence; not "desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." We must "be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another;" "in lowliness of mind" esteeming others "better than" ourselves; not seeking our own, but "another's wealth;" not looking "every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." In a word, we must habitually feel towards *all* other men as we in similar circumstances could reasonably desire them to feel towards us. If there is a human being whom we habitually exclude from this regard, we are unrighteous and enemies of God. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, [any one of the human race,] he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, [no matter who that brother is,] how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" The man then who habitually cherishes ill-will towards the greatest enemy he has on earth,—who in the general state of his mind would be "glad at calamities" that should befall him,—in other words, whose heart is not habitually expanded with genuine benevolence towards every individual of the human race, whether friend or foe, is an unrighteous man and holds the truth in unrighteousness. This answers the question, Who are the unrighteous? But another question full as important remains.

2. Who are the ungodly? They are they who neglect their duty to God. Were it possible for a man to perform all his duties to his neighbour and yet neglect those which he owes to God, he would still be an ungodly man and would hold the truth in unrighteousness. All who take God's name in vain; all who neglect or profane his worship; all who cast "off fear" and restrain "prayer;" all who habitually disobey one of his commands,—are ungodly and hold the truth in unrighteousness. They who do

not love God, who do not love *all* his perfections, who do not love his holiness and justice; they who do not love his government, his sovereignty,—love to find themselves and all creatures in his hands and at his disposal; they who do not love his law,—do not love holiness and hate sin; they who do not depend on him and trust in him and delight in him and thank and praise him,—are ungodly. But I have a still harder test to apply. They who do not love God *better than all other beings or things*,—who do not love him better than father or mother, wife or children, houses or lands, or life itself; they who have not the spirit of a martyr, and are not ready to lay down their lives for his sake; they who do not feel this temper habitually; they who are not actually *governed* by it in their general pursuits and aims,—who do not find their love to God strong enough habitually to resist all temptations,—to carry them forward in his service through all self-denials and sacrifices,—strong enough to rise above every other motive, and to bring them to act as his servants,—as those who are labouring for him and not for themselves,—that is, to act from hour to hour from a direct regard to his authority and glory;—they who are not brought to all this, are not the friends but the enemies of God,—are ungodly and hold the truth in unrighteousness.

Under these two heads is involved all that relates to the Christian character. Nothing distinct from these two branches can be added. But it may be useful to present a few particulars by themselves in addition. I observe then that they hold the truth in unrighteousness who, while they speculatively believe the truth, do not love it,—who do not cordially delight in those doctrines which are the most offensive to the carnal heart. These are the doctrines in which the true character of God and the essential principles of his government are expressed; and not to love these is not to love God. These are the truths which are the most trying to a selfish heart, and will best show whether we are under the dominion of that evil principle. We may delight in many things relating to God and be selfish still. *These truths are the grand tests of character.* If we love not these, but only the goodness and

mercy of God, we are still under the power of selfishness; we are still ungodly and hold the truth in unrighteousness.

Again, they who will not yield credit to the truth and admit it into their minds when it is fairly presented before them, may in one sense be said to hold the truth in unrighteousness. They suppress and bind it as a prisoner, and prevent it from exerting any control over them.

Again, they who admit the truth into their minds by the assent of their understandings, but do not yield to their convictions, hold the truth in unrighteousness. They who stifle the voice of conscience and rush into sin in spite of its warnings, suppress and bind the truth. They who speculatively believe, but do not yield to the truth by genuine repentance and faith; they who have many serious thoughts, many calls of providence, many secret motions of the Spirit; who attend stately on the preaching of the word, are frequently affected under sermons, and after all refuse to submit, and grieve away the Spirit, and remain unregenerate and enemies of God; these are the men of all men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. These go beyond all others in coupling a clear knowledge and sense of truth with unholy feelings. These go beyond all others in resisting, repressing, and chaining the truth, so that it can have no influence on their hearts and little on their lives. There is not a class of men on earth against whom the wrath of God is so terribly revealed. These speculative believers, who are always in the house of God, who hear so many calls, who have so many serious impressions, and yet remain unhumiliated, impenitent, and unconverted, are the very men of whom it is said, that “it shall be more tolerable for—Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for” them.

In short, to “hold fast the form of sound words—in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus,” is the basis of all holiness; while to “hold the truth in unrighteousness,” is the root of all sin and the foundation of all ruin.

My dear hearers, I have chosen this subject with an anxious desire that it may reach the hearts of all of you who are moral and amiable and useful mem-

bers of society, and speculative believers, and constant attendants in the house of God, and attentive hearers of sermons, and still remain unregenerate, prayerless, and enemies of God. You have some concern to get knowledge; I commend you for that: but of what avail will all your knowledge be without yielding your hearts to the obedience of the truth? It will only serve to aggravate your punishment. You are great advocates for orthodoxy; I commend you for that: but it will not be asked so much in the day of judgment what your creed was, as whether you cordially *loved* and *obeyed* the truth. Think not that your orthodoxy will save you without a heart united to God, without being washed and purged in the blood of Christ. You frequent the house of God; I commend you for that: but alas you come and go, and come and go, none the better for your attendance here. Will hearing sermons save you? Will being earnest supporters of an orthodox establishment, save you? My dear hearers, you pronounce the Gospel important by attending on its ministrations: why then do you not obey it? Why are you not deeply convicted of sin? Why are you not trembling in view of that judgment which is just at the door? Why do you not fall down at the feet of Christ and cry with many tears, Lord save me or I perish? Why do you not come up *at once* to the resolution, never to rest another moment

till you find rest in Christ? to seek him night and day, (let the world go where it will,) until you find him? But as you are, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against you; for of all men you are they who pre-eminently hold the truth in unrighteousness. Some of you who answer this description may be in the Church: but whether in the Church or out, the revelation of divine wrath is more dreadful against you than against other men. Every sermon which you have heard only aggravates your guilt. Every accession to your knowledge only heightens the wrath revealed. O rest no longer contented with coming to the house of God and going away as you came. Remember that you have a deep and eternal interest at stake on the truths you hear. When will you awake from this fatal lethargy? Think not to wait for God to come to you; you must arise and go to him, and with all the agony of prayer seek his blessing. Why do you linger? Flee,—haste,—escape for your lives. While you delay, the wrath revealed is waxing more intense every hour. Let this be the day; let this be the moment. And from this instant let nothing be important to you but the kingdom of Christ and the salvation of the soul. O if we could see you thus! But if you will not turn, I would send you away with this label written upon your forehead, *This is the man who holds the truth in unrighteousness.* Amen.

SERMON XII.

TO WHOM AND WHY THE GOSPEL IS HID.

2 COR. iv. 3, 4.—But if our Gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them.

CHRIST is the centre of all the predictions and doctrines of the Old Testament and the New. He and his Gospel, and the moral government which he undertook to support, are the grand subjects of the Bible. He is the author of all revelation. He sent the prophets, he came himself, he commissioned the

apostles and evangelists to speak and write. He is therefore emphatically styled, (though not for this reason only,) "The Word of God." Christ is the author and subject of all revelation.

As such he "is the image of God,"—"the brightness of" the Father's "glory and the express image of his person." That which is called "the glorious Gospel of Christ," is indeed the most glorious manifestation of God that was ever made. It holds out to creatures a perfect image of God, that awakens love or hatred accordingly as men love or hate the divine Original. The Gospel which fills the Old Testament and the New, is the most wonderful arrangement that divine wisdom and benevolence ever made. God is more seen in the glorious work of redemption there unfolded, than in all his other works. Into this wondrous plan "the angels desire to look," that they may behold the most resplendent glory of their Creator.

This is the brilliant sun which has scattered the shades of pagan darkness and illumined the world with the knowledge of God. Wherever this sun has shone, the day has dawned; wherever it shines not, midnight still holds its dark domain.

Among those who are surrounded with this heavenly light, none fail to see it but those who are wickedly and fatally blind. "If our Gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

It is the grand policy of Satan, who is called "the prince of this world," to prevent men from seeing the glory of the Gospel and applying to this remedy. With him and his legions the ministers of Christ have constantly to contend. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." The great aim of Satan is to blind the minds of men, "lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ—should shine unto them." But he succeeds only with

those who are destined to perish. "If our Gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost." The text affords this plain

Doctrine, that "the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ" "is hid" to none but to those "that are lost."

It is now hid only to those who at present are lost, in the sense in which all Christless sinners are lost. It is finally hid only to those who are finally, and eternally lost. "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God." The great decree of heaven, which all earth and hell cannot annul or alter, is written in these words: "He that believeth not shall be damned." "If ye believe not that I am he ye shall die in your sins."

The propriety of this sentence rests on two considerations: first, that unbelief is most unreasonable and wicked in itself; secondly, that it excludes men from the only remedy which God has provided.

1. Unbelief is most unreasonable and wicked in itself. Men do not reject the Gospel from any want of evidence. They believe a thousand things on far less evidence. There is incomparably less evidence in favour of those histories which they believe; and the Bible would command their unwavering credence had they no motives to reject it. They reject it on account of the holiness and justice of its doctrines and precepts; the very thing which ought to convince them that it is divine. That which is the grand proof of its truth, is the very reason why they reject it. Their unbelief therefore is most unreasonable and wicked.

These remarks apply not only to infidels, but to all who disbelieve in their heart,—who do not realize and cordially approve of the truths of the Gospel. Whether they reject the Gospel speculatively or only in their heart, the grand reason is this: the Bible exhibits a moral Governour which they hate, and holds up truths relating to him which disturb their conscience and alarm their fears. Their hearts are "enmity against God." They say to him, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." And we know how hard it is to persuade men to believe what they

are unwilling should be true. The apostle speaks of the man of sin "whose coming is—with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved;" implying that the lying arts of the enemies of religion can deceive none but those who hate the truth. If such a God and such truths were not held up in the Bible, but a deity and doctrines agreeable to the carnal heart, there would not be an infidel on earth,—except indeed among the good.

The greatness of the sin of unbelief appears in this, that it opposes all the manifestations of God which are made in the Scriptures; and it is an opposition which arises wholly from the evil temper of the heart. Unbelievers are described by the apostle as "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them because of the blindness of their heart."

That they are opposed to the moral Governour of the world and to the truths which relate to him, is the grand cause of unbelief. But it is a complex cause, and comprehends several simple causes, some of which I will endeavour to explain.

First, men reject the Bible because it *condemns* them. It reproves their sins and disturbs their conscience. A book that does this is an uncomfortable companion, and they must get rid of it to preserve their peace. They complain of the want of evidence, but this is not the difficulty. There is light enough; but they turn from the light because it reproves them. What says our Saviour? "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And *this* is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men *loved darkness* rather than light *because their deeds were evil*. For every one that *doth evil hateth the light*, neither cometh to the light *lest his deeds should be reprov'd*."

I have always considered it a strong proof of the divinity of the Scriptures, that they describe the operations of the heart and the springs of human action with that matchless precision which shows them to have been written by him who perfectly knew the heart.

The passage just quoted is an instance of this. What man that knows any thing of his own heart will not acknowledge, that the opposition which he at any time has made to the Bible arose from a consciousness that it condemned him? He turned away from the light "lest his deeds should be reprov'd."

Secondly, men reject the Bible because it *alarms their fears*. It speaks of a judgment to come. It speaks of eternal punishment. It speaks of God's being "angry with the wicked every day." These things spoil their peace and spread an awful gloom over the world like that which forebodes the funeral of nature. O what a relief to find that the Bible is a forgery, and that the world may lie down to sleep again. Remove that single word *hell* from the sacred page, and you take away one half of the causes of infidelity at once. A universalist preacher has been known to convert half of the infidels of a town in a single evening, and to turn them into loud advocates for the Bible. The *spite* with which the Bible is assailed, shows that the assailants are afraid of it. If they did not fear it they would let it alone.

Thirdly, men reject the Bible because it requires them to give up sins and idols which they are loth to abandon. They love the world supremely. They love their gains, and love to acquire them in a way not altogether compatible with loving their neighbour as themselves. They love to be respected by worldly men and to enjoy their society,—two things which they are not willing to renounce for religion. They hear the Bible say, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." They hear the Bible say, "Come out from among them and be ye separate." They hear the Bible condemn those who love "the praise of men more than the praise of God." They see at once that the Bible and their idols are in direct opposition to each other. The one or the other must be abandoned. They cannot part with their idols, and so they renounce the Bible.

Fourthly, men reject the Bible because it requires them to perform duties which they do not relish. It requires them not only to abandon objects and pursuits which they love, but to

engage in employments which they hate. It requires them to pray in their closets and families, to lead a life of devotion, to associate with the pious, to keep under every inordinate affection, and to obey all the requirements of both law and Gospel. Such a course appears to them as gloomy as a hermitage. It would relieve them from the burdensome obligation could they nullify the divine authority of the Bible. All the corruptions of their nature therefore are engaged on the side of infidelity.

These are the leading reasons why men reject the Bible. They reject it because it condemns them, because it alarms their fears, because it requires them to abandon what they love and to practise what they hate; in a word, because it exhibits a moral Governour whom they dislike, and truths relating to him which disturb their peace. The grand source of infidelity is a depraved heart. There is evidence enough to convince men if their hearts were not opposed. Infidelity is therefore as really an expression of a wicked heart as theft and murder. It is one of the very greatest manifestations of depravity. It opposes most directly all the exhibitions which God has made of his moral character and government. No distinct light is cast upon either of these but in his word. The works of nature show power and skill, but, standing alone, cast little light upon his moral character, and none at all upon his moral government. Infidelity opposes him as a holy and just King, and would make him a mere architect without a character. The unreasonableness and wickedness of unbelief is then one cause why the decree has gone forth, "He that believeth not shall be damned." But,

2. Another reason is, that it necessarily excludes men from the only remedy provided. While it betrays the greatness of the disease, it prevents the application of the cure. Christ is the only Saviour from sin, and faith in him is the only principle that can purify the heart. While men reject the Saviour they cannot be delivered from sin; all their native opposition to God remains; and they are no more capable of enjoying the happiness of heaven, than a man is to enjoy a feast which he loathes, or to enjoy the stillness of retirement while

rent with a whirlwind of passion. To one who is thus unqualified for heaven, it would be preposterous to apply the blood of Christ to save him from other punishment than his evil temper inflicts. It would be like letting out a devil from the positive punishments of his prison to roam through heaven with his devilish temper still. It is impossible to make such a man happy, and it would be preposterous to shield him from the full misery which an enemy of God deserves, and still more preposterous to sacrifice the life of God's only Son to shield him. An unbeliever therefore cannot find Christ a Saviour either from sin or misery. He is necessarily excluded from the only remedy that God has provided. Some remedy all nations have thought needful. Those nations who have not known the Gospel, have resorted to a thousand expedients to pacify the gods. They have submitted to self-inflicted tortures; they have shed the blood of their children; they have performed a million of expensive rites. But all could not satisfy a disturbed conscience. The only remedy which the wisdom of heaven has provided, is that which the Bible unfolds; and that remedy is thrown away by those who reject the Gospel. It depends therefore on no arbitrary decree of God, but on a necessity growing out of the nature of things, that he who "believeth not shall be damned."

APPLICATION.

1. Are there any present who deliberately doubt the divinity of the Scriptures? I conjure you by all that is desirable in immortal life, by all that is sacred in the authority of God, to bring this question to a speedy decision. If the Bible is true, "he that doubteth is damned." Whether it is true or not, is then a question of infinite importance. The Bible claims to be the word of God. It has been believed to be such by the wisest and best men in all ages. Its claims have been critically examined by the great, the learned, the good. They tell you that the evidences are abundant and overflowing; that if you will candidly examine you too will certainly be convinced. This book claims to reveal to man the will of God and the destinies of eternity. It tells you of an eternal heaven and an eternal hell.

You knew that you must soon die. If then there is one chance in a thousand that the Bible will prove true at last, the subject is of more importance to you than a million of worlds. This book claims to have come from the lips of God, and solemnly declares that unless you believe, you shall lose heaven and shriek away an eternity among devils and damned spirits. And can you lie down to sleep without deciding whether it is true or not? Can you indulge *doubts* which you know will prove fatal if the book is true, and yet rest easy without proving it false? Can you lay the question aside among those indifferent matters which are to be called up at a leisure hour? The man that does this is mad. O my hearers, if you have one particle of reason left, quit your business, quit your food, quit your sleep, to decide this vital question. If you cannot prove the Bible true, never rest another moment till you have proved it false. "Halt" no longer "between two opinions." It is distraction to rest in the smallest degree of unbelief until you have proved the Bible false without a remaining doubt,—until you are so confident that, without a fear, you can commit that great deceiver of the world to the flames and deliberately defy its threatenings,—until you can, (as Dr. Doddridge challenges you to do,) draw blood from your veins, and with that vital stream write an instrument under the eye of heaven, calling God to witness, that on such a day of such a year you solemnly renounced the Bible, that you trod its threatenings and promises in the dust and then committed the vile imposture to the flames. Why do you tremble? I would not tremble to do this with the koran of Mahomet or the vedas of the Brahmins. If the Bible is false it ought to be treated thus; and if it is true it ought to be believed and obeyed. If you have the soul of a man, from this moment let it be your chief concern to decide this great question, and either solemnly reject or solemnly and heartily believe.

2. I will apply the subject to those who, though they do not deliberately doubt, are yet stupid in sin. This subject has more to do with you than you imagine. Think you that none but infidels disbelieve? Multitudes live ha-

bitually under the secret influence of infidelity, who would shudder to be called infidels. In this class are included all that are stupid in sin. They *do not* believe the word of God. One leading truth, firmly and universally believed, would rouse a world. Yes, let any one of twenty leading truths fix its hold on the faith of mankind, and the world would start from their sleep as at the sound of the last trumpet. Those men who are singing along the road of life without ever lifting a prayer to heaven,—*do* they believe that there is a God who is angry with them? that they are already condemned to eternal woe? that the Son of God laid down his life for their redemption? that in a few days they shall be in heaven or hell? Do they believe one of these things? If they did they *could not* live thus. My hearers, what does this mean? Is the Bible true? or is it false? Do you say it is true, and sleep on? Then you do not believe what you say. My hearers, is the Bible true? or is it false? The secret infidelity of your heart answers, It is doubtful. Doubtful? and can you rest till the doubt is solved? Can you rest till you have *proved* the Bible *false*? Can you rest while there is one chance in a thousand that it will prove true at last? Did you never know that on one dreadful page of that book it is written, "He that believeth not shall be damned"? Is then damnation so light a thing? Can you sleep with that dreadful book in your house till you have proved it false?

My hearers, is the Bible true? or is it false? *It is true.* Let this be assumed, and consequences result enough to shake a world. Then there is an *eternity*:—then there is a *judgment day*:—then there is a *heaven* and a *hell*:—then every soul in this house will be in one or the other in a few days,—never, never to come out. And can you sleep still? Sleep? No, they are *dead*. "O that my head were waters and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people."

3. Let me address the subject to those who, though not stupid, have not yet believed with the heart. What a heart is that, my dear hearer, which, in full view of the God of the Bible and of the

Saviour who there entreats, can reject it all? can reject it even under the agonies of guilt, with "hell naked before" you "and destruction" without a "covering"? What *can* keep the heart from consenting to the Gospel when the head assents to its truth? The same causes that have been assigned for infidelity itself. It hates the moral Governour of the world and the truths which relate to him. It hates the soul-humbling terms of the Gospel. My dear hearers, who see your guilt and danger but have not cordially accepted Christ, you are as real unbelievers, in the Gospel sense, as open infidels. Against you, as well as against them, lies that tremendous decree, "He that believeth not shall be damned." The glories of the Gospel are still hidden from you: and it concerns you as much as infidels to know that "if our Gospel

be hid it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." You are altogether to blame for your unbelief. Put away that sin, I beseech you. Accept the offered salvation without delay. Infinite pains have been taken to provide it for you, and you are under every obligation which kindness and authority can impose, to accept it with gratitude and joy. Reject no longer that blessed Saviour who wept and bled for you. No longer throw away your life. No longer hold out stubbornly against the pity and the pleadings of heaven. Give your heart to Christ this moment. This moment love him and his blessed Father, and take God and heaven for your own. Amen.

S E R M O N X I I I.

AND YET THERE IS ROOM.

LUKE xiv. 22.—And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.

IN this parable the Gospel and its invitations are represented under the figure of a man who made a great supper and bade many. At supper time he sent his servant to say to them that were bidden, "Come, for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse." One had bought a piece of ground and must needs go and see it. Another had bought five yoke of oxen and must go and prove them. Another had married a wife and could not come. When the master of the house heard these excuses he was angry, and commanded the servant to "go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in—the poor and the maimed and the halt and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said

unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

This parable had primary reference to the Jews. For many ages God had invited that nation by his prophets, by his word, and by his Spirit. At length he sent his Son to say to them, "Come, for all things are now ready." But so attached were they to the world and to their own self-righteous course, that they would not come. Christ was then directed to gather the houseless children of misfortune,—“the poor and the maimed and the halt and the blind” from “the streets and lanes of the city.” And many of these unfortunate outcasts did he collect from the Jewish church.

On many a heart which had long been a stranger to joy, did he pour the consolations of hope. On many an eye which had long been sealed in darkness, did he shed the light of truth. Many a limb which had long been stiffened with disease, was made to leap with divine transports. He healed the souls of the sick while he cured their bodies. And when he had brought to the feast "the poor and the maimed and the halt and the blind," he surveyed the apartments and found that yet there was room. He then sent his ministers "into the highways and hedges," the waste places of the heathen world, to compel the Gentiles to come in, while he pronounced upon the Jewish nation, "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."

This was the primary meaning of the parable: but it had a wider application, and contains a lesson for men in every age.

Both Jews and Gentiles were perishing with famine when divine love prepared them a feast; "a feast—of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined." This feast was spread for all men, and the heralds of salvation were sent forth with the commission, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." They find a prodigal race "in a dry and thirsty land where no water is." No refreshment can come from any quarter, and they must speedily sink in eternal death unless they are brought to this feast.

A worm is suffered to stand before you to-day as a herald of this grace. To those who are perishing with hunger, I am sent to invite them, in the name of all the compassions of my Master, to come to the feast which eternal love has prepared. I am not sent to the Jews, but to those favoured Gentiles who were chosen to receive the grace when Jews were rejected. And though many millions have come, I am directed to tell you that "yet there is room."

And many millions *have* come. To say nothing of the unnumbered myriads who accepted the grace while it was dimly set forth under the shadows of the Old Testament,—the illustrious army of patriarchs, prophets, and saints who trusted in a Saviour to come; to say

nothing of these, what countless millions have thronged the feast since the Gospel Church was set up. Thousands of "the poor and the maimed and the halt and the blind" came from the Jewish Church. And when the invitation was carried to the Gentiles, innumerable multitudes gladly embraced it. They came flocking out of every nation from Scythia to Ethiopia, and from England to the Canes, until the Gospel was visibly accepted by the mass of the known world. Since then it has been steadily preached throughout Christendom, and multitudes of every generation have seized its proffered blessings. Martyrs have bled in sufficient numbers to make a nation. Besides the immense concourse which have been called in in special revivals of religion, the silent influence of the Gospel has formed vast multitudes for heaven in every generation. Even in the darkest times the power of God has still attended his word, and by a steady and silent course has, in successive generations, produced immense results. Could your eye pierce through the veil which covers eternity, and see in one vast assembly "which no man" can "number," the countless millions of believers who have escaped from our world since the Christian Church was set up, you would stand amazed at the interminable host and be ready to cry, What a God and Saviour! Besides all these, what armies of Christians still remain alive on the earth. Though they seem lost amidst the crowds of the wicked, yet could they be collected from every country and from every cabin, who could count the unnumbered host? If in the degenerate days of Elijah's ministry, when the prophet thought that he alone of all the worshippers of God was left, it was known in heaven that seven thousand had not bowed the knee to Baal, how many true worshippers are now seen by the omniscient eye scattered among the nations. During the illustrious triumphs of grace which have been displayed in our day in very extended portions of the Christian world, how many thousands have thronged the apartments of the great Master of the feast. Even some are seen coming from the recesses of pagan darkness. The famished Hottentot, the pining Indian, the hungry Greenlander,

and the starving islander of the southern ocean, are among the crowd. But with all this vast concourse filling the apartments of the feast, think not that you are excluded. I am sent expressly to say to you that "yet there is room."

I cannot hope, my dear hearers, that this information will be interesting to you unless you feel your perishing condition as sinners. The wandering son must be pressed with famine before he will be affected with the thought that there is "bread enough and to spare" in his father's house. Pause then and consider your miseries. You have been sinning against God, your Maker, Preserver, and Redeemer, all your days. Your heart never moved without moving in rebellion against him. *One* sin deserves eternal fire, and you have sinned as often as your heart has moved. You are covered with sin from the head to the foot. You are one entire mass of corruption. You have sinned against all the perfections, and all the mercies, and all the entreaties of God. You have sinned against the dying love of Christ. You have sinned against the light of the Bible and the remonstrances of your own conscience. You have taken those measures which had a tendency, (if they had possessed power,) to dethrone God, to turn his kingdom into a hell, to destroy the eternal happiness of the whole universe: and you are answerable for all this infinite mischief, as much as though you had accomplished it all. For all this God has condemned you to eternal agonies, and I believe, to eternally *increasing* agonies; which will far surpass any thing which the heathen now in hell are suffering. And your case is every moment growing worse; guilt increasing, danger increasing, and hope that you will ever turn becoming less and less. Do you not need a Saviour? Is it not high time for you to become anxious to obtain an interest in him? Thus far your positive misery, and now your want of happiness in both worlds. Have you not always felt a craving desire for happiness which nothing could satisfy? And nothing ever will satisfy it until you find a Saviour. But even could you live on the husks of this world for the present, what would support you a century hence? You must exchange worlds. You must

enter on another state of existence. There you must spend an eternity. In what way can a sinner enter the presence of a holy God and live before him without a Mediator? How can you attain to the happiness of heaven? You languish, you perish for ever without an interest in Christ. Be solemn, be anxious, and let strong desires rise up in your souls.——I pause for you to prepare.——Are you ready? O God, make them ready by thine arrows fixed in their hearts.

The truth which I wish to present to your anxious minds is, that though so many have thronged the feast, yet still there is room for you. Guilty as you are, you need not stay without and perish.

1. There is room enough in the *heart of God* to admit you. His heart is more enlarged with pity for the human race than you have ever supposed. Your highest ideas of his compassion are altogether inadequate. His mercy is not only *far* greater, it is *infinitely* greater, than you ever conceived. It was to produce this very impression that he uttered those memorable words: "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." "*As the heaven is high above the earth*, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." Stretch your thoughts to conceive the compassion of him who "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." What then may not an humble sinner hope? "He that spared not his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Do you say, the pardon of such a sinner is too much to expect? In this you limit the infinite benevolence of God by the contracted views of your own selfishness. Does it seem wonderful that God should pardon such a sinner? It is far more wonderful than you ever supposed. But should he pardon you this hour, it would be no greater wonder than is taking place on earth every day. You have never yet learned what a God there is in heaven. You

have no conception of the extent of his boundless love. It is infinitely greater than ever you imagined. O that your eyes were open to see what he is. All these doubts would then vanish like mists before the rising sun. These doubts are the very unbelief which the Scriptures condemn,—the very unbelief which has destroyed its thousands, and if persisted in will destroy *you*. The faith which it is your duty and your life to exercise, confides in the truth and infinite mercy of God without wavering. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Lay aside then your distrusts and come. Begin to move, and like the father of the prodigal, your heavenly Parent will come out to meet you; and he will be infinitely more happy in bestowing pardon than you will be in receiving it.

2. There is room enough in *Christ* to admit you. He died for you. His merits are sufficient for you. And you have as good a right as any child of Adam to take him for your Saviour. He died to support the law which all men had broken. This law once supported, every obstruction to the salvation of men which atonement could remove, was removed, as much in regard to all as a part. Atonement could do no more for the elect, than to make it manifest, notwithstanding their pardon, that the law was still to be supported by the execution of its penalty on future offenders. This declaration, once made by the atonement, was absolute, and neither its truth nor its evidence had any dependence on the number that should be saved. It stands unchanged and acknowledged equally whether ten or ten thousand are pardoned. The atonement therefore opened a way for the pardon of many as well as of a few,—for the pardon of all as well as a part. And that all are not saved, does not arise from any insufficiency in the atonement, but from the obstinacy of men and the limited operations of the Spirit. The atonement, from its very nature, must have been made for the whole race. And this is the obvious doctrine of the Bible. God "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us *all*." "He

is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the *whole world*." "That he by the grace of God should taste death for *every man*." "For God so loved the *world*, [collectively,] that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him, [without distinction,] should not perish but have everlasting life." "Who will have *all* men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." "Not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance." "Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die, saith the Lord God, and not that he should return from his ways and live?" This he would not have said if he had left a part sealed over to death without any provision for their salvation. Thus, so far as the atonement is concerned, all men are placed on an equal footing. Had not the atonement been made for all, the invitations could not have been sincerely extended to all. To have spread a feast and given a general invitation, and *pressed* that invitation on all, when provision was made only for a part, would have been unworthy of the God of sincerity and truth.

If the atonement had been made for the elect only, no man antecedent to faith could have had a warrant to take the Saviour for his own. No man can know that he is one of the elect till he has first believed. Antecedently to faith he has no evidence that Christ died for him, on supposition that he died only for the elect. Therefore, on that supposition, no man has a warrant to receive the Saviour until he has first received him; for if Christ died not for him, he has no more warrant to receive him than devils have. And though Christ *did* die for him, yet so long as the man himself does not know it, he has no right to take him for his own. Such an act would be altogether presumptuous. Yet thus presumptuous must be the first act of faith in every man, and indeed *every* act of faith previous to "the full assurance of hope," if Christ died only for the elect. And many are actually afraid of this presumption, and dare not put forth their hand to receive the Saviour, because they fear that he did not die for them. But he died for all, and therefore for

them: and this glorious truth they ought to believe with the most unwavering confidence. Until they believe that Christ died for them, they never can receive him *by faith*, and if they receive him at all it must be by presumption. But as all men are commanded to believe, and are threatened with eternal punishment if they do not believe, it must be the duty of all to receive Christ for their Saviour, and therefore it must be the duty of all to believe that he died for them. And if all are bound to believe that Christ died for them, he *did* die for them all, or they are bound to believe a lie, and will be punished eternally in hell for not believing a lie. For it is a truth of universal application, "He that believeth not shall be damned." For any one therefore to doubt his right to receive the Saviour for his own, in other words, to doubt whether Christ died for him, must be the wickedness of unbelief.

Christ then died for you. His merits are sufficient for you. You have as good a right as any child of Adam to take him for your own. And it is your indispensable duty to believe all this.

3. There is room enough in the *invitations* of grace to admit you. These invitations are extended to all who hear the Gospel. In the "great day of the feast," when Jerusalem was thronged with strangers, "Jesus stood and cried" to the promiscuous multitude, "If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink." At another time, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." These invitations, though they imply the self-evident truth that none will come to the waters but they who thirst, are yet addressed to all. But if it should even be admitted that none but Christians are addressed in these invitations, what will you say of the following? "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "Behold 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." "Wisdom hath builded her house;—she hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled. For-sake the foolish and live, and go in the way of understanding." Can it be doubted that these invitations are made to the unregenerate without distinction? Even those who will finally perish are invited. Such were those whom our parable represents as invited to the supper, but were finally excluded for their obstinate refusal. Such were the mass of the Jewish nation, who indeed were the very people alluded to in this parable. Such are millions who sit under the Gospel, to whom it will another day be said, "Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded,—I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh." Every person in this assembly is then most sincerely invited to the Gospel feast. The word of God says, Come. The Spirit says, Come, and by his secret calls which have followed you from your childhood, has continually invited you to come. The bride, the Lamb's wife, (that is, the whole body of the Church,) says, Come. The ministers of Christ are sent to press you to come. It is on such an errand that I stand before you to-day and earnestly entreat you to come to the feast. Come, my dear friends, make no delay. The feast is prepared. All things are ready. The guests are waiting. O come.

4. There is room enough in the *covenant of grace* to admit you. As vast as your sins are, as numerous as are your diseases and wants, this covenant is broad enough to admit you with all your guilt, miseries, and necessities upon you. The promises are extensive enough to cover all your wants for time and eternity. As much involved as you are, they provide for the discharge of all your debts. As poor as you are, they

invite you to come "without money and without price," and engage to endow you with "durable riches and righteousness." The provisions of this covenant are sufficient for the pardon, sanctification, and complete salvation of the vilest sinner who casts himself upon it; and they secure to him for the present life all needed good, protection against every real evil, and a real benefit from every occurrence. Seek not to make yourselves more worthy before you venture to take hold of this covenant. Wait for no preparations. Come just as you are.

5. There is room enough in the *Church on earth* to admit you. There are alas too many seats empty. Would to God there were fewer. But the bride, the Lamb's wife, that calls you, stands ready to minister to all your spiritual wants, and to bless you with influences kinder and richer than those of any other society. The heart of your mother the Church yearns to embrace you. Her children who occupy her seats, would gladly give you room. They invite, they entreat you to come. And this entreaty is often accompanied with a parent's tears, and with the yearning bowels of brothers and sisters.

6. There is room enough in *heaven* to admit you. There "are many mansions" in our "Father's house." Though myriads of human spirits have already entered there, yet still "there is room." None of them would oppose your entrance or occupy your seats. They all desire you to come. None of the holy angels will bar the passage. "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." And as they rejoice with one soul at the conversion of sinners, they will gladly arise and give you room. Methinks I see those benevolent spirits, with the human souls of a hundred generations, collected on the battlements

of heaven and tenderly beckoning you to come. All heaven will make you welcome. No one in the universe will be disobliged by your coming but devils and damned spirits, and perhaps a few infatuated wretches on earth who cannot bear that your piety should reproach their wickedness.

And can you resist the desires of the whole holy universe? What hinders you from coming and filling yourselves with the dainties of the heavenly feast? Nothing but that rock of adamant in your breast. I call heaven and earth to witness that if you perish your blood will be upon your own head. And after this blame not God for your destruction. He appeals to heaven and earth, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?"

My beloved friends, from your infancy you have been nurtured among sacred rites. You have sat under the invitations of the Gospel. You have been assailed by the entreaties of God and the Church. You have been surrounded by sabbaths and sacraments and prayers and holy examples. Indeed you have been exalted to heaven in point of privileges. Now from the midst of these distinctions look back, I pray you, upon the ancient Jews. For refusing the calls of heaven they at last received this awful sentence, "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." O provoke not God to withdraw himself from you and carry his Gospel to another people more willing to receive it, and to say of you, They are "joined to" their "idols; let" them "alone." While yet the voice of mercy is in your ears, O comply, ere the door is shut and you knock for admittance in vain. Come, for it is not yet too late. I bless God that even at this late hour I may once more say, "And yet there is room."

S E R M O N X I V .

MAKING LIGHT OF THE INVITATION.

MAT. xxii. 5.—But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.

THE most surprising circumstance in the conduct of our world, or indeed of creatures in any world, is the indifference of men to those calls of God which invite them from hell to heaven. This strange phenomenon, which would have been utterly incredible had not experience proved it real, still excites the astonishment of every reflecting mind. It is not so great a wonder, considering what men are, that they should *reject* the calls of God; but that they should *make light* of them,—this is one of those marvellous anomalies in the vagaries of moral distraction, which leave the mind, after all attempts to explain them, still unsatisfied and perplexed. Eighteen hundred years ago this infatuation of man, this madness of the present day, was noticed and reprobated by the Saviour of the world. A king made a marriage for his son; and when he sent forth his servants to call the guests, they would not come: when the invitation was renewed and pressed, “they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.” All this is set forth, we are expressly told, to illustrate what occurs under the dispensation of the Gospel, called “the kingdom of heaven.” Here then you see the stupidity which is embodied in our assemblies, made the object of Christ’s distinct attention and reproach eighteen centuries ago. Do you not start at this? The very indifference which weekly appears in the house of God, was arraigned and condemned by Christ himself in the temple at Jerusalem, and hung up as a warning to all generations.

Let us contemplate more distinctly,

I. The evidence of the fact that men make light of the calls of God;

II. The greatness of the wonder;

III. The reasons of the phenomenon;

IV. The considerations which ought to cure the evil.

I. The evidence of the fact.

God is continually speaking to men in his word, in his providence, and by his Spirit. By his judgments he is warning them of their sins; by the disappointments and trials of life he is proclaiming the uncertainty and unsatisfying nature of all creature comforts; by the graves which are opening around them he is reminding them how short their time is; by the mercies which he scatters in their path he is encouraging them to look to him for favour. Every sentence in the Bible is a voice from heaven to them. By a written and preached Gospel he is constantly telling them of the design of their creation; that they were placed here to prepare for eternity; that his eye is constantly upon them; that he will presently call them to an awful account; that endless ages of happiness or misery depend on their present conduct; that they have ruined themselves by sin, and are under condemnation to eternal death; that his Son has descended from heaven to redeem them, and stands ready to receive them. He pleads with them with eloquence enough to melt a rock. He warns, he threatens, he remonstrates. Every chapter, every sermon is the voice of God in their ears. His Spirit seconds all these calls and often fills them with anxious thought. In this manner he cries after them from day to day,—from year to year.

But they make light of it. Some of them are intrepid enough to turn the threatenings of God into a jest and bully their Maker with a joke. Some of them can play with his thunderbolts, and bandy them about in sport, and hold them to their own breast. Even the children of the streets are trained to this exercise

before they can well articulate their dreadful imprecations. Some, as though tired of waiting for the tremendous stroke, will fly to meet it on the bloody field; or by an act of greater madness still, will with their own hands tear off the covering from the pit and make the fearful plunge; or adding both together, will precipitate themselves and their brother upon the judgment seat in the murderous contest of honour. What multitudes spend their jolly lives on the deck or in the camp or in the whirl of dissipation, with as much thoughtlessness as though there was no God. How many are hardy enough, under all the calls of heaven, to live in the perpetration of crimes. Multitudes pay so little respect to God that they seldom or never visit his house, or open his word, or offer a prayer in secret. Some are too indifferent about his will, his love or his wrath, to take any pains to ascertain whether the Bible is a revelation from him; though they know, if that book proves true, that doubt will plunge them into eternal woe. Some are willing to rest on the hearsay of others, that there is some easier way to heaven, or that salvation will be extended to all, without examining the subject for themselves.

Even among those of whom we might hope better things, how many place themselves under the sound of the Gospel with a heart as indifferent as though that Gospel was not the language of God to them. How many, while the sound is in their ears, will literally fall asleep in the house of God. And of those who could not descend to such indecorum, how many make light of the calls of God in their hearts. They come to his house, they deport themselves with decency, they hear all he has to say, and then think no more of it. They come again, and again hear, and again go away as stupid as they came. They are always in their seats on the Sabbath, and as uniformly swallowed up in the world the rest of the week. Of all men this is the description of people whom I am most anxious to address. It was for them that the text was chosen. They are amiable, moral, useful in society, and kind in their attentions to the word preached; but upon their hearts the calls of God make no impression, and

are forgotten almost as soon as heard. Year after year they come to his house; year after year they refuse to obey, and remain almost as unconcerned as though no God had spoken to them from heaven. They sit and hear him invite them to forsake all for him, and then plunge into the world. They sit with great decorum and hear all his pleadings, and then forget them. They listen with fixed attention to the terrible denunciations of his wrath against the rejecters of the Gospel, and then go away and enjoy the world as well as ever. They hear all he has to say about idolatry and its punishment, and then calmly hug their idols. So the Israelites made and worshipped their molten calf at the very foot of the burning mount, when the voice of God had scarcely done sounding in their ears. You wonder at their infatuation, but behold an equal infatuation is here.

No picture was ever drawn more to the life than that presented in the text. "They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise." It is not a delineation of the idle and dissolute, but of the industrious part of society; not of the intemperate, profane, and vicious, but of men whose only fault was, that they made light of the invitation by going unmoved to their several occupations. I have then certainly found the men intended. They stop and hear the invitation, and then throw it away and plunge into the whirl of business. They pay their debts, provide for their families, and think no more of God. Thus they live, and thus they die, and wake up at last where Dives lay.

II. Let us contemplate the greatness of the wonder.

That a message from a God of infinite majesty and goodness, of infinite wisdom and power,—their Creator, Preserver, and Judge,—who has them entirely in his hands, and can make them as happy or as miserable as he pleases; that a message from the Redeemer of the world, setting forth his expiring agonies and living intercession, and inviting them to his arms; that a message from such a God and Saviour should be treated with lightness, or even with indifference, by those who are not maniacs but rational beings, is among those

wonders which want a name. That a message solely intended for their good, sent to tell them of a Saviour's dying love, to call them from the pollution of devils to the everlasting purity of God,—from despair and shame and endless torment, to honour and glory and immortality; that such a message should be treated with lightness, by men who boast of reason, is a wonder not to be expressed. That a message sent to creatures so dependent, so necessitous, children of affliction, who know that they must die to-morrow; that creatures in such circumstances, and who are so alive to their own interest in all other matters, should treat such a message otherwise than with instant submission and gratitude, is wonderful indeed; but that they should treat it with lightness, is the greatest miracle that the folly and madness of creatures ever brought forth. Let us see,

III. Whether any reasons can be assigned for this phenomenon.

It is difficult to offer reasons for a thing so unreasonable. As the state under consideration is manifestly a state of moral phrensy, something of the same embarrassment is felt in tracing the operations of the mind to their causes, that is felt in every case of madness. The grand reason certainly is, aversion to God, arising from supreme selfishness. This is itself the moral distraction of which I complain. But all this may exist, (as in the other world,) where there is no indifference. The spirits in prison, though they gnash with their teeth, are far from making light of any thing which God has spoken.

The immediate cause of this stupidity is unbelief;—not always a speculative infidelity, but a strange stupefaction and blindness of heart, which excludes a realizing sense of what the intellect believes. There are fifty truths, of which if one were *realizingly* believed, the sinner, as bad as his heart is, would never sleep again. This stupefaction, which is very difficult to be accounted for, is aided in many instances by partial infidelity or ignorance or error. Men persuade themselves that while they avoid outbreking sins, they are safe without the religion of the heart: or they flatter themselves that by attending on means they shall ultimately pur-

chase regenerating grace, and that at present they are doing as well as they can: or they persuade themselves that they possess religion already. Under the protection of these and other soothing errors, it is less to be wondered at that they should remain at ease. But unless shielded by some such error, or by gross ignorance or infidelity, this stupefaction can scarcely keep the soul secure without succour from some other quarter. That succour the mind is very diligent in seeking. Though, under a certain view of truth and of their own interest, sinners often say that they would give all the world to be convicted, yet if they knew themselves better they would see that they *do* and are *compelled* to use great exertions to keep conviction out. They often call to their aid a certain heroism of soul which scorns the cowardice of being terrified by the threatenings of God. They are not to yield to womanish fear. They are not to be scared to heaven. Of all animals man is the most intrepid. The lion, the king of the forest, is not his equal here. Man, from mere fool-hardiness, will march to attack the throne of God and rush upon the thick bosses of his buckler. But all this proud intrepidity will not avail them without other aids. They must plunge into business and amusements to drown reflection. They cannot make light of the calls of God without going "their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise." In the haunts of business, the cares and company they meet seduce them from these painful subjects and give them a momentary respite. As to their amusements, it cannot escape notice that the whole circle of them is constructed with a studious care to fence out all sober thought. Their songs which are prepared for the convivial hour, plainly let the secret out. How many of them expressly profess the aim to *drive away care* and to prevent the uncomfortable habit of *thinking*. Besides these auxiliaries, they fortify themselves with the examples and opinions of others. "Wise men are not alarmed about futurity, and why need I be?" They see the crowd going on heedless of God, and they flatter themselves that if worst comes to worst they shall have company enough. They are relieved

also by looking on death as at a distance and thinking that there is time enough yet. There is a law deeply inscribed on our nature, easily to believe what we wish to be true. Under the protection of this law, their self-love strongly persuades them that the time will come when they shall be prepared for death; that however it may fare with others, their own dear selves will certainly escape. Let us attend,

IV. To the considerations which ought to cure the evil.

Consider deeply the infinite dignity, the boundless goodness, the dying love, of that God and Saviour by whom the invitation is made. Consider what it calls you from, what it invites you to. Consider your own state and character; the creatures of God,—wholly in his hands,—in want of all things,—crushed before the moth,—the children of sorrow,—the children of a day,—rapidly hastening to the grave,—destined to live for ever in heaven or hell; ruined by sin,—under condemnation to eternal death,—entirely dependent on God's mercy,—with the question resting on him whether the Spirit shall ever strive with you again,—whether another call shall ever sound in your ears,—whether you shall not sink to hell to-day. Consider what it has cost the Son of God to procure this invitation for you. Go to the manger; go to the garden; go to the cross. And after all, when he comes from heaven to entreat you to accept what it cost him so much to purchase, will you close your door against him? will you not once look from your window upon him? Will you sit under his calls from Sabbath to Sabbath and feel the most perfect indifference?

This is the greatest evidence of the desperate wickedness of the human heart. What can prove it more than this dreadful contempt of divine authority, this invincible hardness against all the appeals of heaven, this headlong madness that rushes down the precipice?

This is the rock on which thousands have split. Thousands now in hell were once exactly in this condition. They were always in their seats in the house of God; they heard his calls with indifference, and for the rest of the week were swallowed up in the world. No-

thing could rouse them to agonizing prayer, or even to serious reflection. They had no more thought of perishing than you now have. They said to themselves, There is time enough yet: the favourable season *will* come: it cannot be that this dear self should be lost: God must have some kinder designs concerning me. Are you not soothing yourselves with these same hopes? Are you not fast entangled in this same net? You are advancing in the way which is strewn with the bones of millions,—in which not one since Adam ever escaped who did not hastily turn back; and yet you are so certain of safety that you advance without an anxious thought.

Let me hold up a glass before you. Our context furnishes the mirror. What became of those wretches who made light of the king's invitation? Did they ever receive another call? Did not the king swear in his wrath that they should not taste of his supper? When they applied, did they not find the door shut against them, and a voice from within saying, Depart from me, I know you not? What became of the rebels in the wilderness who refused to enter the promised land? What became of Felix after he had said, "Go thy way for this time"?

Be it known to you, my poor hearers, that the reasons for this stupidity will not always last. It cannot remain when the eye is opened upon the awful scenes of death and the judgment. No infidelity, no error, no ignorance then will blind the eye. Their heroism will utterly forsake them, and they will sink down without courage or resistance, as a worm beneath a falling rock. They will find no business or amusements to relieve the anguish of thought,—no merry companions to drive away care,—no songs but the groans of the damned,—no success in warding off the thunderbolts of God with a joke. No longer will they draw support from the examples or opinions of others, nor comfort themselves with the number of their companions. Every companion will prove a tormentor. The more fuel the more fire. They will ten thousand times wish that they could spend their eternity alone. No longer can they soothe themselves with the thought that death is at a distance: the dreadful re-

ality has come, and it is for eternity. As they count the revolutions of ages, and look forward to one eternal round of misery, and then look back to time, how will the period of their mortal life appear? Once they lived under the sound of the Gospel, and heaven was offered to them, but they made light of the invitation. How often will they pour upon the ear of hell the doleful lamentation, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and" I am "not saved." How often will they look back to Sabbaths and revivals, and the calls of ministers, and the tears of parents. Ten thousand worlds for one more year of probation,—for one more Sabbath in the house of God.

O my dear hearers, will you any longer make light of the calls of God? Trifle with your father and mother; trifle with your honour and life; but O trifle not with the invitations of heaven. It is the highest phrensy of distraction to remain stupid another moment. Up without delay, and give no more sleep to your eyes or slumber to your eyelids till you have made your peace with God. Still his calls are in your ears. Still his hand is "stretched out" to receive you. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." You have no excuse for delay. Every one

of you is commanded to submit at once. What excuse *can* you have for disobeying the express command of God? What plea can you offer in the last judgment when it shall be demanded why you did not obey God that hour? I come around into all those seats and demand of sinners one by one, Will you submit to God now? What report shall I carry back to him that sent me? The great God is now looking on to receive your answer. The holy angels are listening. What *is* your answer? Will you obey God and live, or will you disobey him and die? There is now an opportunity to decide. You have now a chance to be saved. I know not what an hour may bring forth. You may open your eyes in hell before I have done speaking. This may be your last chance. What then is your answer? For the last time I demand of you in the name of the eternal God, whether you will accept this great invitation of heaven,—this invitation of yearning, dying love,—this invitation from infinite damnation to infinite bliss? O if I had leisure to linger any longer over your death-bed, I would fill your dying ear with the cry, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." Amen.

SERMON XV.

HALTING BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS.

1 KIN. xviii. 21.—And Elijah came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

ALL nations have joined to complete the proof of human depravity by their strong attachment to idols. This proof appeared most decisive in God's ancient people, who, with all the light of revelation around them, strongly attested by miracles, still pressed their way after other gods. Under the awful glories of

the burning mount they worshipped the molten calf. Like a city set upon a hill, they cast light upon this subject all abroad, and showed the universe a specimen of the human heart.

Baal, which signifies lord or master, was a title applied by the Hebrews to different idols. As early as the time of

the Judges they worshipped an idol under this name. But the Baal mentioned in the text was a new god, first introduced into Israel by Ahab. This profligate prince, having married Jezebel, daughter of the king of Tyre, introduced the tutelary deity of Tyre, the famous Grecian Hercules, under a Hebrew name; and for this Baal built a house and altar and planted a grove in Samaria. Jezebel supported at her table eight hundred and fifty of his prophets, and by a relentless persecution exterminated all the worshippers of God, except seven thousand who lay concealed. By Baal the prophets prophesied, by Baal the people swore, and in sacrifice to Baal infatuated parents burnt the children of their bodies.

To resist this dangerous and abominable innovation the prophet Elijah was raised up. To illustrate the power of the true God, "he prayed earnestly that it might not rain" upon the earth, and told Ahab that there should be no rain for three years but according to his word. This done, he fled to Sarepta, a city Zidon, where, by the widow's barrel of meal and cruse of oil, he was miraculously supported during the famine. Ahab, laying the whole blame of the calamity to Elijah, sent messengers to search for him among all the neighbouring nations, and extorted from them an oath that they had not concealed him. At the end of three years God commanded the prophet to go and show himself to Ahab, and promised to send rain upon the earth. At that time Ahab and Obadiah were going through the land in different directions, to search, by brooks and fountains, for grass for the cattle. And as Obadiah was in the way Elijah met him, and sent him after Ahab. "And it came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Israel? And he answered, I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandment of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim. Now therefore send and gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal, four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves, four hundred, which eat at Jezebel's table. So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel, and gathered the prophets to-

gether unto Mount Carmel. And Elijah came unto all the people and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow him, but if Baal then follow him. And the people answered him not a word. Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them—give us two bullocks, and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken. And—the prophets of Baal—took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But there was no voice nor any that answered. And they leapt upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud; for he is a god: either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth and must be awaked. And they cried aloud, and cut themselves, after their manner, with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them." But "there was neither voice nor any to answer nor any that regarded." When the time of the evening sacrifice arrived, which was three o'clock, "Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down.—And he made a trench about the altar.—And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces and laid him on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood. And he said, Do it the second time; and they did it the second time. And he said, Do it the third time; and they did it the third time. And the water ran round about the altar and—filled the trench.—And—Elijah the prophet came near and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that

I have done all these things at thy word.—Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water—in the trench. And when all the people saw it they fell on their faces, and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God. And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them. And Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slew them there,” according to the law of Moses which had annexed the penalty of death to the crime of aluring the people to idolatry.

The cause of the divine judgments being thus removed, Elijah went up to the top of Carmel to pray for rain. “And he cast himself down upon the earth and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, Go up now, look towards the sea. And he went up and looked and said, There is nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time that he said, Behold there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea like a man’s hand.” And soon “the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.”

“How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow him, but if Baal then follow him.” Their notions of truth were not yet so confounded as to destroy all reverence for the true God. In the commencement of idolatry among all nations, it was not the intention to exclude Jehovah, but to worship him through the medium of visible objects, first the heavenly bodies, and afterwards the work of men’s hands. Even under the light of the Gospel there is much halting between two opinions. This of course has nothing to do with those unhappy men, if such there are, who are confirmed in atheism or infidelity; but it is true of many,

1. In respect to a full and unwavering belief of the great truths of revelation. Though they dare not conclude that there is no God, no heaven, no hell, no Saviour, no such thing as the new birth and experimental religion, yet they do not come up to an unwavering belief of these things. The question respecting their truth floats unsettled in their minds. They prevailingly fear that these things will prove true at last; but

from a reluctance to find them real, and under the attractions of worldly objects, they suffer their minds to flit about them in uncertainty. This state is as full of danger as it is of guilt. These great matters are infinitely too important to be left in doubt. Either they are realities or they are not. If they are not, the settling of this point would remove many dismal forebodings. But if these things are to prove true at last, what will become of those who doubted? Ruined, condemned, lost, and crying to rocks and mountains to cover them. To have doubted will be found as fatal as to have disbelieved. If there is one chance in a thousand that these things will be found eternal realities, no time ought to be lost in examining and deciding. The least delay is madness. Let the point be immediately settled whether the awful representations of the Bible do indeed present realities. Let none who expect to die, any longer halt between two opinions.

2. This halting is chargeable to those who, though rationally convinced of the truths of the Bible, have no corresponding feelings and practice. They admit the reality and importance of religion, and mean one day to attend to it, but they are not yet ready. At different periods, from childhood to hoary age, they appoint seasons when they will begin, but the season passes and nothing is done. They would not for worlds have it settled that they shall die without religion, and yet they have no heart to enter on the work. For no consideration would they renounce salvation, and yet they cannot give up the delights of sin and the world. In this way many of them will continue to halt until they plunge into eternal death. God has been so long pouring his glories into our world, that they want no public trial to convince their understandings of his existence or perfections; but their hearts cleave to idols and are enmity against him. That is their god which they love best. With some it is wealth, with others honour, with others pleasure. But it is high time to break this enchantment and decide the claims of these several deities,—which possesses the greatest excellency,—to which they are under the greatest obligations,—which will prove the richest and most endur-

ing portion. Let them examine the creature on every side; let them contemplate the divine glories, and come near enough to gain a full conviction; and then let them unchangeably decide whether idols or the living God shall be "the strength of" their "heart and" their "portion for ever." Let them either choose the Lord God of Elijah, and cry with the convicted multitude, He is *the* God, he is *the* God, or else let them disclaim him and renounce all expectations from him. Let the stupid awake to this trial. "No God" is the wish of their hearts, and the convictions of their understanding are not sufficient to influence their conduct. But I have a message from the Lord to deliver to them. "How long halt ye between two opinions?" Where are you concealing yourselves from the light of heaven and your own conscience? Do you not know there is a God who will make you happy or miserable for ever? Has he not strictly charged you to acknowledge and treat him as God? Will you obey and live? or will you disobey and die? This is a question not to be put aside for a moment. You must come at once to some decision. If the Lord is God he is *now* worthy to be served, and an hour's delay is full of rebellion and danger. If you ever intend to serve him, why not serve him now? But if he is *not* God, then take your ground. Deliberately renounce him. Disdain his promises and defy his thunders. Commit that resolution to writing. On some dreadful page write it down; *On such a day of such a year I renounced for ever the God of the Bible, and firmly challenge him to do his worst.*—Dare you write it? Will not your hand tremble and your blood curdle in your veins as you impress the seal of your damnation? But yet if he is *not* God write it down. Why that trembling? I would not tremble to renounce Baal. Write it down.—Do you drop your pen? Well then come and choose the Lord for your God and unchangeably devote yourselves to his service. There should be no middle way.

Let the *convicted* prepare to make their decision. You are convinced that you must acknowledge God first or last. Your conscience reproaches you for not doing it at once. Why then this halt-

ing? If the Lord is God delay no more; if he is not God why this concern? Dismiss your anxieties or yield him your hearts. Your very tears reproach you. Halt no longer. While you delay the Spirit may depart and your ruin be forever sealed.

3. This halting is chargeable to those who rest upon a doubtful hope. Grati-fied not to know that they are the enemies of God, they tolerate themselves in not knowing that they are his friends. They do not bring the great question to a decision, and so post on to judgment without knowing on which side they stand or to what world they are going. They will not deny the duty of making their "calling and election sure," and yet their indecision remains. And why do they doubt? It is because they do not love God enough, and have not engaged with sufficient decision on his side. They know they love their friends, because they love them with ardour: and why is their love to God so wavering that they cannot distinguish it from enmity? Such indecision ought not to be. If the sinner is bound to love God at once, the Christian is bound to love him with all the heart; and that would leave not a lingering doubt behind. The Christian is as really to blame for his doubt as the sinner is for his enmity. And this wavering is against himself. It mars his comfort and endangers his salvation. How long, Christians, at such expense and with so much sin, will ye halt between two opinions?

4. This halting is chargeable to those who, beyond the proper time for self-examination, abstain from a public profession. It was to bring the Israelites to a public acknowledgment of God that this trial was instituted on Carmel. The display of God's authority and honour before men, was one great object of a visible Church. To do his will is something more than to acknowledge him in secret; it is to bear public testimony for him before the world. In a day when the name of God is blasphemed by thousands, it is time for his friends to declare themselves. The visible kingdom of Satan is thronged, and shall the visible kingdom of Christ be empty? Shall his friends have so doubtful a character that none can tell on which side they are? If he is worthy of being

loved in secret, why not honour him before the world? If not worthy of public honour, why worship him in secret? Halt no longer between two opinions. Either disclaim all respect for him in secret, or treat him with reverence before the world. Sirs, we would know on which side you are, and on what we may depend. Come forward and declare yourselves. Either take part in the reproach of his cross, or avow your alliance with the enemy. Are you ashamed of his cause? Read and tremble: "Of him—shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

5. This halting is not unfrequently discovered in other branches of Christian practice. It appears in regard to family prayers. Some serious people neglect this duty who dare not deny the obligation. Their conscience is on the side of the duty, but a false modesty, or something worse, produces another feeling, and between the two they halt. For worlds they would not determine never to perform this service, but they are too irresolute to set about it. Thus duty is neglected, while their poor children are growing up for ruin. Wherefore this halting between two opinions? Be consistent with yourselves, and either disown the obligation or abandon the neglect. This same halting appears in the omission of family instruction and the agonizing prayers of the closet. No serious mind doubts the obligation of these duties; and yet many serious people in a great measure neglect them. Their conscience reproaches them for the omission. They know there will be little hope for their children if the neglect continues. They determine to set about the duty, but still they delay; and one and another of their children dies while their exertions sleep. How many families have been ruined by this halting between two opinions. The same halting appears in the indecision with which good people purpose to disentangle themselves from the world and rise up to a heavenly mind. They resolve and re-resolve and die the same. Pious motives attract one way and worldly attachments draw the other, and between the two they halt. The same halting appears in the parley which people hold with their constitutional

sins. They condemn them and mean not to indulge them; but their strength is divided, and by this means they often slide, and sometimes foully fall. The same halting appears in all those cases in which we do "that which" we "allow not," or, purposing to "do good," find "evil—present with" us.

6. Too much of this halting intrudes into the *experiences* of Christians. If a realizing sense of heaven and hell constantly possessed them, they could not live as they do, nor could they see the crowd around them going down to death without more compassion and stronger efforts to save them. Sometimes the attractions of divine love cease to draw them, and they are undecided whether God or the world is the better portion. Too often, amidst the glooms of affliction and the darker glooms of unbelief, their wicked hearts halt in respect to the truth of the promises and the wisdom and rectitude of the divine government. Even Elijah, a few days after the triumphant issue of this public trial, was found halting in respect to his security under the shadow of the divine throne. Alarmed at the threats of Jezebel, he deserted his post and fled for his life through the land of Judah and through Arabia even to Mount Horeb, requesting in his despondency that he might die and not live. For this God reproved him and said to him in the cave, "What dost thou here, Elijah?" And taking him at his word, he commanded him to return and anoint Elisha to be prophet in his room. Ah when shall our haltings cease and our hearts be confirmed in perfect confidence and love? He that knows himself best knows most of this wretched unbelief, which imputes weakness and change to the blessed God, and calls in question those words of eternal truth which are graven with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond on the rock for ever. O that we may rise up to an undivided attachment to God and an unwavering confidence in him, and no longer suffer idols to put in their claims against the high and holy One; that with all the suffrages of our souls we may choose him for our only portion, and be more and more satisfied with our choice, until we awake to the full vision and fruition of him above. Amen.

SERMON XVI.

CHRIST CAME TO CALL, NOT THE RIGHTEOUS, BUT SINNERS.

MARK ii. 17.—When Jesus heard it he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

THESE words were spoken at Capernaum, in the house of Matthew, (otherwise called Levi, the son of Alphaeus,) formerly a publican or Roman tax-gatherer, now a disciple of Christ, afterwards one of the twelve apostles, and at last the writer of his Master's life. Called from "the receipt of custom," where he had sat to receive taxes and where he had grown rich, he made a great feast in his own house for his divine Benefactor. To this feast he invited many publicans and sinners, his former companions, that they might have an opportunity to hear that wondrous man whose words had reached his own heart. The Pharisees, seeing Jesus in such company, upbraided him for eating with publicans and sinners. The compassionate Saviour replied to them in the words of our text: "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;" and I came to call as many as possess this character. Let the poor trembling sinner who fears that he is not elected, that he is too guilty to be saved, that the Gospel was not meant for him,—let him read this passage and take courage. Were he not a sinner the Gospel would not have been for him; but since he *is* a sinner, he is the very one for whom it was intended.

Our text manifestly contains this doctrine: *that the Gospel was provided for all human sinners, even the greatest, and is freely offered to all.* In supporting this doctrine I shall attempt to show,

I. That Christ came to open a door of mercy for all men, even the most guilty.

II. That the blessings of the Gospel are freely offered to all without distinction.

I. Christ came to open a door of mercy for all men, even the most guilty. This point must be decided solely by the testimony of Scripture. And that tells us that "he" tasted "death for every man;" that "he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "God so loved the world," universally, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth in him," without distinction, "should not perish but have everlasting life." It is then the testimony of Scripture that Christ died, not for the elect only, but for me, for you, for all,—for the greatest sinner on earth. Look also at the reason of the thing. Christ died to show God's unalterable resolution to execute on future offenders the penalty of that law which was given to man; whose authority of course is now supported as fully as though its penalty had been executed on the whole human race. It is thus supported how many soever are saved. The same atonement that was necessary for one, is sufficient for all. It is now as consistent with the honour of the law for millions to be saved if they will but believe, as for one. I argue the same thing from the general invitation. God would not have offered any thing which it was inconsistent with the honour of his law to grant. But he offers salvation to all, as I shall presently show. It is consistent therefore with the honour of the law for all to be saved if they will but believe. This was *made* consistent by the death of Christ. Therefore his death opened the door of mercy to all. But things different are often confounded. To make atonement and thus lay a foundation for the offer to all, is one thing; to dispose all to accept, is another. To evince that the atonement

was made for all, it is not necessary to prove that God expected all to accept it. It is sufficient to show that all may accept it if they will.

It is difficult however for sinners oppressed with guilt, and even for Christians in unbelieving hours, to realize that the Gospel was intended for them. They often fear that some decree has shut the door of mercy against them, and rendered it impossible for them to enter if they would. Sometimes this unbelief vents itself in language like this: If I am not elected I cannot be saved do what I will, and it is in vain to try.—What more could you have said if the atonement had not been made for all? if the Gospel had not been offered to all? While you say this you do not cast yourself on the atonement as made for you; you do not believe that glorious truth that the Gospel was provided for you: and what is this but unbelief? To counteract this unbelief I insist that the atonement *was* made for you, and that you ought firmly to believe it. To believe this with corresponding affections, is to take hold of the atonement and appropriate it to yourself. But these gloomy doubts whether it was made for you, or whether you are not excluded by a divine decree,—these doubts indulged even while the Gospel is loudly inviting you to return and live,—are the essence of unbelief. This unbelief, while it continues, will for ever debar you from salvation. If the atonement was not made for you, what right have you to take it to yourself? while you doubt, it would be presumption to take it. It would be seizing what you did not know was your own. This doubt, I believe, is the subtle cause of the ruin of thousands. There are other causes. Sinners are opposed to a holy God, a holy law, a holy Gospel, a holy life, a holy heaven. But among other causes this doubtless is one. You say, If I am not elected it is in vain to try. What? is it in vain to confide in God and cast yourself upon his infinite mercy? You fear you are not elected because you cannot believe; but in truth you cannot believe because you are thus reasoning about election and God's want of mercy to you. You fear that some decree excludes you from believing; whereas one principal

thing that excludes you is this fear about the decree. This gloomy apprehension of God as an irreconcilable foe, is directly opposed to that reliance on his truth and grace in which faith essentially consists.

II. The blessings of the Gospel are freely offered to all without distinction, even to the most guilty. "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." "Wisdom hath—killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, she hath also furnished her table; she hath sent forth her maidens, she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish and live, and go in the way of understanding." "Behold 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." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." "Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded,—I also will laugh at your calamity.—For that they hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord.—But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil." "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." Notwithstanding the decree of election then, the offer of salvation is made to all,—to you, to me; and that too as sincerely as it was made

to Peter and Paul; and we *may* be saved if we will.

But sinners oppressed with guilt, and Christians in their unbelieving hours, are ready to say, The offers of salvation are not intended for me. As I live among the elect, the Gospel must sound in my ears; but it does not mean me. God has no sincere regard for me. He has fenced round himself with an unchangeable decree, and is resolved to remain my eternal enemy.—Thus, instead of attending to what the *Gospel says*, they spend their time in *imagining* what God has decreed about conquering a soul that voluntarily rejects his grace; not considering that these gloomy imaginings are the very rejection itself. Thus they accustom themselves to contemplate God, not as love, but as enmity. God is love towards the whole human race,—towards every individual. They allow him to be such in regard to others,—to people of other ages and countries,—but not in regard to themselves. Thus they set God's real character at a distance,—at too great a distance to affect them. In order to be affected by his character we must bring it near, and contemplate him as love towards us and the objects around us. Were selfishness even excluded, still we should be less affected at hearing of the happiness or misery of people in China, than at seeing the same in our own neighbourhood. Such is the structure of finite minds, that to think of God's goodness to people in another part of the world, does not bring his character so near and render it so affecting, as to meditate on his goodness to ourselves and to those around us. We must begin at home; and having become affected with his love to us, and then to our families and neighbourhood, we must enlarge the view and consider him as love to a county, a state, a country; and, ascending step by step to a point of unlimited prospect, we shall at length see him to be one unbounded ocean of love which fills the universe. This is the way to gain an affecting view of God. But they who consider him as love to others only, and as determined enmity to themselves, can never gain proper views of his character. This is a practical abuse of the doctrine of election. No man has a right to conclude

that he is one of the non-elect while yet mercy is offered to him. He has no business with this question. His duty is to lay hold of the offers of the Gospel and to feed on the views of God's love and compassion as there exhibited. There is no decree which can exclude a man who will admit these views of God and will hope and trust in him. There is no decree to prevent men from accepting or rejecting life as they please. The decree of election comes in after the offer is made to all and is rejected by all. Then God is *obliged* to decide whom he will conquer and whom he will let alone. But men ought not to wait to be thus compelled. They ought to accept of their own accord. They have natural ability to do it; that is, they possess those faculties which are the basis of obligation. They are commanded to do it; and those who are never constrained by special grace, are punished for not doing it. It is their own fault therefore that they do not accept. One reason that they do not is, that they are not convinced that mercy is sincerely offered to them. This hindrance I am anxious to remove.

It is indeed a great hindrance to the salvation of men. While they intermeddle with God's secret counsels and conclude that the offers of life are not sincerely made to them, instead of turning to God they will flee from him as far as they can. That they are prisoners of hope is properly urged as a reason to induce them to return. Take all hope from sinners, and though they were made holy, their guilt would drive them from God. The criminal on the scaffold, however penitent, cannot confidently lift up his eye till pardon comes. His overwhelming guilt cannot bear the gaze of the multitude. No guilty creature can lift an eye to God without a hope of mercy. Hope of mercy was mentioned by David as one great motive to piety. "There is forgiveness with thee that thou mayest be feared." Certainly the love which shines in the Gospel of forgiveness, is the greatest motive to induce an ingenuous fear of offending God. It is then the duty of all to hope in his mercy. "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy." Certainly all ought to feel as good men do. And how do

good men feel towards the Gospel, the Saviour, and a pardoning God? Under an open view of the dignity and holiness of the great High-priest and the inviolable truth of God, they believe that the atonement will certainly be accepted for all who will found their hopes upon it,—that all are invited,—and that the whole race, if they will come, may be admitted to the common salvation. This is the faith of good men, and this ought to be the faith of all. This is the faith which is so often enjoined in the Bible, to which such precious promises are made, and which is followed by the blessed fruits of love, peace, obedience, patience, and triumph over spiritual foes. To all this the unbelieving temper in question is directly opposed.

This unbelief has other modes of operation. It raises objections against prayer. I am in the hands of God. He will do with me as he pleases whether I pray or not. He is unchangeable and cannot be altered by prayer, especially by such prayers as mine, which are an abomination to him. Instead of presuming to speak to him, it becomes me to humble myself in silence, to adore his sovereignty and to submit.—This is the language probably of gloomy Christians; but whether of Christians or sinners, it is the language of unbelief. They who employ it are not at rest. They meditate much on God's sovereignty and their own dependence. They fervently wish that he would move himself to save them; but they dare not pray. The tempter tells them not to move one wish of their own, to be patient as well as silent, and leave God to take his own time. It becomes you, says he, to be quiet and adore the sovereignty of God;—as though men had nothing to do but to sit still and gaze at the divine sovereignty. Will you then, because God is unchangeable, throw away all that part of religion which consists in seeking him and in holding communion with him? Will you thus condemn all the prayers of past ages, and the Bible too, and forbid all the world to pray in future? But the unchangeableness of God is no argument against prayer. As nothing is past or future with him, the sincere prayers which are offered to day, were eternally present to him and eternally affected his

heart; and thus he is eternally and unchangeably affected by the present supplications of his people. This plea then is silenced; but see whither the general objection would carry you. To sink into inactivity and wait for God to exercise his sovereignty for your relief, is to forget that you are agents and to make him the only agent in the universe. Notwithstanding your dependence, you have an agency as distinct from God's as from Gabriel's: and it is as proper for you to exert this agency in prayer, as for God to exert his agency either in a sovereign or a covenanted way. To sit still and gaze on divine sovereignty, is to renounce all action, all religion, and to leave all religion to God. And can this be right? Is not this the broad road to destruction? Continuing thus, his sovereignty can never do you any good, but must fall upon you and crush you to the lowest hell.

But you say, If I attempt to pray I shall only mock God. And how do you know that? How do you know when God's time will come to help you? It may be the next time you pray. Lift your eyes to heaven and hold them there. Who knows but God may pour his glory upon your sight? You certainly cannot see his glory while you fix your eyes on the ground. You will never pray in faith if you never make the attempt. If you abandon prayer you surely perish; if you go forward you can but die. But hold. Perhaps all this time you are a child of God. Surely then you cannot be certain that you shall mock God if you attempt to pray. Men sometimes form incorrect ideas of the quality of their prayers, and when they most fear that they shall mock God, do in fact offer the sacrifice of a broken heart.

And now I must tell you, my dear hearers, that these things are intended for *you*,—for each of you. For you the Gospel was provided; to you its blessings are sincerely tendered; and for you this sermon was designed. Let not that guilty conscience say, It cannot be for me.—Prove to me that you are a sinner, and I will prove that you are one for whom Christ died, and to whom I am sent to offer pardon in his name. Do not turn away from God under a

notion that there is no hope. Count not your sins in order to determine whether you have a warrant to go to Christ. That warrant is found, not in the comparative innocence of your character, but in the invitation of God to sinners. Is there a guilty creature lurking in any secret corner and saying, I dare not go?—*You* are the very person on whom my eye has been fixed through the whole sermon. If no one else may come, *you* certainly may, for you are a sinner. Make no excuse, but come just as you are,—with humility and grief and tears. It is by no means certain that mercy is not intended for you; for Christ came “not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.” He has made his call effectual to millions of sinners before you; perhaps he will to you. He is now inviting you. The door is set wide open. Though millions have entered, still there is room. There is room for the whole world. Let not another word be heard about an excluding decree. There is no exclusion unless you exclude yourselves. There is no necessity for one of you to perish. You may all go to heaven if you will. Come then and let us all set out together. If you *need* not perish, “why will ye die?”

And now, if from the sacred sound of

the Gospel,—if from ground steeped in a Saviour’s blood,—you go down to mingle your groans in fire with those of Dives, you will have no one to blame but yourselves. If at last you shall lift up your eyes in torment and eternally cry for a drop of water to cool your tongue, it will not be because a Saviour did not die for you, nor because mercy was not sincerely offered to you and pressed upon you; it will not be because any decree excluded you; but it will be because you trampled the mercy of God under foot and chose death rather than life. Ah, how will your present privileges then appear to you as you strain your eyes to review the past. How will appear to you these peaceful Sabbaths, when you were permitted to meet in the house of God to listen to the invitations of heaven. But I forbear. By all the value of your immortal souls,—by the yearning pity of a dying Christ,—by the tremendous terrors of the final judgment,—by all the joys and pains of eternity,—I entreat you, I beseech you to have mercy on your own souls. “Turn ye, turn ye,—for why will ye die,” O unhappy and much pitied sinners? Tell it to the ears of a compassionate heaven,—tell it to heart-breaking parents, “Why will ye die?”

S E R M O N X V I I .

NONE BUT SINNERS REDEEMED.

LUKE v. 31, 32.—They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

THE Saviour has been treated with great ingratitude in our world. He came to save *sinners*; and after all his labours and sufferings, men deny that they are sinners, and virtually charge him with throwing away his life. They allow him to have been of some service by his lessons of morality, enforced by his example, and of course do not deny him the honour of being a prophet. They are willing to look for great blessings from his hands, and thus admit that he is a king. But where is his priestly office? Gabriel or Moses might possibly have answered for a prophet, and Christ is a king to those who have never fallen. But what is the Son of God to *men* that another might not have been? Nothing perhaps, or next to nothing, if you overlook his priestly office; nothing

perhaps, or next to nothing therefore, any further than men are sinners. The business of a priest is to make atonement and intercession, neither of which is needed by those who have never sinned. And almost every thing in the kingly office which peculiarly respects mankind, consists in calling sinners to repentance, in subduing rebels, in pardoning and punishing them, and in conferring on them the blessings of grace; all which are words without a meaning if men are not sinners.

But what is it, in a Gospel sense, to be a sinner? Is it to have a few human imperfections, deserving of little or no rebuke? Let the Bible answer. "Sin is the transgression of the law," and "the soul that sinneth it shall die;" for "the wages of sin is death." To be a sinner then is to be a transgressor of the divine law and under sentence of death. But what death? Certainly a death comprehending all the evil ever threatened to sin or ever inflicted on sin. If all this is not comprehended in the death threatened in the divine law, then men are denounced and punished *without law*, which is the very definition of tyranny. When we read that "the wicked shall be turned into hell," "where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched;"—when we actually find a "rich man" lifting "up his eyes—in torments," and see those at last on the left hand, driven away "into *everlasting punishment*;" we know, unless men are threatened and punished *without law*, that this is the death which the divine law denounced.

✓ What is it then to be a sinner? It is to be a transgressor of God's law and under sentence of eternal death, and, (if the threatening of the law is just,) to *deserve* eternal death. This is the definition of the *least* sinner. The smallest sin is a "transgression of the law;" and the law says, "The soul that sinneth, [if it be but one,] it shall die." There is no such thing then as a sinner that does not deserve eternal death. I shall therefore assume this as the definition of a sinner; *One who has transgressed the law of God and is justly condemned to eternal death*. When hereafter I use the word *sinner*, let me be understood as comprehending under the term the whole of this idea. Those

who admit that they have some frailties, and even faults, but deny that they deserve eternal death, do not acknowledge themselves to be sinners in the Gospel sense of the word. Those who lament over the world and talk of the injustice of punishing them without end, do not admit that one of Adam's race is a sinner in the Gospel sense of the word.

The grand parting point where nominal Christians and men of the world split from the Church, is at this question, whether men are sinners. This once settled, and every thing of essential importance is settled with it. At this spot universalists leave us. Convince men that the whole world do indeed deserve eternal death, and universalism dies at once before the plain threatenings of the Gospel. At this spot Socinians leave us. They first assume that sin is a venial fault that may be pardoned without an atonement, and then they see no work for Jesus of Nazareth which might not be done by a creature. But send the conviction through their souls that they deserve eternal death, according to the sentence of a law that *must* be supported as the foundation of all the order and happiness of the universe, and they see at once that "without shedding of blood" there could be "no remission;" and they see at once that no finite person could suffer an equivalent for the endless miseries of a world,—that no finite person of course could make atonement better than "the blood of bulls and of goats,"—in short, that our great High-priest must be divine. This is the spot where the multitude leave us who spit out their profane railery against the threatenings of the Gospel. Did they know that they had forfeited their lives to him whom they blaspheme,—that while the impudent taunt is on their lips they stand condemned by him to eternal wo,—they would not dare thus to turn the awful denunciations of God into a joke. This is where the whole company of more decent people leave us, who complain that the doctrines of grace are rigid and oppressive. Did they realize that the whole world are sinners and lie under a just condemnation to eternal death, not a doctrine of the Gospel would appear oppressive or rigid. In a word, let one deep and universal conviction take pos-

session of the world that all men are sinners in the sense explained, and most of the jarring opinions about religion would cease among a race prostrate at their Maker's feet. There is not a system of error in the world that does not soften the representations of human depravity and guilt; and the common charge of all those systems against the doctrines always held by the Church, is, that they are too degrading to man.

Let us see then whether an argument cannot be raised from our text which shall leave no room to doubt that men are sinners in the sense now explained. The argument is this: *that none but such needed a Saviour, and that Jesus of Nazareth came to save none but such.* When he uttered the words of our text he had recently added the publican Levi, otherwise called Matthew, the future writer of the Gospel, to the number of his disciples. Called from the receipt of custom, Matthew was followed by many other inquiring publicans, who were all with Jesus, partaking of a feast prepared in Matthew's house. The Jews, who regarded themselves as pre-eminently holy, murmured that he eat with publicans and sinners, whom they considered too wicked to be admitted to their society. Jesus justified his conduct in the words of our text: "They that are whole, [as you seem to yourselves to be,] need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." I came to call none but such as you esteem the publicans to be,—poor, degraded, lost sinners. If there are any others on earth, them I did not come to save. If there are any of the character which you profess to have, I have nothing to do with them. They have no occasion for me. "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

For what purpose did Christ come into our world? Socinians say, to instruct us by his doctrines, precepts, and example, and to seal his instructions with his blood. They place him about upon a level with Socrates, and assign him little more to do than to act as the schoolmaster of the world. But what says the Bible? "The Son of man is come to *save* that which was *lost*." He "looked down from the height of" his "sanctuary—to hear the groaning of the

prisoner" and "to loose those that" were "*appointed to death*." He was "anointed, [that is, constituted the Christ,] to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;" "to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house;" to "say to the prisoners, Go forth, to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves." "*By the blood of the covenant* I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.—God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us."

If Christ came, not to deliver "prisoners" "appointed to death," but only to instruct people living at their ease; or if he came merely to remove temporal calamities, to repeal the curse of briars and thorns, to soothe the throb of anguish, to procure earthly blessings for the world, or at most to raise the body from the grave; then his mission did not prove that men are sinners in the sense explained. But if he came to deliver them from *eternal death*, ("the curse of the law,") then the proof is abundant. For what purpose then, I ask, did he come? What has he in fact done? Let the apostle answer. "Christ hath redeemed us from the *curse of the law*, being made a curse for us." *That* for ever settles the question. Let this short sentence be written on your memory and hearts, and you will never doubt again. "*Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*." Then all for whom he died did lie under the curse of the law, that is, under sentence of eternal death. "For—we thus judge, that if one died for all, *then* were all dead, [dead in the sentence of the law;] and *that he died for all*, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." He became a sin-offering and died in our stead, not to save us from natural death, (for that we still endure,) but from eternal death. God "*hath* made him to be sin for us who knew no

sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;" "who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree;—by whose stripes ye were healed." "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.—He was wounded *for our transgressions*, he was bruised *for our iniquities*: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray,—and the Lord *hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*.—*For the transgression of my people was he stricken*.—When thou shalt make his soul *an offering for sin*, he shall see his seed,—he shall see of the travail of his soul.—[He shall] justify many, *for he shall bear their iniquities*.—He bore *the sin of many* and made intercession for the transgressors." For many hundred years this great truth was exhibited to the world in the typical sacrifices, in all which you see *life offered for life*,—the victim slain to save the life of the transgressor. These sacrifices were intended to familiarize to the world the idea of a substitution one day to be exhibited on Calvary; and they were wholly without meaning if we throw away the idea of a proper atonement, consisting in life offered for life.

If then Christ died to save sinners from eternal death, all for whom he died might justly have suffered eternal death. If they did not deserve to suffer, God would not have laid it upon them if Christ had not died, and there was no need of his death. Surely Christ did not die to render the Father just. He did not die to save an oppressed race from a punishment which they did not deserve. Far different was the language of his death. See, said he, I regard the punishment of man so just that I am willing to bear an equivalent for it myself. I come, not to take the part of an oppressed world against an unrighteous law, but to vindicate the claims of God and his law against a rebellious world. I shall never consent that the world shall be pardoned till I have borne their "sins" in my "own body on the tree." I die to convince the universe that though believing sinners are pardoned, the penalty of the law is not repealed, but will infallibly be executed on all transgressors not covered by the atonement. I die to produce a greater proof of this

than would have resulted from the eternal destruction of Adam's race.—Thus by coming "in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin," he "condemned sin in the flesh." Man's desert of eternal death, and the certain punishment of the ungodly, were never so loudly pronounced as on the cross of Christ.

Such was the ill-desert of sinners before Christ died; and it has in no degree diminished since. The nature of sin is not changed. It deserves no less punishment than before. Yea it deserves more, and its punishment is rendered still more certain where it is unrepented of. Nor is the natural character of man changed. "The carnal, [that is, the natural] mind" was never worse than "enmity against God,"—was never more than "dead in trespasses and sins." And men out of Christ are as much condemned as ever. "He that believeth not is condemned already.—He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but *the wrath of God abideth on him*." The condemnation and guilt are even greater than before. "This is" now "the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil."

Thus the priestly office of Christ is a standing proof that all men, (for he died for all,) are sinners, and deserve all that the law has threatened against sin. And not only what he did as a priest, but what he came to perform as a prophet and achieve as a king, proves that men are but sinners. Did he come to instruct the world as a prophet? it was to "bring the *blind* by a way that they knew not" and to "lead them in paths that they" had "not known;" to "make *darkness* light before them and crooked things straight." Did he come to rule the world as a king? it was, as the case evinced, to stretch forth his hands "all day long—unto a disobedient and gainsaying people," and to extend his invitations to the "deaf." It was "to call," not "the righteous, but sinners to repentance;" to make his "people—willing in the day of" his "power;" to "take away the stony heart out of" their "flesh" and to give them "a heart of flesh;" to manifest "the exceeding greatness of his power" in a moral change important enough to be denomi-

nated a new birth, a new creation, a resurrection from the dead. He came to pardon rebels; to wash and clothe those who were cast out at their birth "in the open field," "in their own blood," unswaddled, and with no eye to pity.

Several other names which are applied to Christ, not in the distinct character of prophet, priest, or king, but in the general character of Mediator, denote that men are lost sinners. Is he called a physician? then the world are sick. Is he called a Redeemer? then men are captives in the prison-house. Is he called a Saviour? then the world are lost. But it is too much. After all his dying love displayed for eighteen hundred years,—after he has held up this world from hell from the fall of Adam,—after all his tender care of a poor, wretched, bankrupt race,—is it now made a question whether the world ever needed his aid? Are we holding consultations to decide whether mankind were lost, or whether he rashly threw away his life? After all the treasures of heaven have been exhausted to redeem us, is it now made a question whether we were ever in prison? O the ingratitude of our world. It seems enough to make the angels weep. But so it is. Ten thousand clamours are heard through the world at every suggestion that men are sinners. Wherever Satan can wind his errors round the understanding, numberless apologies are made for sin; and crimes and heresies which God has marked for destruction, are covered with the mantle of charity. Wherever the cold, heartless, eyeless spectre of Socinian blasphemy rears its head, inundations of ridicule are poured out against the doctrines of human depravity, regeneration, atonement, and every lisp that sounds like a divine threatening.

INFERENCES.

1. It is impossible for any man to accept the Saviour that is offered in the Gospel without a conviction of sin. While we shut our eyes upon our depravity and celebrate the purity and dignity of human nature, we may indeed form some notions of Christ as a friend and benefactor, and even as the teacher of our world, but the appropriate character of the Redeemer is wholly over-

looked. They who consider him only in the light of a beneficent king, scattering blessings among his prosperous subjects, do one thing; but they who worship the Christ of God, contemplate him as one entering our dungeons to strike off the chains from criminals condemned to death, and to give them liberty by suffering in their stead; as the good physician entering the chambers of the sick and dying; as the Jesus who came to "save his people from their sins." Without these apprehensions, which necessarily imply a conviction of sin, no man can have a right view of Christ. The effort of faith is the struggle of human misery for relief, the sigh of guilt for pardon, the reaching of a polluted soul after purity, of weakness after strength, of blindness after light,—in a word, of a lost sinner after a Saviour. Hence before men will believe, the Spirit must be sent to convince them of sin and ruin and helplessness.

Nothing is more plain, if I have given a right view of the atonement, than that a man cannot cordially approve of that provision till he feels himself justly condemned to eternal death. I cannot approve of my friend's paying my debt to save me from prison, till I feel that I am in debt and justly exposed to prison. Or if I thank my friend for thus interposing between me and a merciless oppressor, I shall not justify the oppressor. But if it is a matter which involves my character, and my friend takes the part of the creditor against me, and pronounces him just and me unjust, my heart will rise against him as much as against the creditor himself, till I am convinced that the debt is just. Now God the Father is the creditor and Christ undertook to pay the debt. In doing this he pronounced God in the right and the world in the wrong. He pronounced the race of men deserving of eternal death. That declaration we never can approve even with our understandings till our reason is convinced that we do deserve eternal death: and we never can approve of it in our hearts till we heartily feel that we deserve eternal death.

We may hail the Saviour in some loose and general sense, as men do the deliverer of their country; but till we hate and condemn sin, and take the condemnation to ourselves, we never shall

apply to Christ as a Saviour from sin and death. We shall not go to the physician till we feel that we are sick. We shall never flee to Christ without a broken heart. Hence repentance is urged upon all men by the inspired writers, and in all the exhortations of the New Testament it is placed before faith.

2. We see therefore that a sense of sin and ruin lies at the foundation of all the religion of the Gospel,—all the religion of the Old Testament and the New,—all the religion which God has ever enjoined on a fallen race. *That* religion which has its foundation here cannot be essentially wrong; *that* religion which has not this foundation can never be right. By this criterion let our religion be tried. Let us never venture to the bar of God with a religion that does not make us humble,—that leaves us without any conviction of sin. I am willing to give up every other dispute about religion and meet the world upon this ground. Let there be a religion which acknowledges that man is justly condemned to eternal death by the divine law and needs a Saviour, and I am satisfied. You hear many disputes about religion, and are often perplexed, amidst so many jarring opinions, to know what is truth. But here you may find a clew to lead you through the labyrinth. That system of doctrines which charges depravity and guilt upon man and casts him helpless upon a Saviour, must be right. Possess this religion, and no errors in your creed will destroy you. On this ground, my beloved hearers, we may all unite.

3. I infer that those systems of doctrines which conceal the guilt and ruin of men,—which lead them to regard the sins of the *heart* as mere human imperfections that neither deserve eternal death nor need an atonement, must be hostile, must be fatal, to the best interests of man. Wo, wo to the retailers of

such delicious poison. That preaching which excites no insurrection in the conscience,—which leaves men as much at peace with themselves as it found them,—cannot be right. It is a syren voice that lulls to death. But that preaching which *professedly* undertakes to deny the deep depravity of man, his desert of eternal death, and his need of a proper atonement, is probably the wickedest thing in the world. It is more hurtful to the real cause of human happiness than pestilence or wars or murder. For a generation of children and youth to be exposed to this smooth flattery of the serpent,—I must say, to these doctrines of hell,—is a hazard of their essential happiness greater than would be involved in an exposure to the plague.

4. Let me impress on your minds, my beloved hearers, the importance of feeling deeply in your hearts that you are a part of those lost sinners who needed a Saviour. You *are* of that description of persons: God has pronounced you such; and he will prove it to you and to the universe at the last day. To *feel* that you are such, is only to feel according to truth. Those feelings, (realizing and deep,) you *must* possess, or you can never have a part in Christ. It will be in vain to hear these truths preached,—it will be in vain to assent to them with your understanding and to support them with your lips,—if you do not feel the power of them in your hearts. If you cannot go to the feet of Christ with a broken heart,—if you cannot habitually lie there and loathe yourselves and justify the law which condemns you, and see that your only hope is in the atonement of your Saviour,—all is in vain. My dear hearers, fall down before the Son of God to-day, and wash his feet with your tears and wipe them with the hairs of your head. . . . Are you there? There I will leave you, and carry your case to the mercy seat.

SERMON XVIII.

FATAL EFFECTS OF REFUSING TO SUBMIT TO CHRIST.

LUKE xix. 27.—But those my enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me.

CHRIST was now on his journey to Jerusalem for the last time, where the disciples expected that in a few days he would establish an earthly kingdom and exalt them to places of power. To counteract this impression he uttered the parable from which our text is taken. A nobleman, going "into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return," committed to his ten servants ten pounds, with a charge to occupy till he should come. Some of them proved faithful, and at his return received a distinguished reward; another buried his pound in a napkin, and met with a tremendous recompense. Both of these classes represented professing Christians. But there was a third class, not of his household, but "his citizens," who "sent a message after him," openly declaring, "We will not have this man to reign over us." This class represented the Jews and all other open enemies of Christ in a Gospel land. After he had received the kingdom and returned, he first reckoned with his nominal servants, and then issued a general decree for the destruction of his open enemies.

When our Lord was upon earth he appeared not as a king, but in a low condition. He was to receive his kingdom as the reward of his obedience unto death. He was now present with his disciples, but he was about to go to heaven to enter on a dominion over the universe. After a while he was to return and reckon with his Church and with the world, and reward his friends, and punish with utter destruction both his secret and open enemies. In the mean time his servants were to employ the talents committed to them and to wait for their reward till their work was done. They were to be put upon probation, subject to a strict and solemn

scrutiny at their Lord's return, and then to be rewarded or punished according to their fidelity or unfaithfulness. We are led by the text and context to the following thoughts.

I. Christ has set up a glorious and successful kingdom on earth.

II. To this kingdom all men are bound to submit.

III. The world are divided into two classes, one for and the other against the kingdom of Christ.

IV. This King will one day return and crush all his enemies with utter and irretrievable destruction.

I. Christ has set up a glorious and successful kingdom on earth.

It was long ago foretold, by the same lips that predicted the four great pagan empires, that "in the days of these kings—the God of heaven" would "set up a kingdom which" should "never be destroyed;" which should "break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms and—stand for ever." While others are putting in their claims to dominion over men, Christ also has set up a kingdom. While others are contending for their several interests, Christ has brought forward an interest of his own. Of all rivals he has the prior claim. This world was "created *by* him and *for* him," and he has purchased it since and over paid the price in his blood. It has been made over to him by covenant, and his charter covers it all. It is preserved for no other end than to be the seat of his kingdom. It is all his own, and no other being has a right to erect an interest on this ground. This is the grand interest of the world. And it will prevail and swallow up all other interests. This kingdom will advance like a rolling world and crush every thing which rises up to oppose it. Its glorious Head will extend his sceptre over the

thrones of Europe and the temples of Asia. He will march through prostrate nations and lay a subjugated world at his feet. Superstition and ignorance, pride and passion, bloodshed and misery, will yield before him. All that pollutes and all that afflicts mankind shall die on the point of his sword, and he shall sit down upon his throne the grand pacificator and restorer of a world.

This is the most glorious king that ever lived; the most pure, the most just, the most potent, the most distinguished with excellent and awful majesty; and at the same time the most benignant and gracious. His laws require nothing but the various modifications and fruits of love. His prohibitions and his providence are directed only against the disturbers of the public peace. No prince, fabled in Grecian story, ever went forth with so much benevolence to expel from his kingdom bands of robbers and savage beasts, to protect the oppressed, to administer equal justice, and to establish righteousness and peace. His holy precepts, his sanctifying Spirit, the light of his truth, and his powerful providence, all combine to establish a benignant dominion over the ignorance, the errors, the passions, the crimes, and the miseries of man,—to expand the miser's heart, to silence the lying and defaming tongue, to disarm revenge, to tame the ferocious Mohawk, to cleanse the polluted Hindoo, to enlighten the superstitious Laplander, to elevate the degraded Hottentot, and to turn a savage world from a sty and a hell into an abode of purity and peace. Everlasting shall be his praise. Empires shall pass away; the names of an Alexander and a Cesar shall rot; but his fame and dominion shall endure for ever. His love shall be the theme of the impassioned song till human woes and human apostacy are forgotten.

II. To this kingdom all men are bound to submit. The infinite excellence stamp'd on its laws lays bonds on every rational creature. Is not every being bound to rise up to the purity of universal love? The *authority* of this King binds every man. He who requires the submission is a being of infinite dignity and excellence, who by nature is God, and who

as Mediator has received from the Father the fullest right to exercise all the authority of the God-head. God has "set" his Son upon his "holy hill of Zion," and commanded men, as they dread his eternal displeasure, to obey him as their King. Christ has a right to our submission and obedience as our Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer. We "are not" our "own," we are the creatures of his power. We "are not" our "own," we "are bought with a price." He has exalted us to heaven in point of privileges. He has poured around us a flood of heavenly light. He has followed us with his pressing calls. He has sustained the whole charge of our daily support. He has constantly loaded us with his mercies.

After the infinite Son of God has come down to take our nature and bear our sins, in order to pluck us from eternal death and raise us to immortal life; after God has crowned and proclaimed him our King, for the sole purpose of finishing our salvation; after he has solemnly commanded us to receive him for our sovereign and Saviour; after that Saviour has followed us and wooed us and entreated us, and a thousand times told us that he died for our lives; after he has let down his infinite dignity to offer to such unworthiness all that he has purchased,—to offer, "without money and without price," what cost him so much,—to press it upon us and to weep over us when we refuse; after all this is done, are mankind under no obligations to own him for their Sovereign and Saviour? We are under *infinite* obligations. He created us that we might serve him; he bought us out of prison that we might serve him; he takes upon himself the daily burden of our support that we may live and serve him. In the most absolute sense we are his property. Surely then we are the fit subjects of his commands, and ought to feel it our duty and our highest happiness to be entirely at his disposal,—our highest privilege and blessedness to be saved by his merits and to give him all the praise.

Is this the duty of Christians and not of others? Can it be that they only are under this obligation who have already submitted? that there is no previous bond? that the obligation is sub-

sequent to the performance? Then the duty was no duty. If the first act of faith was not in compliance with a previous obligation, there was nothing in it holy. But if there was a previous obligation, then unbelievers who hear the Gospel are bound to submit to Christ. Where then is the plea of inability? It excuses no man. It is only pleading guilty, as it imports that you cannot find it in your heart to submit to such a Saviour. *All* are under indispensable obligations to submit to him.

But what is it to submit to Christ? It is, first, to obey that law which he administers in the name of God,—to love God and man and to bring forth the corresponding fruits. Secondly, it is to submit to the conditions of grace,—to repent of sin, to justify the law which condemns us, to renounce our own righteousness, to cast ourselves on his atonement and merits, on his mercy and power, to place unwavering confidence in him, and to delight in the way of salvation by him.

To submit to Christ in this full and hearty manner, is the indispensable and immediate duty of every sinner under the Gospel; and nothing but this full and hearty submission is any submission at all.

III. The world are divided into two classes, one for and the other against the kingdom of Christ. There are no neutrals here. Our Saviour expressly settles this point. "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Those then who do not yield a hearty submission to Christ, are his enemies. The whole population of Christendom are divided into these two classes. All who are not habitually *governed* by the love of God as he shines "in the face of Jesus Christ,"—whose love to this God and Saviour is not supreme,—are enemies to the kingdom of Messiah. And this is the case with every natural man however amiable,—with all those decent moral people who frequent our religious assemblies and yet belong to the world. They are not reconciled to the kingdom of Christ. The constitution of this kingdom forbids selfishness, and they are selfish. It requires them to extend their supreme regard to Christ and his Church, and to act continually

under the influence of this principle. But their supreme regard is confined to themselves. Convinced that it is their interest to submit, they sometimes wish for this temper; but it proceeds from no higher principle than selfishness. The God who makes such a law is the object of their aversion. The Saviour who came to sanction such a government, and has taken upon himself the administration of it, and insists as a condition of salvation that they shall possess the temper which the law requires, is equally the object of their dislike. To see their own eternal interest left at the sovereign disposal of God, fills them with distress. They hate the doctrines which proclaim these facts. They hate to hear their guilt and helplessness set forth. They hate to be urged to quit their self-righteous dependance on duties and to sue for mercy as beggars. They hate to hear of justice which punishes. They hate to be urged to a life of self-denial and devotion. From a general regard to the order of society, which their natural affections and even their selfishness would protect,—which conscience and the love of natural fitness cannot but approve,—they are willing to promote external morality, and even to exemplify it themselves. But a cordial submission to the laws of Christ, which require them to deny themselves and make the interest of his kingdom their all in all,—which require them to cast away their self-esteem and self-dependance, and to rely on him alone and give him all the glory; this they do not render. Contracted into a unit, they cannot diffuse themselves through myriads of kindred beings, and live in their life and rejoice in their joy. A sordid selfishness weighs them down and depresses them infinitely below the dignity of this heavenly temper. Inflated with pride, they cannot come down to the soul-humbling terms on which pardon is offered. They lie under the dominion of selfishness, which, however reined in at present, is ready to break forth into every passion and crime, and wants nothing but provocation and the absence of restraint to display itself in all the malignity of the damned. This preparation for unbounded wickedness, which is involved in a supremely selfish temper, constitutes what

is called the *infinite depth* of wickedness in the human heart. And this is the description of every man who ever descended from Adam.

IV. This glorious King will one day return and crush all his enemies with utter and irretrievable destruction. By the unchanging decree of God he is to reign until all "his enemies" are "made his footstool." The God who exalted him so high will hold no man guiltless who refuses allegiance to his Son. He will transfix with eternal plagues the wretch that contemns the Lord's Anointed. How could you think that a rejection of all this love and excellence would escape unpunished? that this war against the darling of God's soul would pass without rebuke? And did you dream that God would give up his Son a second time to buffeting? Was it not enough that he was spit upon when he stood to atone for your sins? Did you suppose he would consent to be mocked on his throne of glory? From those heavens which received him he will come again. He will "be revealed—with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel;—who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." He will not then appear a weeping infant in the manger; he will not then come to be arraigned at Pilate's bar; he will not then stand a suppliant at the door of your heart; but he will appear in all the glory of his Father, to raise the dead and to judge the world. After he has wound up the skein of his providence and finished the great plan of government and of restoration, then cometh the day for which all days were made: then cometh the day of execution. In some place which may be called the shambles of the universe, this bloody execution will take place. There is a vault low in the recesses of night, the region of horror and despair: from that state-prison of the universe the wretched culprits will come. And when the supreme excellence of this heavenly King shall be displayed,—his infinite dignity, the righteousness and grandeur of his government, his boundless love to men, his descent to the manger, his unwearied labours, his

bloody sweat, his agonizing death, his long and earnest calls;—when it shall appear that they rejected all his love, all the proffered good which was worth so much, which cost so much, which was offered by infinite dignity to infinite guilt, offered and pressed on such easy terms;—when it shall appear that they rejected this glorious King, not because they were *unable* to obey, but from hatred of holy order, from hard and unfeeling ingratitude, from that sordid selfishness which, with the intrepidity of a madman and the obstinacy of a fiend, has urged forward a conspiracy to overturn the throne of God and to strip from Christ all his hard-earned honours;—when all this is proved by the testimony of God himself and by the confession of their own conscience, what *ought* the King of the world to do? Come, you yourselves shall pronounce their doom. Say then, what punishment shall he inflict? He is still the dispassionate Judge, and is willing to do nothing but what unchanging justice requires. *Ought not* these traitors to be driven out from his presence and shut up in prison, where they can no longer disturb the order of his kingdom? *Shall* he not give command to his ministering angels, "Those my enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me?" Where is the universalist now? Is there nothing but mercy when Christ comes the second time? Where is the Socinian now? Is that awful King who calls all men his servants, who judges the world in his own name, and inflicts eternal plagues because they served not him,—is he a mere creature, a worm of the dust? Where is the infidel now? What now think you of the Messiah whom you reproached as an impostor? Where are Pilate and Herod at whose bar he stood? Where are they who smote him on the face and contemptuously hailed him as a king? And where are my poor hearers who would not accept his love? I think I discern among that trembling crowd some faces which once I knew. Ah, unhappy men, do you not remember the Sabbaths we spent together in yonder world? Do you not remember the pleadings of your minister, and his anxious, breaking heart? What think

you now of those warnings of weeping love which you then thought a jest? What would you now give to regain one of those hours in the house of God which you then threw away? Where are now the many excuses you once offered? Where is the mouth which could speak against hard doctrines and pungent preaching?

My dear hearers, you are still around me. This is a world of hope, and this is the season of prayer. By all the terrors of the judgment day,—by all the horrors of that wild waste of eternal ages,—by the purity, love, and power of the heavenly King,—by all the compassions which heave our bursting hearts,—I beseech you to fall down at

the feet of your King and Saviour. Throw down the weapons of your rebellion and submit to him. Delay not a moment. A thousand dangers hang on a moment's delay. On a moment's delay hangs guilt enough to sink a soul. "Now is the time he bends his ear and waits for your request." His arms are extended to receive you. Rush into his embrace. There is nothing to keep you off but you yourself. Why will you stay away? Why will you die? I can say no more. It must be as you decide. Life and death are now set before you, and you must take your choice. God is above you; eternity is before you: I leave you to make the great decision.

SERMON XIX.

THE DECEITFULNESS OF THE HEART.

JER. xvii. 9.—The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Two things are noticeable here; the *degree* of the deceitfulness of the heart and the *cause* of it. As to the degree, "the heart is deceitful *above all things*." We read of a "deceitful tongue," of "deceitful lusts," of "the deceitfulness of riches." "Favour is deceitful;" "the kisses of an enemy are deceitful;" but the heart is deceitful above them all. As it is more deceitful than the tongue, there is more danger that we shall deceive men unintentionally by first deceiving ourselves, than that we shall deceive them from fixed purpose. The *cause* of this deceitfulness of the heart is its desperate wickedness. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Were men perfectly holy they would have no difficulty in knowing their hearts. Angels know theirs; and men who are the most sanctified possess the most self-knowledge. Sin has converted the mind into a dark house, full of laby-

rinths, which an unenlightened eye can never trace. Of many a man it is true, that "a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?"

This is the general reason of the deceitfulness of the heart; but it may be useful to go into particulars. The root of all sin consists in selfishness, and selfishness produces this deceitfulness in different ways. In the first place, it renders the mind extremely biassed in its own favour; so that when it undertakes to pass judgment on its own exercises, it seldom does it with impartiality. In the second place, it not only predisposes the mind to judge too favourably of itself, but produces many exercises which are mistaken for the Christian graces. It creates a regard for God as a friend and benefactor, which is easily mistaken for the love required in his law. It produces move-

ments of gratitude under a sense of his mercy, condescension, and long suffering. We may have a selfish approbation of his law and government, because they are calculated to produce a happy society, and we hope to share in that happiness ourselves. Regarding him as a friend, we may reckon that if he has the government of the world it will fare well with us; and so we may selfishly rejoice in his government, and in the circumstance that our lives and interests are in his hands. With such a reference to ourselves, we may rejoice in his wisdom to contrive, in his power to execute, and in his goodness to dictate, the best plan of promoting happiness. With the same reference, we may rejoice that his great end is to produce happiness, and so may selfishly approve his character. We may selfishly desire to be in heaven, from a general notion that happiness is there. We may repent from a fear of punishment; and having connected with sin the idea of misery, and being thus accustomed to look upon it as an enemy, as such we may hate it and wish to avoid it. Or from finding certain sins injurious to our peace or our character or our worldly interests, we may be anxious to shun them. And having connected with a life of virtue the idea of present and future profit, we may seek to lead a virtuous life. We may love the people of God because they are our friends, or because their characters and course of life are calculated to promote our interest.

These mistakes are promoted by a selfish operation upon ourselves in the business of self-examination. When a person, solicitous to find something in himself to relieve his fears, sits down to this work, he puts every power in motion to work up his heart to the desired pitch. He plies arguments and motives until his imagination and passions are excited; and in this state he readily obtains what he sought; little thinking that if he had taken half the pains to work himself up to the opposite frame, he would more quickly and more fully have succeeded.

The liability to mistake, thus grounded on selfishness, is the proper deceitfulness of the heart. But this liability is promoted by other powers of the mind not in themselves sinful. For instance,

imagination, sympathy, and other natural affections, may give rise to feelings which are easily mistaken for holy love and gratitude. The love of natural fitness is often put down for the genuine love of holy order. The approbation of the understanding and conscience frequently pass current for the affections of the heart. An enlightened understanding and conscience cannot but approve of the character, law, and government of God, and disapprove of sin, and see that it is worthy of punishment. The damned have a conscience that feels all this, and it is the never-dying worm. An enlightened understanding may argue out the necessity and fitness of the atonement, and this may be accounted nothing less than saving faith. It may be convinced that the happiness resulting from benevolent intercourse is the most pure and substantial; and this conviction may generate a sort of desire to partake of the happiness of heaven, which may be easily mistaken for desires after the society of God and his people.

Having thus developed those powers and operations of the mind which constitute or promote the deceitfulness of the heart, I will proceed to show how far a man may go in favourable appearances and yet be deluded. And because I wish to present these symptoms in one connected view, I shall glance at some things which have already been said.

He may exercise a correct speculative faith in all revealed truths. "The devils also believe and tremble." His understanding and conscience may approve of the character, law, and government of God, of the atonement of Christ, and of all the truths of the Gospel. He may have a sort of regard for God,—may rejoice in his wisdom, goodness, and mercy, and may be melted into gratitude for benefits received. He may exercise a general desire to be sanctified and saved. The foolish virgins desired the oil of the wise, and said to the bridegroom, "Lord, lord, open to us." Even Balaam desired to die the death of the righteous. His conscience may disapprove of sin and condemn himself as being worthy of death. With such a conscience the devils are tormented. His conscience may be so tender as to revolt at most acts deemed sinful. Balaam could say, with seeming conscien-

tiousness, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord." Indeed in the general tenour of his conduct he may act conscientiously, either through the power of education or from the sensibility or even error of his conscience. Paul, before his conversion, was an instance of such erroneous conscientiousness. He had "lived in all good conscience before God;" "touching the righteousness which" was "in the law" he was "blameless." The man may abhor the sins of others for various reasons; first, because they are against his interest. Thus Absalom abhorred the conduct of Amnon. A similar instance of conduct in Shechem was highly resented by Simeon and Levi, who destroyed the city of Shechem, alleging, with a semblance of zeal for God, that Shechem "had wrought folly in Israel,—which thing ought not to be done." Yet their father Jacob pronounced on their conduct, "Cursed be their anger for it was fierce, and their wrath for it was cruel." Secondly, he may abhor the sins of others from compassion. When he sees the widow and fatherless weeping under the hand of merciless oppression, his indignation may be excited. Thirdly, from that love of natural fitness which leads him to delight in a well arranged garden, he may be pleased with the order of a well regulated family; and he may hate to see untowardliness in children and domestics, and ill management in parents and masters, just as he would hate to see an ill-shapen rock in the midst of a beautiful parterre. For the same reason he may hate to see those disingenuous actions which destroy good neighbourhood, and all ingratitude to benefactors; and may wish to see performed the relative duties of superiors and inferiors, magistrates and subjects, husbands and wives, parents and children. He may be opposed to all known sins *in himself*, first, from the dictates of natural conscience. To any rational being whose reason is not extremely perverted, the consciousness of acting an inconsistent part is always painful. To avoid this pain most men avoid many sins, and all would do so were not conscience silenced by error or lulled by the syren voice of pleasure. Secondly, he may

be anxious to avoid certain sins on account of the uneasiness they occasion, aside from the reproaches of conscience; such as anger, envy, pride, and drunkenness. Thirdly, he may resist sin in general out of respect to his character. Having models of amiable conduct before him, and perceiving how highly it is respected by the ingenuous part of society, he is ambitious to imitate it. Fourthly, he desires to avoid sin for fear of future punishment.

For some or all of these reasons, he may, first, mourn for his sins. Esau mourned with tears for having profanely sold his birthright. The rebels in the wilderness "mourned greatly" when they thought of their sin and its consequences. When the envious Saul was delivered into the hands of David and was spared, his heart smote him, and he "lifted up his voice and wept: and he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil." When Ahab heard the denunciations of God against his sins, "he rent his clothes and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly." When Judas "saw that" Jesus "was condemned," he "repented,—and brought again the thirty pieces of silver,—saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.—And he cast down the—silver,—and went and hanged himself." Secondly, he may be free to confess his sins. When sentence was pronounced on the rebels in the wilderness, they publicly confessed with grief. The same they did when the fiery serpents were sent. Balaam confessed to the angel that he had sinned. And the wicked Shimei freely confessed the sin of cursing David. Thirdly, he may make resolutions and vows to break off from sin. Pharaoh repeatedly made resolutions and promises to let Israel go. Saul repeatedly resolved and promised no more to persecute David. Fourthly, he may strive against sin. Thus Pilate strove against the sin of condemning Jesus. Fifthly, he may go so far as to forsake most of his external sins. The young man who professed to have kept all the commandments from his childhood, had doubtless led an externally moral life. Sixthly, he may be

awakened and brought under strong convictions of sin, and may tremble at God's word, like Felix and Belshazzar, and may have the feelings of that generation at the Red Sea, of whom it is said that "they feared the Lord."

Thus far in regard to *sin*; and this has prepared me to say that he may undergo a great *change* in his views and feelings. After Saul was anointed by Samuel, "God gave him another heart,—and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among" the prophets. Simon Magus was changed from a public sorcerer into a speculative believer, and "continued with Philip and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." After great distress he may receive comfort, under the hope that his sins are forgiven. "He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word and anon with joy receiveth it: yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while." He may make a public profession of religion and enter into covenant with God. When Israel entered into covenant with God at Sinai, "they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues: for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." In after ages Isaiah thus addressed them. "Hear ye this, O house of Jacob,—which swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth nor in righteousness." The parable of the ten virgins, of the tares, and of the net, plainly teach us that many enter the Church who will never enter heaven.

Having thus made a public profession, he may take much delight in external duties. It was said of Israel by way of reproof: "They seek me daily and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God." He may listen with pleasure to the preaching of the word. It is said of the hearers of John the baptist, that they "were willing for a season to rejoice in his light." Even Herod heard John gladly. He may be much affected under sermons, and may have great movings of feelings in prayer. Esau "found no place of

repentance though he sought it carefully with tears." Moses said to rebellious Israel; "Ye returned and wept before the Lord, but the Lord would not hearken to your voice nor give ear unto you." He may have an affection for the people of God. He may love them for their natural accomplishments; he may love them as his friends; he may love them as being on his side against an opposing world, or because they belong to his sect, and support his views in opposition to other sects, or because he has received or expects to receive some benefit from them. For some of these reasons the sons of Heth were friendly to Abraham, Pharaoh loved Joseph, and Ahab was attached to the good Jehoshaphat. He may have a flaming zeal for God. Jehu had such a zeal, and with an ostentation common to hypocrites, proclaimed, "Come with me and see my zeal for the Lord." The Scribes and Pharisees had a great zeal to pay tithes of mint, anise, and cummin, and fasted twice a week, and would "compass sea and land to make one proselyte." The whole nation, while they crucified the Son of God, did it under the cloak of religious zeal. And Paul plainly intimates that a person may give all his "goods to feed the poor" and his "body to be burned" as a martyr, without holy love. A flaming, overbearing, noisy zeal is a strong mark of a hypocrite. "Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift, is like clouds and wind without rain." The figure is easily understood. Those clouds which have the most wind and sound, generally contain the least rain. Peter and Jude apply the same figure to blustering zealots. "These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest." "Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds." It is supposed that the vision which Elijah had at Horeb, was designed to teach that true religion does not consist in the wind of words, nor in the quakings of a guilty conscience, nor yet in the fire of a blazing zeal, but in the still, small voice of humility and love.

We are now prepared to see that such a man may believe that he is a Christian. "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing." "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet

is not washed from their filthiness." "If a man think himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." Such was the man who built his house upon the sand. "What is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?" "The hypocrite's hope shall perish." The man may not only believe in his good estate, but may be very confident of it. The Jews had this confidence in a high degree. When Jesus gave a hint about blindness, "some of the Pharisees," astonished at the suggestion, "said unto him, Are we blind also?" The same astonishment will come to many in the Christian Church. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" To be very confident of one's good estate, especially at first, often betrays ignorance of the deceitfulness of the heart. True humility begets modesty and self-distrust. There is doubtless such a thing as "the full assurance of hope;" and we ought to give "diligence" to acquire and carry it with us "unto the end." It is generally the result of long experience of the power of our religion to overcome sin and the world. But that strong confidence which, like Jonah's gourd, grows up "in a night," is apt to perish "in a night." It is too often connected with a self-righteous spirit which says, "Stand by thyself; come not near to me; for I am holier than thou." "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." Such a man, under the strong apprehension of the love of God to him, may be deeply affected, and his mouth may run over with his praises. So it was with Israel at the Red Sea: "They sang his praise; they soon forgot his works." The man may have texts of Scripture suggested to his mind, which seem to bring a promise of salvation. Doubtless that same tempter who suggested a Scripture promise to our Saviour on the pinnacle of the temple, has still power to insinuate such promises for the purpose of delusion.

Such a man may be a zealous preacher of the Gospel, and may attain to great success in his labours. Judas preached the Gospel; and for aught that appears,

had the same success as the other disciples, particularly in casting out devils and performing other miracles. For we have already heard of "many" who will say at the last, "Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" Paul knew of some who preached "Christ even of envy and strife;—of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to" his "bonds." But they did good; for Paul adds, "What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, *Christ is preached*; and I therein do rejoice, yea and will rejoice."

Finally, the man may not only have one of these marks, he may possess them all. If each of these marks may exist where there is no religion, I presume no good reason can be shown why all may not. How strongly fortified must he be against the knowledge of himself, who, at the same time that he is in the darkness of unsanctified nature, has his confidence supported by all these deceitful marks of religion. It might be expected that light would almost as soon break into the chambers of the dead, as into a mind thus defended on all sides by sevenfold darkness. No wonder that Jesus said to "the chief priests," "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." After thus discovering that persons possessed of all these marks of religion may fall short at last, we are almost ready to cry out with the astonished disciples, "Who then can be saved?" And indeed when we consider, in addition to all that has been said, the artifices of Satan, who can so easily transform himself "into an angel of light," and reflect on the inattention of most men to what passes in their own minds, it is not so great a wonder that many are deceived, as that any escape the snare. Let us all be distrustful of ourselves. "He that trusteth to his own heart is a fool." "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves."

We learn that much of that which in real Christians is considered true religion, is nothing more than the operations of nature. Every form of deception which has been mentioned belongs to them in a less degree. Take away

all this, and Christians will have but little left. We ought to know how to judge ourselves, lest we overrate our religion. We cannot estimate enough the importance of caution. Consider the infinite interests at stake. O let us never conclude that sufficient caution is applied.

After all there is such a thing as true religion, and such a thing as assurance that we possess it. There is something more in the world than a deceitful and a deceiving heart. There is a principle of candour and sincerity introduced from heaven. I say this by way of comfort to the children of God, who may be cast down at this exhibition of their dangers. Let them cast themselves upon the Saviour of the world, and relieve every anxiety on that only pillow

of hope. It is his purpose to save millions,—to save you. He will introduce the heavenly spirit into the hearts of his chosen. His power will prevail over the corruptions of nature and the stratagems of Satan. Go with confidence to him. Cast your souls upon him. Believe in his infinite sincerity and compassion. Love him with so much ardour and tenderness that you cannot doubt your love. Believe in him; confide in him; cast your whole souls upon his boundless love and mercy,—upon his unchanging truth and faithfulness. And you may go on with the full assurance of hope, and joyfully view the opening heavens, and keep your eyes fixed on that ravishing light, until you are rapt up to his eternal embrace. Amen.

S E R M O N X X .

S E L F - R I G H T E O U S N E S S .

ROM. ix. 31, 32.—But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.

From the different ways in which the term righteousness is used in the writings of Paul, some difficulty has arisen in fixing on its precise meaning, and tracing that meaning through all the uses of the word. The term originally signified personal rectitude and nothing else, as it does for the most part at present. But under the first covenant personal rectitude was made the condition and ground of justification. Righteousness was that thing which entitled the subject to justification. Hence it comes to pass that whatever entitles us to a gracious justification under the Gospel, is figuratively called our righteousness. Christ, the ground of our justification, is certainly so called; and faith, the condition of justification, seems sometimes to take the same name. Those personal

qualifications on which a proud sinner relies for justification, are called his own righteousness, and that reliance is denominated self-righteousness. So the rule or method of justification is in our text called “the law of righteousness.” The text therefore may be paraphrased thus: But Israel, who pursued a rule by which they hoped to be justified, have not attained to the method of justification. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.—This of course was self-righteousness. And this is the evil which it is my purpose to explain. There are mistakes about justification which do not amount to self-righteousness, and there is one thing which has been called self-righteousness which really is not an error, and has been so

called from a mere misapprehension of meaning.

I. I will give a distinct explanation of self-righteousness.

II. Exhibit the theory of justification.

III. Show that certain mistakes about justification do not amount to self-righteousness, at least in theory.

IV. Explain the dispute among Protestants, whether justification is in any sense by works or by faith only.

I. I will give a distinct explanation of self-righteousness.

As a righteousness, in New Testament language, is that which entitles us to justification, so self-righteousness is a reliance on ourselves for justification, or a hope to obtain justification by the works of the law, or "*as it were* by the works of the law." We find no account of this sin in the Scriptures except as it was exemplified by the Jews and those who were taught by Judaizing Christians. We know nothing of it but as we find it in them. Of course we have no right to apply the name to any thing but what appeared in them. Now self-righteousness in the Jews was the mere swellings of pride in relation to their own character and claims. It consisted,

1. In a self-complacent spirit, proud of their own goodness and prone to overrate it; and on both accounts elated with ideas of their own superior piety. They "trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others." "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess." "Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou." "Thus saying, thou reproachest us also." "Are we blind also?" This is what is commonly called spiritual pride.

2. In a high sense of their own personal merit, and of the consideration to which their merit entitled them from God and man. This was a proud estimation of what was befitting themselves, aside from any claims for services rendered to another. It was the mere vanity of pride, swelling with a conceit of what was due to their own high dignity and worth, and of the homage which they ought to receive from all. It was

not a demand upon any law, or any specific species of justice, but was the mere delirium of pride.

3. In a proud claim on God for services rendered. They thought they had earned a hearing when they prayed; and instead of casting themselves on mercy, they came forward with demands, and if denied were ready to murmur. "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul and thou takest no knowledge?" This claim, as it related to present treatment, was set so high that it not only excluded gratitude for the good things of life, but could not be satisfied with any ordinary gifts of providence. "Those," says one, "that think highly of themselves and their services, are apt to think hardly of their Master and meanly of his favours." It is difficult to satisfy a proud man that he is dealt as well by as his merits deserve. Thus in the parable of the prodigal, the elder son, who certainly represented the Jews, complained that he had not received any thing for wages. "Lo these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid that I might make merry with my friends."

The Jews carried this notion of desert so far that they verily thought they had merited or could merit eternal life. Thus the young man who came forward with the profession, "All these things have I kept from my youth up," had no other idea but to earn and receive; and fearing that he still wanted something to fill up his works before God, he demanded, "What lack I yet?" "What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

Of the self-righteous Jews there were two sorts; one thinking that they had never sinned, the other sensible that they had broken the law. Let us consider the two classes distinctly.

1. The stricter sort of Pharisees thought that they had never sinned. And to account for this strange opinion, it is necessary to remark, that the whole sect had essentially changed the law of God. In the first place, they limited its requirements to outward conduct and overlooked its demands on the heart. It was this construction at which our Sa-

viour aimed when he said, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill :—but I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment.—Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not commit adultery : but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." And in the same connexion he adds, "Whosoever—shall break one of these least commandments and shall *teach men so*, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.—For I say unto you that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." In the second place, they lowered down the outward requirements. They changed for the most part the duties of the first table of the moral law into ceremonial observances, paying "tithe of mint and anise, and cummin," and neglecting "the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith." The duties of the second table they also reduced, teaching men to "love" their "neighbour and hate" their "enemy," and excluding from the character of neighbour all who belonged to another religion or nation. Thus they narrowed down the duties of the second table to kind offices to their friends and their sect. When they had thus reduced the divine law to a carcase, and had maimed that carcase of half its members, it was easy for the stricter sort to say, "All these things have I kept from my youth up." "Neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment." These of course expected justification by the works of the law. And yet this expression admits of some limitation. They sought justification as a legal reward, and yet sought it by what were really the works of another law. The most that could be said therefore was, that they sought justification "*as it were* by the works of the law."

2. The other class knew that they had broken the law. Those for instance who devoured "widows' houses, and for a pretence" made "long prayers," could not but know that they had sin-

ned, for they had broken the law even in the form to which they had reduced it. But overlooking this, or thinking it done away by their cleansing and atoning ceremonies, or that their good works overbalanced their evil works, they could, by a delusion which pride and ignorance are always able to produce, persuade themselves that they still deserved a recompense; not pardon only, but the reward of eternal life. They knew the original law, and knew that they had transgressed it, and therefore could not expect justification on the ground of sinless obedience; and yet they believed that they deserved justification on account of their obedience. This was not expecting justification literally by the works of the law, but only "*as it were* by the works of the law."

Both of these classes made demands on justice. But the moment the eye turns to see what such a demand could be, it is confused. On justice! says one, and what demand can Gabriel himself have on justice? On justice, says another, and what harm was there in such a demand? Is not justification under the Gospel a matter of justice? Is it not said, "If we confess our sins," God "is faithful and *just* to forgive us our sins;" "God is not *unrighteous* to forget your work and labour of love;" "A crown of righteousness which the Lord, the *righteous* Judge, shall give me at that day"? Has not every believer then a claim on justice? These various questions are enough to show that justice is used in different senses; and in order to detect the exact nature and inconsistency of self-righteousness, it is necessary to ascertain on what kind of justice it lays its claim.

Divines have spoken of three kinds of justice; general justice, commutative or commercial justice, and distributive or moral justice.

1. General justice is nothing more than general rectitude or holiness. Thus when Noah is called "a just man," no more is meant than that he was a good man. The justice of God in this larger sense is his general rectitude, and it is sometimes particularly placed in his truth. As all kinds of justice in a great degree consist in respecting the rights and claims of others, so a respect for those rights and claims which are found-

ed on a *gracious promise*, is called justice. This is the case in those passages which have just been quoted. When God is said to be "just to forgive us our sins," it means nothing more than the justice of *truth*, or a respect for those rights and claims which are founded on a gracious promise. This kind of justice is certainly exercised in justification, and believers have an actual claim upon it; but this is nothing more than a claim upon truth, graciously pledged to the ill-deserving.

2. Commutative and commercial justice are commonly put together, but in truth they are not in all respects one. Commutative justice relates to the exchange of one thing for another, and is bottomed on the principle of *something for something*, or as the lawyers say, *quid pro quo*. It indeed chiefly relates to commercial matters, but is not confined to them, for it enters into moral relations also. It supports a claim to gratitude and to all suitable returns for benefits received. I have conferred favours on you, and you ought to make returns to me. Such a claim has our Divine Benefactor on us. If this is not exactly the same as commutative justice in commercial matters, it is at least a new modification of the general principle of *something for something*. On the other hand, though commercial justice is chiefly commutative, and consists in rendering an equivalent for something received, yet it extends further. It is bottomed on the general rights of property, and consists in respecting those rights to a wider extent than in the mere business of barter. It is exercised in *leaving* a neighbour in the undisturbed possession of what is his own, and is violated by theft and robbery where no exchange is pretended.

To establish a claim on commutative justice, it is immaterial whether one advances money or service. The man who has done a day's work for you, has as really increased your property by something that was his own, as though he had lent you money; and his claim on commutative justice is the same in one case as in the other.

This claim is not properly founded on a promise, but on the value of the thing received, and on the right which a man has to his own property or to an equi-

valent. The use of a promise is only to show that the good was not given gratuitously on the one part, and was voluntarily received as a loan on the other. It is incident to the right of property that no man has a claim to change the form of my property without my consent. No man has a right to put a day's work into my hand and take a dollar out without my consent. Also no man has a right to force property upon me and make me answerable for it. A promise is only a consent to receive the property upon the principle of making returns. If a man places a sum of money on my table without my consent to take upon myself an obligation to return it, it either is a present or remains his own. If he goes to work in my field without my consent to exchange a dollar for a day's work, he has no right to demand his wages. He made those changes in my field at his own instance, and had no right to bind me without my consent. The promise is only a voluntary consent to receive *something* for something. It has no other influence on the obligation than as a consent to receive a something which shall *itself* create an obligation to make returns. The promise indeed imposes the additional obligation of *truth*, but I am speaking only of the obligation growing out of commutative justice. That obligation is radically founded on the thing received, and not on the consent to receive it, although the bond could not be forced upon the man without his consent. The promise was necessary to the obligation, as without it the thing could not come into his hands; but when it has come into his hands with his own consent, he is bound *because he received it*. The bottom of the bond is the principle of something for something. His property is increased by his neighbour, and he is bound to return an equivalent.

When the benefit conferred consists in any thing besides property given to be received again,—where it is expressive of kindness and love,—the obligation is complete without any promise at all. Here is a bond resting on the principle of something to be returned for something received, without the intervention of a promise.

Such are the claims of commutative justice. Now it is evident that no crea-

ture has such a claim on God. No creature has given any thing to him for which he can claim returns. It was to refute this very idea, to which self-righteousness is so eager to cling, that several texts were placed in the Bible. "Who hath first given to him and it shall be recompensed unto him again?" "If thou be righteous what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand? Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man." "Can a man be profitable unto God, as he that is wise may be profitable unto himself? Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect?" "Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." "My goodness extendeth not to thee, but to the saints that are in the earth." We may promote the happiness of creatures; and if God, as the benevolent Guardian of the universe, is willing to consider that as an addition to his interest, it was something which he had a right to without purchasing it of us. He has a sovereign right to command without promising to pay. Every idea of a *something for something* must be abandoned in our claims upon God. Gabriel himself has no such claim, and no claim but on a promise. Had not God gratuitously promised Gabriel immortality, he might annihilate him to-day without violating one of his rights.

But you say, the contract helps to make out the claim of a day labourer. Without the promise the labourer would have had no claim; with the promise he has a claim on commutative justice, that is, a claim founded on the principle of something for something. So here: without the promise Gabriel would have had no claim, but with the promise that his labours should be rewarded, he has a claim on commutative justice, that is, a claim founded on the principle of something for something. No, for he has given God nothing. The cases are widely different. The husbandman has received from the labourer something to

which he had no right, and something as valuable as the reward promised, and he as truly owes to him the recompense as if he had received the same value in money. But God has received nothing to which he had not a perfect right; he has received nothing to increase his own private interest, and his obligation grows wholly out of a gratuitous promise.

3. Distributive or moral justice is a branch of general justice, or a particular manner in which the universal rectitude of God is exercised. It consists in distributing rewards and punishments according to the promises and threatenings of a righteous law, without grace; a law holding out rewards and punishments exactly fitted to the characters of creatures, as being most calculated to encourage virtue and discourage vice, to reveal God's estimate of both, and thus to promote the order and prosperity of the universe. The exact measure of distributive justice is the moral law, because the moral law is exactly fitted to answer these ends; and therefore *legally just* and *distributively just* are synonymous expressions. This kind of justice does not consist in dispensing rewards and punishments, of whatever nature, without law, but according to a law previously revealed; not in *making* the law, but in acting according to righteous principles already embodied in a legal code; not in administering a government according to *law*, but according to *such* a law,—according to principles which were right before the law was promulgated.

It is an attribute of this justice, as of every other kind of justice, that it violates no rights. Creatures in relation to it have but two rights; one original, the other created by a promise. The original right is, not to have their existence made a curse without sin, and not to suffer more than they deserve. To violate this right would be oppression, would be defrauding them of what is inherently and unalienably their own, would be distributively unjust. The right created by a legal promise is a claim to receive, after perfect obedience during the time of probation, all the good stipulated in the law. Words are arbitrary, but I see no impropriety in calling a respect for this right distributive justice. To satisfy a claim, of

whatever sort, is a general idea which may fitly fall under the general name of justice or rectitude. If the claim rests on a gracious promise, the act is general justice; if it rests on the value of something rendered, the act is commutative justice; if it rests on a legal promise, the act is distributive justice. I do not say that the violation of the latter right would *defraud* the creature, (because defrauding is the violation of an original right, and this is a right created only by a gratuitous promise;) but I see no difficulty in saying that it would be distributively unjust.

It is sometimes said that distributive justice consists in giving creatures their *deserts*. This needs explanation. Gabriel does not deserve a reward as a man deserves wages who has done a day's work: he has only exhibited a character which it is right and fit for God to approve. But its being right and fit for God to approve and reward that character, gives Gabriel no personal claim. Its being right and fit that my neighbour should do his duty, gives me no claim upon him. Gabriel's claim rests wholly on a promise. If by desert you mean that it is right and fit for God to approve of Gabriel, and that the seraph has a claim upon a gratuitous promise, I agree. But if you mean any other desert or any other personal claim, I dissent. Distributive justice *does* consist in rendering to *sinners* their deserts. But what do we mean when we say that a sinner deserves to be punished, or that justice requires his punishment? Not that he has a personal claim to punishment which it would defraud him to resist. A right and a claim always have respect to a personal good. But we mean that he has done that which renders it suitable for God to punish him, that he has forfeited all right of exemption, that the glory of God and the good of the universe require him to suffer, and that God in justice to himself and kingdom cannot spare him.

Distributive justice then requires that God should punish Judas, and that he should punish him no more than his iniquities deserve. To spare him or to punish him to excess, would be unjust. But Judas has no personal *claim* on this justice, except not to suffer beyond his deserts. Distributive justice requires

that Gabriel should be rewarded; and it would be a violation of this justice not to reward him, because it would be a departure from law. It is distributive justice to respect the personal right made over to Gabriel by covenant, and Gabriel has a claim on this kind of justice, but it is a claim created solely by a promise.

On the whole, creatures have but two claims on distributive justice; one, not to be punished beyond their deserts. This claim is original and inherent. The other is, to receive all the good stipulated in the divine law. This claim rests wholly on a promise and is entirely created by it.

It is obvious that this kind of justice has nothing to do with the justification of sinners.

We have now before us a distinct view of the three kinds of justice, and are prepared to contemplate the nature and unreasonableness of self-righteousness. It makes all its claims on commutative justice, which does not lie between God and creatures, but between man and man. It makes claims which Gabriel never thought of urging,—on the ground of something due for something rendered. It admits that God originally owed the creature nothing, and that the debt grows wholly out of the services rendered. The claim is, I have done for you and you ought to do for me. According to the common notion, at least of proud creatures, to fulfil the law of a parent or master, gives one a claim upon him, much like that of a common labourer who has earned his wages. And where one has conferred a benefit on an equal, he feels himself entitled to returns; and if he is proud, his claims are so high that it is difficult to satisfy them. It is this common notion of obligation which has given rise to the word *obliged*, to express the bestowment of a benefit. Such an obligation the self-righteous creature thinks he has conferred on God. Overlooking the claim which God has to his service, and the fact that after doing all he is but an unprofitable servant, he thinks, even after all his sins and the acknowledged imperfection of his service, that he has given something to increase God's private interest, for which he deserves returns; that he has actually

done him a favour and obliged him, and is entitled to say, Give to me for I have given to thee; that he has a claim of the same general nature as the man who has done a day's work for another and is entitled to his wages. The common labourer, though he has the claim, has little temptation to be proud of it; but here the very service imagined lies in that personal excellence of which a proud man is the most likely to be vain. This produces the united effect of self-elation and a claim on justice for wages. Such a proud sense of excellence and such a demand for wages are ascribed to the Jews in the person of the elder son. "Lo these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid." If all this was unreasonable, it is not the less credible on that account. The calculations of pride are always unreasonable. It was a delusion, but such a delusion as pride and ignorance were competent to produce.

It appears then that the self-righteousness of the Jews consisted of the following parts: first, a self-complacent spirit, proud of their own goodness and prone to overrate it; and on both accounts elated with ideas of their own superior piety. Secondly, a high sense of their personal *merit*, and of the consideration to which their merit entitled them from God and man,—as a matter of intrinsic worth aside from any claims for services rendered to their Maker. Thirdly, a proud claim on commutative justice for services rendered, as though it was a "gain" "to the Almighty" that they made their "ways perfect." These calculations of course excluded, not only every idea of Christ, but every idea of grace, and left them no other way but to seek justification "as it were by the works of the law." This is, I believe, a complete description of self-righteousness as it appeared in the Jews and in those taught by Judaizing Christians, and therefore of the only self-righteousness found in the Scriptures. We have therefore no right to put any thing into the definition of self-righteousness but these three ingredients.

Indeed in the third of these, as frequently involving the other two, the sin essentially lies. As the whole is bot-

tomized on pride, when the subject can possibly work himself up to the belief that he is good and very good, the pride of the principle will certainly carry him to the conclusion that he has *earned* something of his Maker; and then it will swell with self-complacency, and with all that sense of personal merit and importance which has been described. But self-righteousness is found in those who are forced by conviction to know that they are not very good, nor on the whole good men. And then it consists in a struggle to give God something that shall bind him to pay an equivalent, and when they have done any thing, in a proud spirit of self-complacency and the hope of receiving their hire. In this lies essentially the nature of self-righteousness; and the opinion of superior goodness and the swellings of pride in view of it, are rather accompaniments in certain cases, but not essential to the thing itself.

And now does this sin exist in modern times, or has it left the world? It appears in all its vigour among the heathen, particularly among the Hindoos; but does it prevail under the light of the Gospel? The Galatians were led away to this sin by Judaizing Christians, and observed "days and months and times and years," hoping for justification by the law; but has this folly outlived the apostolic age? The church of Rome, in her deplorable apostacy and ignorance, has gone a full length in maintaining the merit of good works; asserting that good works ["*ad vitam eternam consequendam vere promereri,*"] are really meritorious in purchasing eternal life, and that men's inherent righteousness is the meritorious cause of their justification. But is this doctrine found among Protestants? I have heard it advanced by a Socinian minister in conversation; you may now and then in books find an unguarded expression; but so plainly is the principle of self-righteousness condemned in the New Testament, and so conspicuous a figure did justification by grace make among the doctrines of the Reformation, and in the disputes of the first Protestants with the Romanists, that it would be difficult to find self-righteousness plainly embodied in any Protestant theory. I know of no system of cele-

brity among those who disown the authority of Rome, which avows it. Even a denial of the justice of eternal punishment, does not amount to it. It is one thing to say that a criminal does not deserve to die, and another to say that he deserves a kingdom. But you will often find this principle in the theories and conversation of the ignorant; and you will find it abundantly in the hearts of unsanctified men, to say nothing of Christians. Much of it secretly lurks in the formalist; and it is the grand principle of action with awakened sinners. When they have refrained from outward sin, or when they have attended to means, or performed any action externally good, they think they have done something for God, and notwithstanding their sins, have a claim on him for returns. This accounts for the relief which they feel after prayer. It is not the relief of going to Christ and tasting the sweetness of pardoning love. It is not the relief produced by a humble, subjected spirit, and by the freshness of divine communications. It is the relief of thinking, *I have now done something for God, and he will do something for me.* When guilt and fears arise, the sinner, instead of going to Christ, goes to his prayers, and he finds relief. And the relief arises from the mere consciousness of having done something which he considers a duty, and having a better title to favour on that account. He felt guilty before, but now he thinks he has done a duty, feels relieved. *That is the very essence of self-righteousness.* And this is the grand principle which urges the unregenerate to religious duties, especially when they are serious in them. Their plan is *to do a job for heaven for which they shall receive wages.* Take away that hope, and you stop all the prayers of the unregenerate throughout the world.

Amazing folly! to think that they oblige God by their worthless perfor-

mances! that they really *give to the Lord* and bring him under obligation to pay! that they are promoting the *private interest* of their Master, as a labourer who is performing a day's work for another! that they confer a *favour* on God by the respect which they pay him! What horrid presumption is this. "Can a man be profitable unto God?—Is it any pleasure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him that thou makest thy ways perfect?" "If thou be righteous what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?" "Who hath first given to him and it shall be recompensed unto him again?" And yet this is the universal calculation of the unregenerate world in their attention to duties, and without this hope they would do nothing. They are urging a claim which no angel in heaven ever durst urge, a claim to an equivalent for something rendered. They are urging a claim which sinless perfection from the beginning could not have supported; and yet they are resting it on actions rotten at the core and utterly destitute of a holy principle. They never did a good thing in their lives as God accounts goodness; and yet they hope by such actions to purchase eternal life. It is of great importance that their exact image should be dropt before their eye. This is that image. It is of great importance to show them the beatings of their heart in every prayer they make. This is that discovery. They are blind to the more secret workings of their own minds: if they will search deep they will find in themselves the very thing which I have presented. They will find in every motive which urges them to duty, a hope that they can give God something which, like a day's work in human affairs, will deserve some returns. This is their character. Let them search it out; and let all discover by this test who are unregenerate and who are not.

SERMON XXI.

JUSTIFICATION.

Rom. ix. 31, 32.—But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.

It is important to know what self-righteousness is, that we may be able to detect its secret workings in ourselves. But as some mistakes about justification do not amount to this sin, it is necessary, in defining and separating self-righteousness from every thing else, to take some notice of these mistakes. But in order to know what are mistakes respecting justification, we must know what the theory of justification is. And when we have laid open the great condition of justification, which is nothing else than personal holiness uniting us to a Saviour, we shall be prepared to see that the dispute among Protestants, whether justification is in any sense by works or by faith only, is chiefly a dispute about words. And when this is settled, we shall see that we have charged self-righteousness upon the theory of our Arminian brethren without a cause. Justice and charity require that this mistake should be corrected and confessed. The cause of charity would be greatly promoted by clearing up all those misapprehensions which have arisen from a different use of the same word. Could these misapprehensions be removed, the world would be surprised to find to what narrow limits some of the disputes in the Christian Church are reduced. This end, as relates to the present subject, may be obtained, as before proposed, by,

I. Explaining the nature of self-righteousness;

II. Exhibiting the theory of justification;

III. Showing that certain mistakes about justification do not amount to self-righteousness, at least in theory;

IV. Explaining the dispute among Protestants, whether justification is in any sense by works or by faith only.

We have no account of self-righteousness but as it existed among the Jews and those taught by Judaizing Christians. In the Jews it consisted,

1. In a self-complacent spirit, proud of their own goodness and prone to overrate it; and on both accounts elated with ideas of their own superior piety. This is what is commonly called spiritual pride.

2. In a high sense of their personal *merit*, and of the consideration to which their merit entitled them from God and man. This was a proud conceit of what was due to their great sanctity, not because they had given their Maker any thing, but because it was befitting their high personal worth.

3. In a proud claim on God for services rendered. They thought it was a "pleasure to the Almighty that" they were "righteous," and a "gain to him that" they made their "way perfect;" that they had "first given to him and it" was to "be recompensed unto" them "again;" that instead of being "unprofitable servants," they were "profitable unto God." This was not such a claim on general justice or rectitude as the believer has who can plead a gracious promise, nor yet such a claim on distributive justice as Gabriel has who can plead a legal promise, but such a claim on commutative justice as a man has who has done a day's work for another. It rested on the principle of something due for something rendered. They calculated of course on a legal justification; not according to the original law of God as it was in truth, but according to the form to which they had reduced it by their traditions. Those of them who thought they had kept all the requirements of this new law from their youth up, and those who were

conscious of having transgressed it, equally calculated on earning eternal life by their obedience. Both sought justification as a legal reward, (that is, as a reward honestly due for their obedience to the law,) and yet neither sought it by actually doing the works of the law. Whether it appeared to them that they had perfectly fulfilled the law or not, it could not be said of them unqualifiedly that they sought justification by the works of the law, but only "*as it were* by the works of the law."

In this third particular, which frequently involves the other two, lies essentially the sin of self-righteousness. The whole is bottomed on pride; and where the subject can possibly work himself up to the belief that he is good and very good, the pride of the principle will certainly carry him to the conclusion that he has earned something of his Maker; and then it will swell with self-complacency and with all that sense of personal merit and importance which has been described. But it is found in those who are forced by conviction to know that they are not very good, nor on the whole good men. And then it consists in a struggle to give God something for which he must pay an equivalent, and when they have done any thing, in the proud spirit of self-complacency and the hope of receiving their hire. In this lies essentially the nature of self-righteousness; and the opinion of superior goodness and the swellings of pride in view of it, are rather accompaniments in certain cases, and not essential to the thing itself. I come now,

II. To explain the theory of justification.

Justification is a judicial term taken from courts of justice. It originally signified the sentence of a judge pronouncing the subject just,—not only acquitted from blame, but entitled to all the rewards of well-doing. It was a sentence according to law. Such would have been the nature of justification had men never sinned. But the moment that a justification by the works of the law became impossible, justification ceased to be a legal and became a gracious transaction. It no longer remained the same thing: yet from resemblance to the former thing it took the same name. It is now the sentence of God

declaring the subject graciously acquitted from guilt, (that is, pardoned,) and graciously entitled to all the rewards of righteousness; entitled not by law but by the covenant of grace. It is not necessary that such a sentence should be audibly pronounced in heaven, or pronounced in the ears of the believer, or even revealed to his mind. It was promised him that he should never go to hell, but should certainly go to heaven, if he would once believe. When he believed therefore he became entitled by covenant to a release from hell and to the enjoyment of heaven. That covenant security constituted the new relation. Now let truth be personified and pronounce what is the fact. It looks on the covenant, and beholds the faith of the sinner, and then declares that the sinner is released by covenant from hell, (that is, pardoned,) and entitled by covenant to heaven. No matter whether the sinner himself knows it: no matter whether he is conscious of any change of treatment: truth declares that the new relation is complete. Now instead of drawing out this sentence from *truth*, put it into the lips of God. We seem to hear him declare, (because his covenant does declare,) that the sinner is released from hell and entitled to heaven. The issuing of that sentence from God is what we mean by justification.

Although in two or three instances in the New Testament the term is used with special reference to *pardon*, yet justification, as the very word imports, must include, when taken in a larger sense, a title to the rewards of the righteous: and the term is almost always used in this sense in the Bible. Here then are two parts to justification; a sentence of acquittal from guilt, (or pardon,) and a sentence that the subject is entitled to heaven and to all the positive good of the covenant.

It is an essential quality of this act of justification, in both of its parts, that it is of free grace; that is, a favour to the ill-deserving, bestowed as a free gift, and not as a proper compensation for any thing which the sinner has done. The *reward of grace* it may be, as I shall show in another place; but not the reward of law; much less does it proceed on the principle of something for something, as in the case of barter.

Faith is indeed made its condition ; because it could not comport with the honour of God or of Christ or of the law, nor with the holy order and happiness of the universe, to pronounce upon a confirmed transgressor and unbeliever, an enemy of God and of Christ, that he is sheltered from punishment and taken into the favour and bosom of God. But we are not justified by faith in any sense which implies that faith fulfils the law and secures such a justification as Gabriel enjoys, or that it earns justification like a day's work, or that it adds so much excellence to the creature that justification is but the homage due to his high worth,—a thought never whispered but in the dreams of pride. These are the only senses in which imagination itself can ascribe any thing to faith which has the semblance of merit, and in neither sense, when it comes to be examined, has it the least pretence of being meritorious.

Both parts of justification are granted for Christ's sake. This part of the subject has been often treated with great confusion, and seems by many to be but imperfectly understood. It is necessary to consider the two parts distinctly.

1. Pardon is granted out of respect to the atonement or vicarious sufferings of Christ. I say not that these are the *legal* ground of pardon. Properly speaking there is no legal ground, for the law knows no pardon. If you mean by legal ground, that these sufferings are respected as the *honour* of the law is concerned, I grant it ; and in another sense the faith and obedience of the sinner are respected as the honour of the law is concerned. Without the substituted sufferings of Christ no man could be forgiven without ruining the law, for it would have proclaimed impunity to transgression. And even after the death of Christ, no hardened transgressor can be pardoned and shielded without ruining the law ; for this would be to contradict all that was pronounced on the cross, and to declare that incorrigible offenders shall still go unpunished. What end did the death of Christ answer ? the same that would have been answered by the eternal destruction of Adam's race. It proclaimed, as loudly as the damnation of all men would have done, that the law should be supported

by the execution of its penalty on future transgressors. And what if, amidst those awful declarations, a raging sinner had been taken into the bosom of God and sheltered there from every danger ? It would have contradicted every expression of Calvary and utterly defeated the glorious design. All that I have to say under this head is, that the honour of the law requires that the man who is pardoned should be a reclaimed believer, and that he should be pardoned on the ground that Christ suffered in his stead. The latter is the true reason why the believer is forgiven.

2. A title to heaven and to all the positive good of the covenant is granted out of respect to the righteousness of Christ. Around this position the confusion has chiefly gathered. I apprehend that few propositions are expressed with less definite meaning than this. What are we to understand by the common expression in every one's mouth, that heaven and all positive good comes to us for Christ's sake ? The only meaning is, that it was all granted to him as the reward of his obedience, and granted for the use of men ; a part to be bestowed on the world at large in sovereign gifts fitted to a state of probation, and the rest to be wrapt up in the covenant and offered to men on the condition of their faith, and actually given to believers. The whole is Christ's inheritance, detached from God-head by the covenant claims of his obedience and held by him for our use. The fact is, that it did not comport with the highest honour of the law for God to issue any positive good but as the reward of a perfect obedience,—perfect for the time the subject had been in active existence. On this principle God proceeded with the angels and with Adam. In order that any good should get to a sinful world in consistency with this principle, it was necessary that it should all be given to Christ as the legal reward of his obedience, and given for the use of man. Thus the Mediator holds it all as his inheritance, and distributes it according to the right which he has thus obtained. Every particle of food which the wicked receive, as well as the crown of glory conferred on the righteous, comes thus from God as Christ's reward, and so for his sake.

But the crown of glory comes thus through Christ according to the covenant which God has made with the Church. This covenant is, that those who are once united to Christ by a true and living faith, shall be "joint heirs" with him to the eternal inheritance, and shall receive from the general inheritance as they pass along, "all things that pertain unto life and godliness." All these things, as they issue from God, are the reward of Christ's righteousness, and viewed as coming from God, come thus for Christ's sake. When men believe, it is promised them that they shall receive all these things for the sake of Christ. This covenant title to the blessings is the second part of the good conferred in justification. The conferring of this title on believers, or the declaration through the covenant that they are entitled, is the second part of justification. And as they are declared entitled to nothing but what Christ received as his reward, and could not have been entitled had he not received it, they are thus justified for his sake.

But you ask, if the blessings are thus detached from God and transferred to the hands of Christ, why do we apply to God for them? I reply: their being detached from God means not that they have literally changed place. It means only that Christ has a *right* to give them to us, and thus far has a property in them and a control over them, which from his benevolence to us he considers as his own interest. That right he secured by his obedience and holds by a covenant claim. It is his stipulated reward. His right to bestow the blessings on us in the way settled by covenant, is his chartered recompense. When I say that the blessings were issued to him as his reward, I do not mean that they were given to him for his own private use, or that he ever had a covenant right to retain them in his own hands. They were given to him for the use of men, and he was bound to give them to men; that is, he did not hold them by such an exclusive and sovereign claim, that the Father had lost his right to give them to men for Christ's sake. Had it been so, there would indeed have been no propriety in our applying to God for them. Thus a

man works for a physician and receives his wages in medicine for his child. The medicine is his own reward, and in a sense his own property, and yet he is bound by righteousness and the understanding of the parties to give it to the child and not to take it himself. And the child may ask the physician for it as his father's wages, and receive it directly from the hands of the physician for the father's sake. And the physician, who has the care of the patient, and whose honour and fidelity are concerned for the faithful discharge of the trust, has not relinquished his right to administer it directly to the child. This case does not fully illustrate the other. It was no part of the design of the Gospel to hide God behind a Mediator, but to reveal God through a Mediator. The Father is still to be known on earth as the original proprietor and source of the blessings. The Son acts only as his vicegerent, and dispenses them in his Father's name, constantly acknowledging the Father's supreme right and his own dependence: and he continually lets us know that his reward extends no further than the right of thus dispensing them in his Father's name. It is intended still to be understood that though they come as Christ's reward, they come *from God*, and that the Father has not relinquished his right to be owned as the original giver. It is perfectly consistent therefore that men should at one time apply directly to the Mediatorial King for these blessings, and at another time ask them of God for the sake of Christ.

It is not inconsistent with this free and gracious justification, that believers should be mercifully rewarded according to their faith and obedience, or according to their works as the fruits and evidence of their faith. This is actually involved in a gracious justification. I will begin by premising, that wherever there is a rational agent, there is one susceptible of reward. But believers have an agency distinct from that of Christ, and therefore are to be rewarded for themselves as well as he for himself. A reward is a token of approbation presented as a motive to virtue. It may be legal and it may be gracious. If the faith and obedience of believers are really approved, and if favours are sent upon them in token of approbation and as

motives to virtue, then they are rewarded; and if they have not fulfilled the law, the reward is gracious, not legal. I remark further, that no agent can be rewarded but for his own character and conduct. No further than the favour is a token of the approbation of him, is it a reward to him. Believers are *blest* for Christ's sake, (as without his righteousness to detach the blessings from God they could not have come to them;) but they are *rewarded* for their own sake alone. I remark still further, that two persons may be rewarded in different senses by the same thing. Thus a parent labours for a man and receives his wages in articles of clothing for his children, and then bestows them on the children as rewards. Here the same article is first a reward to the parent and then a reward to the child. In the circuit in which the blessings come from the Godhead to believers, there are two distinct parts. The first consists in their passage from God to Christ, and this is Christ's reward, not ours; the second consists in their passage from Christ to believers, and this is our reward, not his. In the former, the righteousness of Christ stands as the legal ground of detaching the blessings from God; in the latter, or in the direct intercourse between Christ and believers, the principle is adopted of rewarding them for their own sake alone and in proportion to their faith and obedience. Indeed the passage of the blessings to Christ, (to speak the literal truth,) is nothing more than the investment of him with a right to bestow them on his disciples in gracious rewards according to the interest which they hold in his affections, or in proportion as they love and obey him. It could not have been a reward or honour to Christ to receive the highest blessings of the covenant for his implacable enemies. These blessings were a reward to him only as they were received for believers. And this distinction was made in favour of believers because they were fit to be approved. The blessings were then a reward to Christ only as they were placed in such a new relation to the world that he might bestow them on men as tokens of approbation, that is, as gracious rewards and according to their fitness to be approved. Of

course they could not issue from the Godhead as Christ's reward, or for the sake of his righteousness, but as they were to drop upon his disciples in gracious rewards and in proportion to their faith and obedience. It follows then that a free and gracious justification for Christ's sake, so far from excluding, necessarily involves, the gratuitous grant of rewards to believers according to their faithfulness.

I have considered these rewards as coming directly from Christ. But when the agency of God is brought into view, who is in truth the original giver, we must say of him that *he* rewards men according to their faith for Christ's sake. It will express the truth if we say, that God rewards his Son by bestowing blessings on believers in gracious rewards according to their holiness.

Let it then be distinctly remembered that it is not self-righteousness, nor is it an error, to hope to be graciously rewarded, through Christ, for our own faith and obedience. Whether it is proper to talk of justification *by works* is another question. John says that the good as well as the bad will be judged at last "according to their works." (a) James says "that by works a man is justified and not by faith only;" (b) meaning that he is justified not by an inoperative faith, but by a faith producing good works. Paul, on the other hand, when he would show that men are not justified by law, said that they are "not justified by the *works* of the law," (c) and adopted the shorter expression that they are not justified "by works." (d) His language I prefer to follow; but if any choose to adopt the language of James, with his meaning, I cannot charge them with self-righteousness.

III. I am to show that certain mistakes about justification do not amount to self-righteousness, at least in theory.

I have three remarks to make in this place.

1. The question is not whether the advocates of any system are themselves in heart self-righteous, nor whether their

(a) Rev. xx. 12, 13. (b) James ii. 14—26.

(c) Rom. ix. 32. Gal. ii. 16, and iii. 2, 5, 10.

(d) Rom. iv. 2, 6, and ix. 11, and xi. 6. Eph. ii. 9. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. iii. 5.

theory tends to promote self-righteousness in others, but whether the theory itself plainly avows the self-righteous principle. I have nothing to do with the hearts, but only with the theories of men. It must be admitted that where great errors of any kind prevail, there is more reason to fear that the heart is unsanctified, and of course is self-righteous. And where the proper influence of Christ is disowned, there are still stronger reasons to fear that the heart is secretly resting on the claims of works. But the question is not about the heart, but whether the theory itself is self-righteous; not whether the theory by an indirect influence may encourage self-righteousness, but whether it distinctly avows the self-righteous principle.

2. It must be kept in mind that self-righteousness is a proud claim on commutative justice, resting on the principle of something due for something given. Every theory which disowns this, of course disowns self-righteousness. Every theory therefore which acknowledges that salvation is all of grace, is free from the charge of self-righteousness. It may be greatly defective and erroneous, and by putting out of view the proper influence of Christ, or by laying too much stress on works, or by encouraging the unregenerate to hope for spiritual aid in reward of what they do in a state of nature, it may indirectly promote self-righteousness in men; but the system itself cannot be called self-righteous while it acknowledges that every part of salvation is of grace.

3. Though it is an effect of self-righteousness always to cast away the influence of Christ, the nature of self-righteousness does not lie in that act, but in a proud demand on commutative justice for services rendered. It will be allowed that in the parable of the Pharisee and publican, a complete contrast was intended to be set forth between a self-righteous spirit and its opposite; but all that was ascribed to the publican was an humble spirit that disclaimed all merit and cast itself on grace. No respect for Christ is attributed to him. It does not appear from the story that he had ever heard of Christ. And yet he was the complete contrast of a self-righteous Pharisee. One then may be

free from the charge of self-righteousness without a knowledge of Christ, provided he has a broken heart and casts himself on grace. Certainly then one may be free from this charge who, through ignorance or misapprehension, partly overlooks the influence of Christ, provided he disclaims all merit and relies wholly on grace. This was the case with the Old Testament saints. They had very inadequate apprehensions of Christ, and yet they were not self-righteous. And this may be the case with some in Gospel times. There may be those who, led away by a perverted theory, disown a part of the influence of Christ, who nevertheless are humble men and depend on the grace of God for their whole salvation. These are not self-righteous. And if you can find those who disown the *whole* influence of Christ, and yet disclaim merit and avow their dependence on grace for all, you cannot tax their *theory* with self-righteousness, whatever you may think of their hearts. Their theory is to do without any righteousness at all, and to look to grace which has regard to nothing legal in giving.

There are three distinct systems which I wish to try by these principles. The first is, that we are *pardoned* out of respect to the vicarious sufferings of Christ, but receive nothing positive on his account. All positive good comes to us from the pure grace of God without being given as the reward of Christ. The honour of the law did not require this intervention of Christ's righteousness. When we are pardoned for Christ's sake, and the impediments to divine favours are thus removed, God can consistently confer upon us gracious rewards of his mere mercy without further respect to a Mediator. This, in both of its parts, is a gracious justification through faith, but only one half of it is for Christ's sake. This is the system to which is attached the respected name of Dr. Emmons. It ascribes a proper place to our faith and obedience, and is right in maintaining that positive blessings come to us as gracious rewards: but its error lies in denying that they are issued as the reward of Christ. Here then is a mistake, and a serious mistake, about justification: but does it amount to self-righteousness? Not at all. The pious

author disclaims all merit as much as we, and fully admits that it is all of grace, and that if believers had their deserts, instead of being rewarded they would be punished. He allows also that had not Christ removed our guilt by atonement, positive blessings could not have come to us. In this indirect sense he ascribes even our positive blessings to the influence of Christ. This system, you perceive, makes all the influence of Christ to lie in his vicarious sufferings, to the exclusion of his obedience except as qualifying his atonement.

The second system is the direct opposite of this, and places the whole of Christ's influence in his obedience, to the utter exclusion of his vicarious sufferings. His death was only the highest act of obedience, and had no other direct influence upon us than as an example. He may be said to have died to redeem us, first, as the moral influence of that example was intended as a means to redeem us from sin; secondly, as his obedience "unto death" is the ground on which pardon and all positive blessings are dispensed. "The blessings of the Gospel are the gift of God to the obedience of Christ;" in other words, are all his reward. This principle has been illustrated by the following simile. A master grants to a whole school a relaxation from study, and even pardon to an offender, as the reward of a scholar who has produced a copy of Latin verses. In this case the verse-maker may be said to have purchased the benefits granted. This is the system of the celebrated Dr. John Taylor of England, and has been adopted by several pious and otherwise orthodox divines in our own country. The error lies in excluding the vicarious sufferings of Christ as the ground of pardon, and placing the atonement itself in obedience and nothing else. Here is a mistake about justification: but does it amount to self-righteousness? By no means. The theory wholly disclaims merit, and not only ascribes pardon and all other blessings to grace, but makes Christ the ground of them all.

The third system excludes the influence of Christ altogether, and represents him as coming on earth merely as a teacher of righteousness, and as dying

for the double purpose of confirming his doctrines and setting us an example. It denies his atonement, whether placed in vicarious sufferings or in obedience. It denies the very principle of substitution, and it denies that we receive any thing on Christ's account. God needed no such intervention of a Mediator to render it consistent for him to pardon us and to reward us according to our works. This is the Socinian system: and it is difficult for us to believe it possible that one so blind to the whole structure of the Gospel can be a good man. And if not good, he must of course, if he has any idea of being fit for heaven, be full of self-righteousness. But the question is not about the self-righteousness of the heart, but of the system. And whether the system is self-righteous or not, depends on the question, whether it maintains the claims of merit for services rendered, or ascribes the whole salvation to grace. If it casts a world upon the grace of God, though without a Mediator, and distinctly disclaims all merit, it is not a self-righteous theory, whatever the hearts of its professors may be, and however calculated it may be to promote self-righteousness in others. Now the fact is, that there are two classes of advocates for this general theory. The more consistent, and I believe the greater part, admit that man has no merit, and that all is of grace. Their theory of course must be exempted from the charge of self-righteousness. They hold that there is no need of *any* righteousness and that God can bless without. The other part talk loosely of merit and the justice of rewarding men according to their works. This they do in their more extemporaneous communications, but I know not that they have ever embodied the sentiment in any regular system which they have published. And it is doubtful whether the most daring of them all would advocate a claim on *commutative* justice, and deliberately raise from the grave the exploded Pharisees. Some of them have certainly acknowledged that Gabriel himself has no such claim on justice. I know not that any of them would say, what has been said in the Romish church: I will go to him at the last day and say, Give unto me, O Lord, for I have given unto thee.

SERMON XXII.

THE ARMINIAN IDEA OF JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS.

ROM. ix. 31, 32.—But Israel which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.

THE fourth and last head, in the plan suggested by this text, was, to explain the dispute among Protestants, whether justification is in any sense by works, or by faith only. This is a dispute which has been carried on, in rather a desultory manner, between Calvinists and Arminians. Not that it is one of the great dividing points between the two sects. No question relative to justification was agitated by the Synod of Dort, the great tribunal before which Arminianism was tried in its infancy. Neither of the *Five Points* related to this matter. When the two hosts separated and drew their lines of demarkation, they were not divided on the subject of justification. Nor are they now materially divided on this point except in words. Calvinists have charged Arminians with a self-righteous reliance on works, and have had a saying among them, that every man is born an Arminian. If they mean that every man is born with a self-righteous spirit, and that Arminians, by denying the new birth and by other errors, prove that they are as they were born, I have little to say on this subject. Doubtless every system of error diminishes the evidence of sanctification; and where one is not sanctified, he is fully inclined to self-righteousness. But this is not the meaning of the charge. It has reference to symptoms of self-righteousness supposed to appear in the Arminian theory, and not to any thing lurking in the heart. It has reference to that emphasis which Arminian writers generally lay on obedience and good works in the matter of justification. This has been thought to be in opposition to a justification by grace and by Christ; but it is neither, except in words. And while the theory acknowledges that justification is all of grace, and is be-

stowed for Christ's sake, it is not self-righteous. The form of expression is to be condemned, but the sentiment deliberately supported is according to truth. I will lay out my thoughts on this subject in the following order.

1. I will show how our Arminian brethren came to get in this way of emphasizing obedience or good works.

2. Show wherein their language is to be condemned.

3. Vindicate their theory from the charge of self-righteousness, and even from the imputation of material error.

1. How did our Arminian brethren get into this way of emphasizing obedience or good works? It was by separating faith from good works and from every principle which would infallibly lead to good works. The bottom of the mistake lay in their incorrect ideas respecting the native character of man and the operations of the Divine Spirit. The whole sect disbelieve in special grace, and recognize no such thing as faith produced by a supernatural change of heart. Faith with them, "considered simply and separately from" its "fruits and effects," is nothing more than the assent of the understanding to the truths of revelation, bringing those motives to the mind which can be yielded to or rejected by the self-determining power of the will. If they are yielded to, then faith grows into a principle in the heart, working by love, overcoming the world, and producing good works. But this is "faith built upon and improved," and not faith simply considered. And when they have made faith entire without that vital principle which is sure to produce good works, they must separate faith and works, and not speak of them as involving each other. And when they have made them two, no one

can help seeing that faith "alone" is not sufficient for final justification or acceptance with God: and therefore they insist on a justification by works and not by faith only. This was exactly the view taken of the subject by James, and this is the meaning attached by him to the term faith. And the example of an apostle is enough to confirm them in this use of the word, though it ought not to *confine* them to it. And when they have thus separated faith from works as cause and effect, they must understand Paul as meaning by justification by faith "without works," justification by a faith which involves no principle infallibly leading to good works,—justification by just such a faith as James speaks of. And then they find James and Paul flatly contradicting each other; one affirming that we are not justified by faith without works, the other affirming that we *are* justified by *the same identical* faith without works. And then to reconcile the two apostles, they must resort to the idea of a double justification, one *with* and the other *without* good works, or at least to a distinction between justification *begun* and justification *continued*. Dr. Whitby says that we are at first justified by a faith which has no good works connected with it or infallibly growing out of it, but that we cannot continue to be justified without good works. The fact that we are at first justified by faith before it has had time to produce good works, and therefore literally without good works, added to the fact that we cannot ultimately be accepted without a life of holiness, naturally led to this distinction, with those who saw nothing in faith, considered by itself, but an assent of the understanding. This notion of a justification at first by a faith which cannot secure our ultimate acceptance, led Dr. John Taylor to adopt the idea of a first and second justification, and of a first and second faith corresponding thereto. The first faith is faith simply considered, or a mere assent of the understanding, by which we are changed from a heathen to a Christian state. This obtains our first justification or pardon; by which is meant that past sin ceases to be a bar to our admission into the kingdom of God in this world, and ceases to be a bar to our admission to heaven provided

we hereafter do our duty. This justification is altogether of "free grace without works:" that is, the privileges of the Gospel were bestowed on the heathen without any previous works of their own as a condition. They were admitted to the church on a mere assent of the understanding, without any works first required. This Dr. Taylor supposes is all that Paul meant by a justification by faith without works. The second justification is our final acceptance with God, or admission to heaven. For this, good works are necessary. And as he could not but see that that which is the condition of eternal life is called faith, he was obliged after all to give this name to the whole amount of qualifications on which salvation is suspended. Thus: when the truths which a speculative belief brings to the mind are yielded to by the self-determining power of the will, then faith grows into a principle in the heart, working by love, overcoming the world, and producing good works. This, though it is not faith *simply considered*, but "faith built upon and improved," is still called by the general name of faith. Thus: "The just shall live by faith." This is the second faith, and it involves all those principles and affections from which good works proceed. Here, after all, he has found a faith which, except its origin, answers to all our ideas of a justifying faith: and by the emphasis which he lays on works, he means to say no more than that *such* a faith, (I mean a faith involving good works,) is necessary to final salvation. And this we fully admit. Had he not understood Paul to speak of an unholy and unproductive faith that justifies, he would not have run into the idea of a justifying faith of two sorts, and of a double justification.

Let us then examine the meaning of Paul. By a justification "without works," Taylor understood him to mean, not only a justification without works as a *condition*, but justification by a faith disconnected from works and unproductive of them. But Paul meant no such thing. There have been two modes of justification proposed to the world. One was "by the works of the law," as it is written, "The man that doth them shall live in them." The other was by grace and by Christ, through the inter-

vention of a faith holy in its nature and productive of good works. One was by law and the first covenant, the other was by the Gospel and the second covenant. These two modes of justification are distinguished in the New Testament, and especially in the writings of Paul, by the summary names of justification by works and justification by faith. The latter Paul undertook to support; and when he speaks of justification "without works" and "without the deeds of the law," he means a justification not *by* works and not *by* the deeds of the law, or a justification without those full and perfect works which justified under the first covenant. This is evident from all his writings. (a) Thus, in the language of Paul, "the righteousness of God without the law," is a righteousness which does not "come by the law." (b) To be "of the works of the law," is to be upon the plan of looking to the law for justification: (c) to be "without works" therefore, is not to be upon that plan. According to the language of Paul, the man who pursues that plan "worketh," the man who abandons it "worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly." (d) The contrast is between justification by the works of the law and that gracious justification through Christ which comes by an operative faith. Paul does not mean to exclude good works as involved in that faith which is the condition of Gospel justification: he only means to say that we are "not justified by the works of the law." While James declares that we are not justified by a mere speculative and inoperative faith, Paul affirms that we are justified by a true operative faith, to the exclusion of the old plan of justification "by the deeds of the law." By nothing he says does he create any necessity of searching for a justification unconnected with holy works and where no obedience is ever to follow. The justification is indeed complete before faith has had time to produce good works, and in this sense it is literally without works: and if the apostle is thought to have had reference to this, it was only to show more fully that justification is by a mere operative faith,

and not by "the deeds of the law."¹ Thus he argued that Abraham's justification was complete before he was circumcised, in order to drive the Jews from depending for justification on circumcision and the law connected with that. (e) But whether by "without works" he meant not *by* works or *anterior* to works, he plainly did not speak of a justification by an *unholy* faith, or by any faith which did not involve a principle infallibly productive of good works. The justifying faith which makes such a figure in the Epistle to the Romans, was not a mere assent of the understanding. It is thus described: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness." (f) Paul's justifying faith then comprehended both the assent of the understanding and the consent of the heart, and, rendered permanent by the covenant of God, stood in the same relation to good works that strength does to the outward exertions and appearances of strength. It is true that justification is complete when nothing exists but this faith, and before it has had time to produce good works. It is true also that no man can be finally justified without good works, provided he *had time* to produce them after his faith existed. But does this make out two justifications? No more than it makes out two rational beings, to say of the infant John that he is a rational being, and afterwards to say of John when arrived at age, that he cannot be a rational being without putting forth the actions of a man. Had Dr. Taylor made faith to comprehend a holy principle, sure to develop itself in good works as soon as it has opportunity, he would have had no need of supposing a double justification. This notion arose from the idea that Paul spoke of a justifying faith that was wholly disconnected from a holy nature and good works, and to a justification of course belonging, it might be, to a state of sin. If this was so, there must be another justification, for all agree that holiness and good works are necessary to our final acceptance with God. This necessity of works for final acceptance, is all that Taylor meant by the connection between works and the second justification.

(a) Gal. ii. 16, and iii. 2, 5, 11, 14, 17—24.

(b) Rom. iii. 21, with Gal. ii. 21.

(c) Gal. iii. 10. (d) Rom. iv. 4, 5.

(e) Rom. iv. 9—16.

(f) Rom. x. 10.

2. I am briefly to show wherein this language of Arminians is to be condemned. They generally speak of good works as the *condition* of justification under the Gospel, and represent men as placed, (by grace indeed and by Christ,) under a new law, and their life suspended on obedience. Now there are two great methods of justification which have been known to the world. One according to law, the other according to Gospel; one by perfect obedience or good works, the other by grace and by Christ through faith in him. These two methods are set forth in the Scriptures under the comprehensive names of justification by *works* and justification by *grace*. When the conditions of the two covenants are spoken of, obedience is made the condition of one and faith of the other. When therefore our Arminian brethren speak of obedience as the condition of justification under the Gospel, they confound the two covenants. *In words* they send you back to the first covenant for justification. Obedience is not to be spoken of as the present condition of eternal life, because that was the character of the legal dispensation and the very point which distinguished it from the Gospel. And although obedience is required as necessary to justification in those who have opportunity to render it, yet it is no where spoken of in the Gospel as the condition. This language of our brethren therefore is contrary to the Scriptures, and it confounds the terms by which the two covenants are distinguished. Although when called upon to explain, they recognize both grace and Christ, and even faith, as concerned in this justification, yet in their passing remarks they speak only of obedience or works. This, while it betrays, as we have reason to fear, too great a leaning to self-righteousness in the heart, is certainly calculated to promote self-righteousness in others.

In the Gospel *works* and *grace* stand in opposition to each other as significant of the two opposite methods of justification; and orthodox divines have scrupulously kept up the distinction between works and grace. Dr. Taylor also makes this distinction, but how does he apply it? Not to distinguish between the old legal method of justification and

that of the Gospel, but between two imagined justifications under the Gospel. The first justification, or an admission to the church, he allows to be of "free grace without works;" implying that if works were made a condition they would exclude "free grace;" and yet he makes works a condition of the second justification. Does he mean then to exclude free grace from the second justification? So his words would seem to imply. And yet this is not the case. When he comes to explain, he allows justification in every form to be all of grace. The fault then is more in his language than in his system. And this is the case with the whole sect.

3. I am to vindicate their theory from the charge of self-righteousness, and even from the imputation of material error.

It is to be distinctly observed that in all the various representations of their theory, they never make obedience the *ground* of justification, (as it was under the first covenant, and as it was in the hopes of the Jews,) but only the *condition*. The ground of justification they make to be Christ, and the method of it grace. This is enough to shield them from the charge of avowing self-righteous principles. The two things which they have had in their eye were, first, to show that we cannot be finally accepted without holy lives, and secondly, that we are *rewarded* for our own works alone. When they asserted the latter we were alarmed, from not understanding the true idea of reward, and from not seeing the consistency between the two propositions, that we are *rewarded* for our own works alone, and that we receive all things by grace and for Christ's sake. We are to distinguish between being *blest* for Christ's sake and being *rewarded* for Christ's sake. Christ and you are distinct agents, and must each have his separate reward. A reward is a token of approbation of the *person rewarded*, presented as a motive to virtue. As it is a token of the approbation of Christ, it is his reward, not ours; as it is a token of the approbation of us, it is our reward, not his. No further than our character is approved, is it a reward to us. We *must* then be *rewarded* for our own character alone, because our character must be approved

for its own sake and for nothing else. But we are *blest* for Christ's sake. The very blessing which comes in reward and approbation of us, was given to Christ for our use as the reward of his obedience. That is, in approbation of his obedience he received the right of conferring the blessing on us as a gracious reward. It comes to us for Christ's sake; but considered as *our reward*, it is an approbation of none but us. That is, considered merely as approving us, it approves none but us. The principle of graciously rewarding us for our own faith and obedience, is involved in the very idea of a gracious justification. If the sentence of justification declares the subject graciously entitled to all the rewards of the righteous, and if the literal and legal rewards of the righteous are for their own works or obedience, then the sentence of Gospel justification declares the subject graciously entitled to the rewards of his own obedience. It is therefore nowise incorrect to say that we are rewarded, graciously rewarded, for our own sake alone. But because our Arminian brethren have insisted on this, they have been called self-righteous.

Let us consider some of the different forms in which their theory has been set forth, all preserving the idea, not only that we are rewarded for our own sake alone, but that obedience is made the condition of justification; the former being right, the latter wrong, but wrong chiefly in words.

They say that in reward of Christ's obedience we are placed anew on probation, and have a new chance, but it is a chance of being rewarded for our own works alone. This is true, and appears true from the explanations already given. A chance of being rewarded for our own faith and obedience, is all the positive good which we obtain, according to covenant, for Christ's sake.

They say that as we were unable to obey the original law, we were, by grace and for Christ's sake, placed under a new law, in which the original wages were promised for a reduced service. This is really true, though couched in language too legal. I admit that by grace and in reward of Christ's righteousness, we are placed under a new covenant, in which God promises to re-

compense our faith and obedience, though imperfect, with as high rewards as were ever promised to Adam. It is in reward of Christ that we have these promises, and can be remunerated for our own imperfect obedience.

They say that by grace and for Christ's sake God placed us on a new footing; and having pardoned our past sins, entered into a new contract with us, and opened with us a new book of debt and credit, and undertook to transact directly with us and to give us according to our works. Though this is expressed in terms altogether too legal, it amounts to no more than this, that God, for Christ's sake, graciously entered into covenant with us personally, to reward us according to our faith and obedience. And this is true.

They say, a king has pardoned a capital offence out of respect to the services or sufferings of a friend; and out of respect to the same friend has graciously agreed to put the criminal under parental discipline, and to proceed on the principle of rewarding his sincere but imperfect obedience, and overlooking or slightly chastising him for his occasional offences. He suspends the operation of the original law, and tries him continually by the parental law, and by that law punishes or rewards him. All this again is too legal in its language, but substantially true in fact. It is not meant that the moral law has ceased to command and condemn him, but only that it is not executed upon him. It is not meant that the man's former character is so separated from him that he ceases to deserve the punishment originally threatened, nor that his present offences are forgiven on account of what he himself has done. It is meant that all this merciful treatment, including every act of pardon and the remuneration of him according to his present works, is gracious and for the Mediator's sake. And so long as the placing of him under a new law is acknowledged to be of grace and for Christ's sake, the representation is neither self-righteous nor essentially erroneous, though the form of expression may be too legal and even betray a secret leaning to works.

When they would deny that the law was *literally* executed upon Christ, they say, "It is the prerogative of every

lawgiver to soften the rigour of law :” and when they have said this, we have inferred that they were talking of a new and reduced law according to which the subject might hope to obtain a *legal* justification,—a justification, as their own incorrect language would sometimes seem to imply, of *works* in distinction from grace. But when they have spoken of softening the rigour of the law, they have meant *as to its execution*, or at most, as to the original requirement of perfect obedience as the condition of justification. They have not meant that the law itself was changed, but that God had a right to dispense with the infliction of its curse and with the suspension of life on the original condition. And so he had after taking measures to prevent the law from being injured by it. The obedience and atonement of Christ were such measures. And God, having thus rendered it consistent with the honour of the law to dispense with its execution upon believers, and to place their salvation on another condition, granted them pardon and salvation on account of the death and obedience of Christ. This was not according to law but against law, though agreeable to law *to the honour* of the law. If this is all they mean by softening the rigour of the law, there is nothing false or alarming in it.

In opposition to the idea of a *literal* transfer or a *legal* imputation of Christ’s righteousness, they represent faith in him as the principle or spring, (by the consent of the will,) of those virtues which render us *fit objects* of that mercy which comes to us by grace and by Christ. Now here is no self-righteousness avowed ; for both grace and the influence of Christ are acknowledged. Unless there is a downright contradiction in terms, by “*fit objects*” must be meant, not *meritorious* objects, but *holy* objects, such as God can fitly approve.

A few years ago a young minister, who afterwards became a leader of the Arminian sect in New-England,(g) was complained of by some of his people that in explaining the condition of accep-

tance with God, he had stated *obedience* to be that condition. When called upon more fully and deliberately to explain himself, he acknowledged the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, and declared his belief that justification was all of grace, and that its condition was no other than the true faith which will produce good works. This public mention of obedience as the condition of justification, without speaking of faith or of Christ, betrayed, it may be feared, a secret leaning to self-righteousness, and was certainly calculated to promote self-righteousness in others ; and yet when called upon deliberately to spread out his system, he maintained no error, but unreservedly confessed the whole truth. This is about the whole that can be said of the manner in which our Arminian brethren generally think and speak of *final* justification.

On the whole, though they are incorrect in their language, and use terms which confound the two covenants, and are calculated to promote self-righteousness in others ; and though the emphasis which they place on obedience or works, and their fondness to consider the new covenant as a new *law*, may betray some self-righteous tendencies within ; yet their system in relation to final justification with God, when it comes to be spread out and explained, cannot be pronounced self-righteous or materially incorrect. When, in the first place, they make a distinction between free grace and works, and then pronounce final justification to be by works, they do indeed declare in words that justification is by the old covenant, and thus in words they assume a self-righteous position. But when they are catechised closely, they still acknowledge that salvation is all of free grace and procured by Christ. And these two acknowledgments are enough to clear any theory from the charge of self-righteousness, and indeed from the imputation of any material error of thought.

Brethren, I hoped it might help you to more precise ideas on the subject of justification, to enter into these explanations. I thought also that to make it obvious that the partition wall between two great sects on an important doctrine is mere paper and ink, would tend to

(g) Mr., afterwards Dr. Dana, of Wallingford, Conn. Trumbull’s Hist. of Connecticut, vol. ii. p. 483 and 500. Note.

promote charitable constructions and allowances on points of difference generally. I have gone to the extent intended in pursuit of these ends; and having thus accomplished my design, I here dismiss the subject.

S E R M O N XXIII.

V A I N G L O R Y .

GAL. v. 26.—Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another.

THE religion of the Bible is the only religion that ever taught men not to be desirous of vain glory. The poets and orators, and even the philosophers and moralists of the heathen world, with one accord exhorted men to aspire to glory and fame as their chief object. The poets represented *military* fame as the highest good of all, and as constituting the principal happiness beyond the grave. And though in the more polished heathen nations, orators inculcated love of country, and moralists exhorted men from “provoking one another” and “envying one another,” yet never did those moralists or orators utter a word against the pursuit of fame for its own sake. They ascribed to a man the highest virtue provided he sought fame by lawful means: the pursuit itself was not condemned. That men are to abandon self-aggrandizement, and bring, not only their lives, but their hearts, under the influence of disinterestedness and humility, so that they shall not even desire vain glory, is a morality far too refined to have entered into the systems of heathen ethics. Such a principle is one of the peculiar glories of that religion which came from the God of purity and love, who “trieth the hearts and reins” of the children of men.

The want of such a precept in other systems of morals, was a radical and essential defect. The desire of vain glory is among the principles which have the deepest root in the human heart and the greatest influence upon human actions. It in a great measure

governs the world. To leave so powerful a principle untouched and unrestrained, was an oversight so great as to prove at once the insufficiency of the light of nature, and the need of a divine revelation to teach mankind their whole duty.

He must be very ignorant of the human heart and of the history of man, who does not see the necessity of such a precept from heaven. For not only was the pursuit of vain glory allowed by moralists in every heathen nation, but after all the light which revelation has shed on the subject, it is still justified and recommended by the great mass of those who enjoy the instructions and acknowledge the authority of the holy scriptures. It assumes indeed more commonly the specious name of ambition, and sometimes is called a sense of honour, but not unfrequently is it set up and vindicated under its own proper name of pride. But whether denominated pride or a sense of honour or ambition, it is none other than that desire of vain glory which our text condemns. This general pleading for the principle shows that the human heart is strongly attached to it: and the slightest observation of the conduct of men will convince us that all the restraints of divine authority are not sufficient to prevent it from exerting a universal and prodigious influence upon mankind; that even sanctifying grace and all the struggles of the pious heart do not wholly subdue it; that no one natural principle, (if we barely except the love of

wealth,) has so great a power over men,—over even the best of men. The love of vain glory is almost the only passion which is addressed in the soldier's breast, and it is the principal care of his superiors to blow this spark into a flame. This passion is the great engine of war. It is this which has stimulated every conqueror from Nimrod to the modern Cesar, to lay waste provinces, to overturn kingdoms, and to butcher mankind. This is the ruling principle in the patriot and statesman. They talk of the love of country, and doubtless many of them are not wholly destitute of this generous principle: but do you think that most of them are governed by love of country? I confess myself one of those who believe there is very little true patriotism on earth, except in hearts sanctified by the grace of God; and that by far the greater part of those, in every age and climate, who are loudest in their professions of love of country, are chiefly influenced by the love of vain glory. It is the same passion which awakens that sickly sense of honour which renders men exquisitely alive to every affront, and which hurries many to commit deliberate and honourable murder. It is to this principle that we are to impute the splendour of luxury in all the variety of its forms. Indeed it is one of the most busy principles of the human breast. Not only is it displayed in the lustre of gilded trappings, but it daily influences the farmer and mechanic in the choice of their apparel. It is doubtless proper in some measure to adapt one's style of living to one's station in society, and therefore from proper motives men may distinguish themselves in this respect from those beneath them. But alas how little do such motives influence these distinctions. It is this same passion that gives ardour to the boy to excel his fellow in the dexterity of his sports, and to the mechanic to surpass his neighbour in the expedition of his labour and the beauty of his wares. It is this which flushes the school-boy's cheek with ambition to obtain the prize of honour. How far the common practice of addressing this passion is a defect in the education of children and youth, or how far it becomes a necessary evil

from the want of more generous principles, I will not stop to inquire. It is nothing better than a love of vain glory which renders the ostentatious Christian desirous of being known to enjoy extraordinary communications from God. It is this which influences him to give alms to be seen of men. It is this wicked principle which induces a preacher to aim at elegant dissertations and popular harangues, instead of wholesome illustrations of Gospel doctrines and solemn appeals to the conscience. It is this which induces him to pursue a course of study and conduct more calculated to exalt his own name as a gentleman and a scholar, than to bring souls to Christ and to edify the Church. Alas how universal is this contemptible desire of vain glory. As the wind is constantly moving the leaves of the forest, and not a tree nor a leaf is still; so this light wind of the soul is universal and constant in its action upon the race of men, and no individual but is daily moved by the breeze if not tossed by the whirlwind. Surely a system of morals would be very defective that should take no notice of a principle so universal and so influential upon the actions and happiness of men. We may therefore be sure that the Scriptures have paid a marked attention to this passion. Do they then condemn it? Or do they, like heathenish Christians, approve and justify it? We shall see. But that I may proceed orderly on so delicate a subject, I will,

I. Define the principle which our text is supposed to condemn; and,

II. Prove that the principle defined is the one condemned.

I. I am to define the principle. I understand it to be precisely this: *a desire to excel in any thing for the sake of being esteemed equal or superior to another; or in other words, for the sake of having another regarded as inferior or no more than equal to ourselves: or it is the love of human admiration and applause for the sake of the personal glory which it brings.*

Without incurring the imputation of this weakness, a man may desire the approbation and love of friends whom he esteems virtuous and wise. It is inseparable from love to wish to be beloved by its object, and a tender con-

science is naturally pleased with the approbation of the wise and good. Both of these principles seem to be approved by Solomon when he says, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold." "A good name is better than precious ointment." But to wish for the "loving favour" of those we love, and "a good name" among the virtuous and wise, is quite a different thing from a general thirst for distinction,—a sickly craving for admiration and applause.

Again, there is a virtuous sentiment which may perhaps be called a sense of honour; but it is very different from that sense of honour which dwells in souls inflated with pride. It is that exquisite love of purity which a delicate and conscientious mind feels when it shrinks with horror from the touch of pollution. There is no pride or thirst for distinction in this emotion. That sense of honour which duellists cherish, is infinitely different from that sense of honour which angels feel. One is rank pride, the other is the dread of moral pollution.

Again, a man, without the desire of vain glory, may, in the conscientious pursuit of duty, merit and obtain *military* distinction, provided he believes in the lawfulness of war: he may ascend through all the grades of political preferment: for the sake of decency he may, in some measure, adapt his style of living to his station in society, conscientiously believing that by this means his usefulness will be promoted. For the same reason, if he is a public speaker, he may give his style a form that will excite the least possible disgust, and make the strongest impression of truth. But in all these things it is the motive by which the man is to be tried. One man seeks these distinctions from pride, another from holy love; one from supreme regard to himself, another from supreme regard to God; one from a desire of vain glory, another from respect to the authority and glory of his heavenly Father. Now what I would impress upon your minds is, that to seek or affect any of these distinctions from pride, or a supreme regard to self, or for the sake of the mere pleasure of being exalted in the

eyes of men, or for any other purpose than to be more useful, is offensive to God.

II. The point thus explained is now to be supported by proof.

I have defined the offensive principle to be, *a desire to excel in any thing for the sake of being esteemed equal or superior to another, or for the sake of having another regarded inferior or no more than equal to ourselves*. In such a desire it is plain that a man does not love his neighbour as himself, but sets up his own interest in opposition to that of his neighbour. And what is this but mean, contracted selfishness, that is devoid of every social and generous feeling? It is the same principle, carried to a greater extreme, that robs and murders.

It is said by some that self-exaltation may be sought for its own sake if it is sought by lawful means, or by the promotion of valuable qualifications in ourselves. But the pursuit of an object cannot be lawful, whatever means are employed to obtain it, unless the object itself is good and such as virtue delights to pursue. If the object is bad, the pursuit is bad whatever means are used. If the exaltation of one's self in the eyes of men is the simple object, the actuating principle is a desire of vain glory, whether one seeks it by means of virtuous or vicious qualifications. The qualifications, as the supposition is, are not valued at all, but only the glory. The qualifications are nothing but rounds in the ladder by which the man ascends. Whether the rounds are wood or iron or gold, they equally raise him to the desired height, and he regards them only as means of such elevation. What is a man's ultimate object? what is his motive? are questions which decide the moral character of every action. If his object or motive is worldly aggrandizement, his pursuit is selfish and vain glorious, whether he seeks his end by means of virtuous qualifications or vicious. We must not therefore suppose that personal exaltation must be sought by unlawful means in order to become vain glory. Vain glory is worldly glory, and is called vain because it is unsatisfying and transitory. And this worldly glory we are commanded not even to desire. Certainly then it is not lawful to make it our object, and to seek it by promo-

ting even good qualifications in ourselves.

Pride, the first born of selfishness, is, in all its degrees and modifications, most markedly condemned in the word of God. It was this which thrust the angels out of heaven. It is mentioned as the leading sin which drew down vengeance upon Sodom. And many such sentiments as the following are found upon record: "Pride and arrogance—do I hate." "When pride cometh then cometh shame, but with the lowly is wisdom." "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." "A man's pride shall bring him low, but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit." "Those that walk in pride he is able to abase." "The pride of life is not of the Father but is of the world." Now what is pride? *What* if it is not the very principle which has been described? If a desire to be equal or superior to another in the eyes of men, for the mere sake of such equality or precedence, is not one of the definitions of pride, I confess I know not what it is.

There is something unspeakably mean in making the aggrandizement of one's little self the great object of desire and pursuit, in opposition to the infinitely glorious God and the interests of his immense and holy kingdom. Yet this is the degraded nature of the carnal heart. The natural propensities of man and the spirit of the Christian religion are as perfectly opposite as light and darkness. The former are called the flesh, the latter the spirit; and the opposition between them is strongly marked in our context. "For the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other.—Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication,—hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife,—envyings, murders. [The most of them the malignant effects of pride and a desire of vain glory.]—But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.—And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.—Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." And in

another place: "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Then follows a luminous description of the disinterestedness and humility of Christ, set forth as our example. James also marks the opposition between the pride and malignity of the natural heart, and the meek, disinterested spirit of the Christian. "If ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not:—this wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.—But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." From these passages it obviously appears that to be a Christian, is to have the whole bent of the soul changed, and to be influenced by views and motives of which the man before had no conception; and that the prominent features of his present character are love, disinterestedness, meekness, and humility,—principles which are wholly opposed to a desire of vain glory, and to all that strife and malignity which it engenders. Paul, before his conversion, was eagerly pursuing vain glory: but what was his language after that event? "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ." Before his conversion he was glorying in his worldly distinctions and honours: but what was his language after that event? "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." "We glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience." He tells us that the purpose of God in the

Gospel was to humble the pride of man, "that no flesh should glory in his presence;—that, according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."

Here you see illustrated the noble, disinterested, meek, humble spirit of the Christian religion, and may contrast it with the selfish, proud, aspiring temper of the world.

Against these sentiments I think I hear an objection raised. What could men do without ambition? What could the soldier? What could the school-boy? What could any person? All would sink together into inaction and sordid indifference to every generous pursuit, and be reduced to blocks. I reply. Were those principles removed which naturally impel men to action, and no others substituted in their stead, men would indeed sink into sloth and stupidity. But the Gospel, while it removes the pride of man, furnishes new motives to action, more powerful and far more sublime. In the room of selfishness and pride, it substitutes the love and fear of God; principles which excited all the labour and self-denial of the blessed Jesus, which awakened the enterprise of the holy apostles, and fortified with unconquerable strength the souls of the martyrs. Cannot rational beings be excited to action without pride? What then impels to action the holy angels, those unwearied spirits who dart like flames of fire to execute the will of God in different worlds? There has been no pride in heaven since Satan was cast out. The same motives that move the angels, the Gospel inculcates on men. While all other systems of morals, ancient and modern, seize on the pride of man and employ it as the chief engine to move him to noble deeds, the Gospel substitutes in its stead the love and fear of God and good will to men. These motives are essentially necessary to make a truly good man,—to give energy to his virtue against the whole array of temptations that assail his selfishness,—to exalt his virtue into a noble and beneficent principle of action,—to give it power over the passions of his heart and over the acts of his secret hours,—to make it a uniform and persevering principle under all the changes of fortune, under the

discouragement of disgrace, and even in the decline of life, when the glow of ambition becomes extinguished by the frost of age. These things pride could never do. It is wholly inadequate to be the grand moving principle of virtue. Ever variable and unstable, no calculations can be made of the direction it will give the mind, except that it will always move as the opinions of men and apparent interest sway. It cannot produce that fixed and stable integrity on which you can confidently rely. It is rather calculated to form a mean, trickish, time-serving character, on which no dependence can be placed. It is itself a cold, unsocial, repulsive principle, totally devoid of all interest in the happiness of others; and instead of uniting mankind in amity and peace, it contains in itself the most powerful causes of dissension, and wants nothing but temptation to throw the world into confusion and kindle it to a general flame. It is the torment of the mind in which it dwells, producing little else than the restlessness of insatiable desire and the mortification of defeat. It is ever making torturing comparisons, which awaken, as our text suggests, the throbs and pangs of envy. "Only by pride cometh contention." It conceives all the affronts, and is the parent of all the strife and animosities and wars which convulse the world. It needs all the restraints which have been thrown around it. All the authority of reason and conscience, added to the dread of punishment and the eagerness of men for self-preservation and peace; all the authority of religion, all the exertions of moralists and divines, all the laws and institutions of society; all these are found necessary to fence around this baleful evil, to restrain it from disturbing the order of society. Were it not thus powerfully counteracted, it would leap every barrier and overturn all the harmony and happiness of man. And even all these restraints together do not prevent it from agitating and convulsing the world. A principle which wants so many restraints, cannot be good in its nature or tendency. And is this to be the great engine to give impulse to virtue? No, it is itself an odious and filthy vice, lying at the worst extreme of sin. It excited the first rebellion in

the universe, and has been the parent of most of the crimes and miseries which have since agitated the dominions of Jehovah. And is it thought unreasonable to separate this pollution from the principles and motives of virtue? Is it strangely thought that virtue would suffer by such a divorce? In its feeblest and most latent movements, it cannot be any thing but sin; and the more completely it is banished from the hearts of men, the purer will be their virtue, the more heavenly their piety, and the more affectionate and happy will the world be.

The objection being thus removed, the injunction returns upon us with all its weight and authority: "Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Let us not indulge and inflame our pride by seeking the admiration and applause of men. Content with the approbation and love of the virtuous, the testimony of a good conscience, and the friendship of God, let us not seek for fame, or the distinctions which a gaping world are so eager to seize. Let us cultivate the unassuming meekness and sweet disinterestedness of Christian love; cherishing a noble, yet not haughty, indifference to the opinions of the world. With an eye steadfastly fixed on the glory of God, let us laboriously and meekly pursue the business of life and the duties of religion, and convince the world that the fear and love of God can give sufficient impulse to a virtuous soul without the aid of pride. Thus we

shall imitate the meek and lowly Jesus, whose "meat" it was "to do the will" of his heavenly Father "and to finish his work;" who, though he was a stranger to pride, was, more than any other man, laborious and unwearied in the service of God and his generation. My brethren, "the fashion of this world passeth away," and all its glory is transitory and vain. But soon the splendours of everlasting day will break upon the humble Christian. The honours of heaven will cluster around his brow, and crowns, such as angels wear, will adorn his beauteous temples. He will sit upon a throne of glory and reign in all the dignity of a son of God, while the lustre of his glorified body will "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of" his "Father." Christian, can you not wait for this, without panting after the distinctions of the world? Wait a little longer amidst the neglects of strangers who know you not,—who know not the Father that begot you nor the family to which you belong. "Let patience have her perfect work;" and soon your honours and your reward will come, and no man will take them from you. "Seek—the honour that cometh from God only:" and it shall be no grief of heart to you that you were unknown on earth, when you shall sit at God's right hand, and kings and emperors shall be chained beneath your feet. "By patient continuance in well doing, seek for" this "glory and honour and immortality," and you shall obtain "eternal life." Amen.

SERMON XXIV.

THE TWO ERRING PROPHETS.

1 KIN. xiii. 20—22.—And it came to pass as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back: and he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.

THE history of the Old Testament | which the providence of God is conducted. Much instruction of this na-

ture is conveyed in the interesting account from which our text is taken. This account is as follows. After the defection of the ten tribes from the house of David, Jeroboam, who was the instrument of that revolt, established an idolatrous worship at Bethel, on the southern border of the kingdom, and at Dan, on the northern border, to prevent the tribes from returning to their former allegiance. While he was engaged at Bethel in dedicating the altar which he had erected, at the season appointed for his new feast of tabernacles, a prophet arrived from Judah whom God had sent to testify against that apostacy. He found the king employed in executing the priest's office which he had profanely assumed, and in the very act of offering incense to one of his calves. He had the boldness to attack the idolatrous monarch in the very paroxysm of his pride, and in the midst of this public and proud solemnity. It would ill have become the messenger of God to have feared the face of man. He did not fear. He did not conceal the tremendous message. He did not utter it in a whisper, nor in the honied words of a man-pleaser. But in a style of impassioned eloquence, which showed him to be deeply in earnest, he cried aloud "against the altar in the word of the Lord, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord, Behold a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee." This was more than three hundred and fifty years before the predicted destruction took place. How intolerable was this rebuke. The first sacrifice that would be pleasing to God on that altar which the king was then dedicating with so much pomp, would be the priests themselves. The prophet then proceeded to give a sign, "saying, This is the sign which the Lord hath spoken: behold the altar shall be rent and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out. And it came to pass when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God,—that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand which he put forth against him dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to

him." It is worthy of remark that when his hand was stretched out to burn incense to his calves, it was not withered; but when it was extended against a prophet of the Lord, in direct opposition to a message from Jehovah, it was dried up. Of all the wickedness of the wicked, none is so offensive to God as their attacks upon his servants who come to them in his name; because therein they make the most direct opposition to his authority and calls. Many ways has he to disable the enemies of his people and to protect his servants. In this case he withered the hand that was stretched out against his prophet. "The altar also was rent and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given."

To whom in such a case did the king look for help? Not to his calves, but to the God whom he had defied. And by what means did he hope to obtain help from God? Not by his own prayers, but by the prayers of the prophet whom he had sought to destroy. "And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Entreat now the face of the Lord thy God, and pray for me that my hand may be restored me again." In times of trouble, many who have hated the preaching of God's prophets, are glad of their prayers. "And the man of God," with that spirit of forgiveness which marks a real saint, "besought the Lord, and the king's hand was restored to him again.—And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward. And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thy house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place; for so was it charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread nor drink water nor turn again by the same way that thou camest." He was forbidden to eat or drink at Bethel that he might have no communion with idolaters and apostates, but show his utter detestation of them. We may not hold fellowship with the workers of iniquity, especially with apostates, lest we encourage them in their wickedness and be tainted with their infection. He might not return by the way he

came, but by shunning as execrable the road which led to so polluted a place, he might teach others to dread and avoid it. "So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came."

Thus far his conduct was heroic and noble. "Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel," who had come out of Samaria, in expectation perhaps of some great advantage from Jeroboam. He had probably been trained up among the sons of the prophets in one of Samuel's colleges; and though a bad man, was really a prophet of the Lord. The gift of prophecy and miraculous powers never decided the character of those to whom they were imparted. It would scarcely have comported with a state of probation to have markedly distinguished the righteous from the wicked by a public badge wholly distinct from moral character. Accordingly we find these miraculous powers in Balaam, Saul, Judas, and the many who will plead at last, "Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name—cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" Through the whole account this man is styled simply a prophet, while the other is almost uniformly called the man of God. It can scarcely be reconciled with real piety that he should have removed to Bethel, unless he came to bear witness against the abominations of the place; and this it seems he did not do, as his own sons were present, apparently with the connivance of their father, at the idolatrous ceremony performed that day. "And his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: the words which he had spoken to the king, them they told also to their father. And their father said unto them, What way went he? for his sons had seen what way the man of God went.—And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass; and he rode thereon and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak," exhausted no doubt by his long fasting, and by his pedestrian journey in the heat of the day. "And he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? and he said, I am. Then he said unto him, Come home with me and eat bread. And he said, I may not return with thee

nor go in with thee; neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place. For it was said to me by the word of the Lord, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest." And the other "said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art, and an angel spoke unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thy house, that he may eat bread and drink water: but he lied unto him." Most profane and daring falsehood! to pretend to a special revelation from God, countermanding a solemn injunction which he knew God himself had given! a falsehood premeditated; for he knew before he left home, from the report of his sons, what prohibition God had made: a falsehood without any temptation, except a vain curiosity to be better acquainted with the prophet and his message, or at best a hospitable feeling; unless indeed, as some suppose, he was in deep conspiracy with the idolaters of Bethel, and intended by this stratagem to entrap the man of God, and destroy his influence there. Whichever way it was, this presumptuous and dreadful lie plainly shows that he was a bad man.

The people of God are more in danger of being drawn away by the arts of false professors, than by the barefaced bribes of the world. The man who could spurn the proffers of a king, was decoyed by the insinuations of a prophet. "So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house and drank water." Ah, man of God, beware. Who has given thee a dispensation from that prohibition to eat or drink at Bethel? What proof has the stranger given that God has repealed that order, or that he himself is even a prophet? If he is a faithful prophet, how came he to live at Bethel? and why did not God employ him, instead of sending you so far, to carry his message to the apostate king? Do not the reasons of the prohibition still remain in full force, namely, the unlawfulness and danger of communing with idolaters? Or if you think this man better than an idolater, where is the proof? But look again at your commission. Does it not say, *No house in Bethel*? And will you dare to refine upon the divine command by read-

ing, *No house but that of a prophet?* At least take time to ask counsel of God. Alas he does not stop to pray. The cravings of hunger and thirst bias him to believe the report, and he falls to rise no more.

"And it came to pass as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back; and he cried [aloud, as in an agony,] unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou has disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back and hast eaten bread and drank water in the place of which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers." Was this too severe? Remember that he was a prophet and a messenger from God, and as such was under the strongest obligations to fidelity in the execution of his trust. He was in an enemy's camp, with the eyes of all Israel upon him; and his disobedience could not fail to exert an extensive and destructive influence upon those whom he was sent to reclaim. It gave "great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme," and did in fact defeat the end of his mission. To counteract these pernicious tendencies, and to wipe off from himself the stigma attached to his messenger, God found it necessary to make him a public example. This was the more necessary in order to make, before all Israel, an awful display of his severity against sin, even when found on one of his own prophets, and to convince them that he would inflexibly punish them according to the threatening just denounced. If these things were done in "a green tree, what" should "be done in the dry?" The public execution of this offender under circumstances convincing to all Israel that God had inflicted the blow, and inflicted it for disobedience to the command which the prophet had declared to be inserted in his commission, furnished double proof that the message which he had brought to Bethel was not conceived in his own fancy, but was dictated by that Master who had taken away his life. All these warn-

ings and proofs were furnished to justify God in those dreadful judgments which he intended to bring on the house of Jeroboam and on the people of Israel. And he was willing also, by this severity upon his prophet, to hold up a warning to his servants in all generations, and particularly to his ministers, strictly to follow his injunctions upon their peril.

It was a just judgment upon the lying prophet that he was forced, by the pressure of the inspiration, to proclaim himself a liar, and to denounce against his guest that destruction which he himself had brought upon him; which, if his intentions were not the wickedest possible, must have been an overwhelming task.

It is thought by some that the denunciation was *understood* to import that the man of God should die in that very journey before he reached the place of his fathers' sepulchres. It certainly gave reason to *apprehend* that a stroke so sudden might fall upon him.

"And it came to pass after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that" the old prophet "saddled for him the ass;" thinking perhaps to make some amends by furnishing him a means of conveyance, and possibly hoping to afford him a better chance to escape the threatened destruction.

"And when" the man of God "was gone, a lion met him by the way and slew him; and his carcase was cast in the way; and the ass stood by it; the lion also stood by the carcase. And behold men passed by and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase; and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt." The miracle of the lion's not tearing the body nor the ass nor the travellers, and of the ass's not fleeing from the lion, was to show all Israel that the death of the prophet was not the natural effect of the lion's hunger, but was miraculously inflicted by the hand of God.

"And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard thereof, he said," (for the information of all the idolaters of Bethel,) "It is the man of God who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord: therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath

torn him and slain him, according to the word of the Lord which he spoke unto him. And he spoke unto his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled him. And he went and found his carcase cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcase: the lion had not eaten the carcase nor torn the ass. And the prophet took up the carcase of the man of God and laid it upon the ass and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city to mourn and bury him. And he laid his carcase in his own grave; and they mourned over him, saying, Alas, my brother. And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried. Lay my bones beside his bones: for the saying which he cried by the word of the Lord against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass." This then was the reason why he wished to be buried with the man of God. It will be recollected that the prediction had declared that men's bones should be burnt upon the altar at Bethel. On the prophet's tomb therefore this man doubtless put the inscription which Josiah found more than three centuries and a half afterwards; calculating that it would protect his own dust by protecting that of the man of God. And so indeed it happened.

Ministers may die,—die untimely for their sins,—but the word of the Lord which they have preached will endure for ever. Though the man of God died for his transgression, the prediction did not fail. More than three hundred and fifty years afterwards, Josiah, king of Judah, came to Bethel, (the country having, many years before, been desolated by the captivity of the ten tribes,) and broke down the altar and high place

which Jeroboam had made, "and burnt the high place and stampd it small to powder, and burnt the grove. And as Josiah turned himself he spied the sepulchres that were there in the mount, and sent and took the bones out of the sepulchres and burnt them upon the altar and polluted it, according to the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed who proclaimed these words. Then he said, What title is that that I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulchre of the man of God which came from Judah and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel. And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria;" that is, the old prophet. "And all the houses also of the high places that were in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke the Lord to anger, Josiah took away, and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Bethel. And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there, upon the altars, and burnt men's bones upon them, and returned to Jerusalem."

Thus accomplished was the prediction, and thus honoured was the memory of this man of God. But who he was we are nowhere told, his grievous sin having blotted his name from the records of history. In tenderness to the reputation of a good man, his name is not suffered to appear. His sin was pardoned, but his name is buried in oblivion. The sins of good men, though they are forgiven, are followed with consequences which are not soon to end. But blessed are they whose names are not blotted from "the book of life."

There are several other truths brought to light in this history, which I have reserved for the afternoon.

SERMON XXV.

THE TWO ERRING PROPHETS.

1 KINGS xiii. 20—22. And it came to pass as they sat at the table, that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back: and he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.

In the morning I interspersed the narrative with observations more general and which needed no discussion. But there are several truths brought to light in this record, on which it is proper to dwell with a little more particularity. These I shall now exhibit in their order.

I. If the word of God has spoken, the vision or the interpretation which essentially contradicts it, cannot be followed without destruction. This is the plain truth which lies on the face of the record, and which the record was doubtless intended to teach. If it teaches not this it teaches nothing. The man of God was directed by a divine revelation not to eat or drink at Bethel. An old prophet, wearing probably the prophetic mantle, comes to him and tells him that he has had a revelation from God, through the medium of an angel, rescinding the former order and commanding him to return and eat and drink in that place. Nothing short of a real, well-attested revelation could have furnished a better excuse for departing from the word of the Lord; and yet for departing he was slain. Here a lesson is written as it were on the arch of heaven, and hung out for a warning to all generations, not to depart, on any pretence, from the plain word of God. Whatever he has said we must believe and obey, and an angel from heaven must not be allowed to contradict it. We may compare Scripture with Scripture to ascertain what he has actually spoken; but that being determined, we must suffer neither our own reasoning, nor the authority or reasoning or ridicule or glosses of others to weaken our confidence in any revealed truth. The

meaning of the terms used in any particular passage, may be judged of by their use in other places; or if the passage is dark, it may be explained by the more obvious parts of Scripture: but when from the natural construction of the words, uncontradicted by the general tenour of revelation, we find any particular doctrine plainly laid down, that must stand however it may militate with our benighted reason; and no doctrine contrary to it must be extorted from any other text. This is a canon of criticism in which all the learned are agreed, except those who are determined to try God and his revealed truth at the bar of human reason.

But this class of men are more numerous in this day of profane speculation, than some may imagine. The proper divinity of Christ and the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit, are points plainly revealed in the word of God, and uncontradicted by the general tenour of Scripture or by any of its parts. And yet some, because they cannot fathom the sublime doctrine of the Trinity, scout it as incredible, and contend for the right of believing nothing which their blinded reason cannot comprehend. The endless punishment of the wicked is as clearly revealed as it could be in any language; and yet because it appears to some unreasonable, they indignantly reject the doctrine; and having peremptorily decided, from their own wisdom, what punishment it is proper for God to inflict, they proceed to put certain texts to the torture to make them speak a language consonant with their own. The doctrines of total depravity, election, and decrees, are re-

vealed with no less perspicuity; but some, because they cannot reconcile them with their own notions of man's character and moral agency, throw them away; and then, to prevent going over to downright infidelity, they proceed to cover up one half of the Bible under the tapestry of their own glosses, or at best stand aloof from it as mysterious and incapable of being explained, as though God had made a revelation one half of which is no revelation at all. How many reject what they are pleased to call the *harder* doctrines of the Bible, without even an examination, because these doctrines do not accord with their own blinded reason, or rather with their *wishes*. Many who do not look into the Bible once a year, and make no pretension to a knowledge of its contents, boldly proscribe these truths of heaven, not because they are not found in the Bible, but because they are not agreeable to their taste.

Much the same course is held by the more careless part of the world respecting the *duties* of religion. Their sense of propriety and obligation is so subjected to their inclinations, that nothing appears to them a duty which does not comport with their taste: and when you urge upon them the obligation of family and secret prayer,—when you call upon them to open their hands for the relief of the poor or for the support of public institutions,—when you exhort them to renounce the world, to withdraw from their dissipated companions, to come down from “the pride of life,” to devote themselves to God and begin a religious course, they refuse to acknowledge their obligations to do all this, not because the word of God has not enjoined it all, but because it does not comport with their inclinations. They stand determined to judge over the head of Scripture and to think for themselves. All this without formally denying that the Bible is the word of God.

In all these cases men act over again the part so strongly condemned in the history before us. They leave the plain revelation of God for another guide more congenial with their feelings. At the suggestion of others who set up pretensions to superior knowledge, or at the sole instance of their own depraved

hearts, they depart from truth and duty in defiance of the plain prescriptions of God's word. Let them beware. These paths lead “down to death,” and these “steps take hold on hell.” If there is any truth imbodyed in sacred history,—if that history does not cast a delusive light on the providence of God,—they see in the catastrophe before us a sure emblem of their own doom. The end of these things is death; not the death of the body merely, but the eternal death of the soul. The Almighty God will rend them like a lion and there shall be none to deliver. All this becomes more credible when we see, as we do in the account before us,

II. That it is some *selfish and sinful bias* which leads men to forsake the word of God for fables. In the present case it is most plain by what influence and by what process of mind the man of God came to believe the fatal lie. It was under the spur of an appetite awakened by long abstinence. Pressed with hunger and fainting with thirst, in a sultry climate, in the heat of the day, no sooner was the sound in his ear that God had released him from the burdensome restraint, than he rushed to the conclusion that so it was. He opened his ear to hear the refreshing tidings, as he would his parched lips to receive the cooling draught. Any one can almost *see* the operations of his mind, who has ever studied his own. That selfish desire of personal gratification,—that impatience under the restriction of a burdensome command,—predisposed him to fall in with the suggestion, and to believe, (for he doubtless *did* believe,) that God had released him from the prohibition. How easily do men believe what they wish should be true. In this case the process by which the man went over to believe a lie in opposition to a divine revelation, is almost visible. In other cases the motive may not be so manifest, but in all instances the process is essentially the same; and this case is held up to teach the world this very lesson. No man ever went over from the revelation of God to believe a lie, without being led by a selfish and sinful bias.

I have heard it said that men are not to blame for their opinions, and that if they really believe a thing is right, to

them it is right. Let that modern dogma be tested by the fact now before us. None will doubt that this man of God really believed that he had a divine permission to return and to eat and drink at Bethel. But did he do right? Was his belief innocent? and did it screen him from punishment? You all know the fact.

III. We perceive in this history how men, and even prophets, will lie to draw others from the path-way of the Lord. The old prophet, having full evidence from the miracle wrought in a public assembly of the people, and no doubt cherishing an unwavering belief that God had forbidden his servant to eat or drink at Bethel, had the effrontery to pretend to a revelation from heaven to warrant him to disregard the prohibition. Thus he audaciously lied to draw away the prophet from what he knew to be a revelation from God. Had no such development of the human heart appeared, it would have been deemed a libel on the nature of man to charge him with such a crime: but now we may safely affirm that the carnal heart is capable of all this. What has been done may be done again. Notwithstanding the small diversities of character arising from different degrees of restraint, all men by nature are essentially the same. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." The soldiers who witnessed our Saviour's resurrection, and who "for fear" of the angel "did shake and become as dead men," were capable, for a bribe, of spreading the infamous report, against their own knowledge, that "his disciples came by night and stole him away while" they "slept." And the Sanhedrim, to whom the soldiers had come, all breathless, and declared the vision and the resurrection they had witnessed, were capable, against their full conviction, of giving them that damning bribe. The Jewish priests and Roman soldiers equally conspired to cheat the world, by a deliberate lie, out of that infinitely important fact on which the whole Gospel rests. And were they the last men who, against the clear light of conscience, have attempted to seduce others from the belief of revelation? I am a witness to the contrary fact. I knew a man some years ago, who after

having stood forth a distinguished leader in the ranks of infidelity in a neighbouring place, was hopefully converted to "the obedience of faith." Two years after, and just after he had been raised from the borders of the grave, where he had given triumphant proofs of his sincerity, I fell in company with him and received from his lips the following confession. "You know, sir, that I was considered for years a leading infidel in ——. I will now give you some account of my life. When I was about twelve years old, (he was now about fifty-seven,) I was brought under conviction. I resisted the Spirit and went back. From that time I had no doubt that I was sealed over to perdition. When I opened the Bible and found, as I supposed, that Christ would build his throne upon my ruins, my heart rose against him. This was my state of mind all the way up through life till two years ago. You know I was considered a leading infidel: I now solemnly declare to you that in my life I never doubted that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah."—"I had seen so much of this sort, that when a leader of an infidel club, some years after, came into my inquiry meeting, (himself under deep impressions,) I had the confidence, without any previous conversation with him, to put to him this pointed question before them all: "You have been reputed the leader of an infidel club: I now wish to ask you: Did you ever in your life *doubt* whether Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah?" He threw his eyes on the floor for a few moments, and then replied; "No, sir, I do not think I ever did: I *tried* to doubt."—"For half a century the world has rung with the ribaldry of infidel blasphemers: but do you think that they themselves give credit to their own tirades? Here and there one may have his conscience so seared as to be sincere; but there is scarcely one in a hundred who believes a word he says. Determined not to leave their sins, they calculate, like the first infidel I mentioned, that hell must be their portion: and when they contemplate Christ building his throne on their ruins, they cannot bear it, and set themselves, with the fury of mad men, to fight against his religion: but after all they verily believe it to be the religion of

heaven. Something of the same sort may be said of Socinians. I have had opportunity to watch the conscience of these men; and from discoveries made in the sick chamber and by the bed of death, I have no doubt that many of them apprehend that we are right and they are wrong. This is pre-eminently the case with universalists. I am possessed of facts which place this matter beyond a doubt. The same is true of the great mass of loose and worldly men in every place, who, without any definite system of their own, cry down the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel. Every revival of religion brings out confessions of this sort. The religion of these several classes is a religion supported, not by their reason, but by their passions. So it was with the religion of Jeroboam. He distinctly confessed his belief in the God of Judah when his arm was withered, and entreated the prophet to pray, not to the calves which the hypocrite had set up, but to the prophet's God. He well knew that it was the God of Judah who restored his arm, and that he alone was the true God: and yet, to prevent his kingdom from going back to the house of David, he returned to the worship of his calves. What a picture does this give of the human heart. And after all is not the natural man totally depraved?

IV. It may be our duty so to bear testimony against errors and vices, as to refuse to eat or drink or associate with those on whom they are found. And when the evil is so great as to call for this marked condemnation, no feelings of courtesy ought to turn us aside from the course of duty; nor ought such a withdrawal to be stigmatized as uncharitableness or bigotry. All this is fully supported by the history before us. God strictly commanded his servant not to eat or drink with the idolaters of Bethel, as an example to all Israel to withdraw from them, that they might withhold encouragement and avoid the contagion of their society; and because he failed in this thing the Lord slew him. In this age of catholicism it is deemed a mark of intolerance to turn away from those who have departed most from the doctrines and practice of the Gospel. Whether this sen-

timent is just, and what opinion is formed of it in heaven, we now have an opportunity to judge. Not that we are to split into parties and withhold fellowship on account of every trifling difference. This is the other extreme. And it is an extreme which lamentably shows the selfishness and contractedness which still spot the character of good men. But where individuals or a community have decidedly apostatized from the vital principles of Christianity, the plain language of heaven is, "Come out from among them and be ye separate,—and touch not the unclean thing."

V. We learn from the history before us that strong resistance of temptation will not screen us from death if we are overcome at last. This man of God made a noble stand against the temptation by which he fell, when he said to Jeroboam, "If thou wilt give me half thy house I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink wine in this place." He spurned, not only the invitation, but the proffered reward of the king, and fairly overcame, and was triumphant on his way to Judea. But notwithstanding all this fidelity and valour, as soon as he was vanquished he was destroyed. When men have long resisted temptation and are overcome at last, they are prone to raise some excuse from the resistance they have made. But there is no excuse. The virtue of their past resistance is annihilated. They have sinned, and the sentence is out that they must die.

VI. Seducers are often made the instruments of punishing their own victims. The old prophet, after decoying the man of God to his house and table, is made the organ of the terrible denunciation against him. The tempter becomes the instrument of punishment. In sin and sinful things is found the punishment of sin. If you touch what is polluted, it will thrust you through with a dart. If you transgress against the Lord, some of the instruments of the transgression will become the executioners of his wrath: your punishment will grow out of the sin, or be so adapted to it as to make you sensible for what you suffer. And at last the arch seducer will be the chief tormentor. Whom he causes to serve, he will afterwards lash with plagues.

VII. From this illuminated section of divine providence we learn that good men, when they transgress, are often more severely punished in this life than the wicked. Instead of being protected by the sanctity of their profession, their nearness to God, the dignity of their office, or any services they may have rendered, they frequently receive a double portion of the cup of trembling. So good a man as the prophet from Judah, who had been so bold and faithful in the cause of God, must die for one offence; while the old lying prophet who had seduced him may live at ease, and an idolatrous and corrupting prince may continue in pomp and power. Surely there must be another world where these inequalities will be adjusted. The general reason for this diversity is, that one class are to be *reclaimed* by chastisement, the other will have time enough to suffer beyond the grave. "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; [that is, receive their punishment in this life;] and some men they follow after;" that is, pursue them beyond the grave and pour the whole judgment upon them there. "Whom the Lord loveth, [and intends to reclaim,] he chasteneth;" but of others he says, They are "joined to idols, let them alone." "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more." Wo to them who are doomed to have their portion in the present life, and whose judgment is deferred to a future world. That Christian had a more correct sense than is common of these things, who when he was cast down and complained that his heavenly Father had forsaken him, and was asked why he thought so, replied, It is a whole month since my heavenly Father afflicted me.

But there is another reason why, under certain circumstances, God punishes his children in this life more than others. When their sins are public, it behooves him to wipe off the aspersion thus cast upon himself. It is given out and publicly understood that his children resemble him. When therefore flagrant transgressions are found upon them, it is necessary for him to break silence and announce that he disclaims all resemblance to them in that respect. If they *will* speak for him and speak the truth,

he is contented to be silent; but if they defame him by their evil conduct, he must speak for himself: he must take them, in the presence of that world who have heard the slander, and correct them openly, and convince all that he disowns the conduct thus imputed to him. This was the motive in the case under consideration. A child of God had appeared among the idolaters of Bethel, and had gone in and eaten with them. It would naturally go abroad that the Father of that child, who had sent him to the place, had fellowship with idolaters. It was necessary for the Father to disown the act; and that he might show his utter abhorrence of idolaters and of all communion with them, he delivered the offending child, in their presence, to the jaws of a lion. Blessed be God that he will thus disown our public sins, by which, otherwise, the blind, mistaking them for conduct approved by him, might be led to ruin.

Such being the reasons for public severity against offending Christians, we must not, like the friends of Job, consider men forsaken of God on account of the greatness of their sufferings, nor approved of God because "their eyes stand out with fatness" and "they have more than heart could wish." When the greatest and dearest of God's sons stood to bear the sins of the world, the Jews "did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted," as one whom the Father disowned. We must learn not to judge of men by their present sufferings.

VIII. This piece of history affords a specimen of the complexness of God's providence, and particularly the extensive effects which are sometimes connected with the punishment of his people, beyond the immediate ends of the chastisement. In the case under consideration, the immediate ends in view were to disown the communion which the prophet had held with idolaters, and to show those idolaters God's abhorrence of sin, and his unalterable determination to punish it on whomsoever found. But besides these ends, the miraculous death of the prophet for disobeying what he had publicly declared to be a part of his instructions, furnished irresistible proof of his divine mission,

and of the truth of the prediction which he had hurled against the altar of idols. By his death also his body was left at Bethel, where his sepulchre, with a broad and legible inscription, hard by the temple of idols, daily delivered anew the same denunciations of heaven, and proved a standing testimony against the idolaters. Thus a monument was *preserved* at Bethel which bore testimony against the calves of Israel from generation to generation, and kept alive the remembrance of the prediction until its accomplishment more than three centuries and a half afterwards; by means of which the fulfilment, in the days of Josiah, was rendered far more notorious and convincing. Had the prophet died in Judea and been buried in the sepulchre of his fathers, his tomb would not have preserved the remembrance of his mission, and the prediction would have gone out of mind. Thus out of this evil God educed multiform and extensive good, and yet the evil was the proper punishment of sin. That course of events by which God chastises his people, may lead to wide and lasting benefits to the Church, beyond the proper and immediate effects of the chastisement; but those benefits do not prove that the events were not a punishment. Those trials which we are wont to conclude have done their office when they have punished our sin, may have consequences far more extensive and beneficial.

In that new condition in which our sufferings have placed us, we may render important service to the Church, and may be tempted to consider the trial intended, not so much as a chastisement as to open a way for this more extended usefulness. But while it *was* appointed to draw in its train these more extensive consequences, it was none the less a punishment of sin. So complicated is the providence of God.

IX. God corrects his children "in measure," and does not let loose all his wrath, but in the midst of "wrath" remembers "mercy." When the spirit of the prophet had left the body, the debt was paid and vengeance pursued him no further. The contention being closed, I see the Father hovering over the lifeless body to protect it from the jaws of the lion, nay stationing a lion to guard it against other ravenous beasts and birds. The carcase from which the soul has just been chased by an offended God, is now taken under the protection of a reconciled Father; to show that though for sin he took away the life, the remains are still precious in his eyes. Thus always does he break the stroke by which he chastises his children; and when the end of the infliction is answered, he opens to them a Father's heart. And at last, when for sin he has sunk them in death, he will set himself down to guard their dust until the last morning bids it rise. Amen.

SERMON XXVI.

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

SACRAMENTAL.

MAT. xxii. 42.—What think ye of Christ?

THIS was a question put to the Pharisees by Christ himself. Having heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, in great self-confidence, to try him with hard questions. When they had asked as many as they chose, he thought it his turn to put one or two to them. So he "asked them,

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saying, What think ye of Christ? whose Son is he? They say unto him, The son of David." They expected no more of their Messiah than that he would be a mere man descended from David, and that as a secular prince he would deliver them from the Romans, and perhaps raise them to universal em-

pire. Jesus "saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord ; saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool ? If David then call him Lord how is he his Son ? And no man was able to answer him a word ; neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions." Full of the dreams of an earthly kingdom, they had no idea of that spiritual dominion which the Messiah was appointed to exercise over David and over all creatures, nor of that divine character which fitted him for universal empire. They had never seen that sublime spiritual King in their Scriptures ; and when a text relating to him as such was quoted, they knew not what to make of it. When those proud rulers who boasted of their perfect knowledge of the Old Testament, and wished to pass for infallible guides, found themselves unable to answer so plain a question, and had a text hurled against them which demolished their whole system, and saw their ignorance exposed before the multitude, they were utterly confounded ; and instead of trying again to perplex him, they thenceforth made it their study to take away his life.

"What think ye of Christ ?" This is a question whose answer from the heart is to decide our eternal destiny. According to the views and feelings which we have respecting the Mediator, will be our everlasting state. We are responsible for the very judgment we form of him, as well as for the temper we exercise towards him. And at the last day this question will come back upon us with tremendous bearing, and ring an awful peal through every conscience, What thought ye of Christ ?

My brethren, I will frankly tell you what I think of Christ. I think of him, in his original nature, as very God, yet so distinguished from him who in the economy of redemption is called the Father, as to lay a foundation for different agencies, for different responsibilities, and for the application of the different personal pronouns. What that distinction is we are not informed ; but I believe it to have existed in the Godhead independently of the work of redemption, and to have been the foundation of that work.

I think of Christ as offering, in his original state, to assume the office of Mediator, to become incarnate and subject to the Father's law, to yield, in the human nature, perfect obedience to that law, and particularly to a command to die as a substitute for sinful men. I think of him as being accepted in that most sublime and benevolent offer, and as receiving from him who from that moment assumed the rights of the Godhead, a promise that his mediation should be accepted in behalf of all who would believe ; that the Spirit should be sent out to bring to salvation an innumerable multitude as his reward ; and that, in the character of Mediator, he should have the dominion of the universe until his work should be done, and after that the throne over his redeemed for ever and ever.

From the formation of that eternal covenant, I think of him no longer as simply God, but as Mediator, holding this office under God, deriving from God all his authority, acting in his dominion as the Father's Vicegerent, and becoming what is known on earth as the second Person in the Trinity. The second Person in the Trinity is known on earth by no name but what belongs to him in the character of Mediator, and indeed, if *second* implies inferiority, he is not the second in any other scale than that of redemption. The terms *Christ* and *Messiah*, (both of which signify the anointed,) *Immanuel*, (or "God with us,") the *Son* of God, the *Angel* of the covenant, and the *Word*, all belong to him in the character of Mediator ; and though applied to him by anticipation beforehand, were chiefly founded on what took place when he became incarnate. He is called in the ears of men by those names which fitly belonged to him in his public appearance in our world. As he was God *with us*, he was *Immanuel* ; as he was the anointed, or appointed, Prophet, Priest, and King, he was the Messiah or Christ ; as he was begotten by the Holy Ghost in the womb of the virgin, and went through a course of filial obedience, and in reward became the "Heir of all things," he was the Son of God ; as he was sent to perform an agency and to deliver a message, he was the Angel of the covenant ; and as he was appointed

to stand forth the image of the invisible God,—to bring out the secrets of the eternal mind by his preaching and work and holy life and the revelations of his Spirit,—to be in short the grand medium through which the mind of God was to be revealed to creatures,—he was called the Word.

I think of Christ as one *by* whom and *for* whom all things were made, as the Author of heaven and earth, the Up-holder of “all things by the word of his power,” and as having created the whole to subserve that grand exhibition of God which was to be made in the work of redemption.

Although the foundation of pardon and salvation was to be laid by his sufferings and obedience on earth, and though the whole ground of his reward, including his dominion, was to be established by his obedience during the time of his humiliation; yet having given bonds for the endurance and performance of all this, he entered upon his dominion and began to apply the virtue of his atonement and righteousness as soon as man fell. It was the Mediator who governed the world in the name of God between the fall and the incarnation. It was the Mediator who, under the name of the Lord God, appeared to our first parents in Eden, and who afterwards appeared to the patriarchs. It was the Mediator who entered into covenant with Abraham, who brought the Church out of Egypt, who gave the law at Sinai, who resided in the pillar of cloud and of fire, who planted the Church in Canaan, who sat between the cherubims and gave his responses in the tabernacle and temple. In short, if you ask me what I think of Christ, I think of him as the God of the Old Testament.

In these matters he acted in the name of God and as his Vicegerent; an honour conferred on him as mediatorial King. But his own distinctive character and influence every where appeared under the old dispensation. His influence was felt in all the pardons and salvations granted from the time of Abel; in all the mercies which fell upon the Church and the world; in all the promises of grace, from that made in Eden respecting the Seed of the woman, to the annunciation to the virgin mother. But in another point of view the Me-

diator, in his own naked character, filled the whole field of vision during the patriarchal age, and still more during the times of the Hebrew Church. Innumerable predictions foretold him; innumerable types set him forth. The slain beasts whose skins covered our first parents, pointed to Calvary. The bloody sacrifices brought by Abel did the same. The rite of circumcision prefigured forth the blood of the covenant. And when you come down to Sinai, the whole body of institutions intended for a great nation during fifteen centuries, were full of Christ. In short, whether you look at the types or predictions, he is the grand subject of the Old Testament.

I think of Christ as the august Personage for whose advent a way was prepared by all the revolutions in the four great empires, and was so intelligibly fixed as to time and place as to become the object, about the appointed season, of general expectation throughout the east. I think of him as ushered in by a harbinger miraculously conceived and miraculously endowed. I think of him as announced by Gabriel before his conception, and begotten by the Holy Ghost. I think of him as proclaimed to the wise men of the east by a new star in heaven, to the shepherds by the message and song of angels, and to Simeon and Anna by the Holy Ghost. All heaven and earth seemed moved at his appearance.

I think of Christ as born in a manger among the cattle of the stall. The Son of the royal house of David, the Son of the living God, the child of poverty. I think of him as pursued by the persecuting sword of Herod and driven an exile to Egypt. I think of him, (the Being before whom the assembled universe will be judged,) subjected to the authority of two obscure peasants. I think of him as gradually emerging from the unconsciousness of an infant and growing in knowledge like another child. I think of him, (the great Architect of heaven and earth,) as working at the humble trade of a carpenter. I think of him as breaking forth from his obscurity and entering on his public ministry by the baptism and testimony of John, by a visible unction of the Holy Ghost, and by a voice from heaven, saying, “This

is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." I think of him as the glorious preacher of righteousness, come out to instruct an ignorant world, and speaking as never man spoke. I think of him as carrying omnipotence about him, commanding the elements, commanding devils, commanding the grave to resign its prey; thus surrounding himself with miraculous proofs of his divine mission. I think of him as standing in the midst of this great hospital, assuaging the pains of disease, scattering health from his hands, and thus announcing himself the great Physician of the world. I think of him as melting over the miseries of a suffering race, often in tears, but never, it is said, known to smile. I think of him as spotless in his life, as uniformly obedient to his Father's will under circumstances the most difficult,—as filled with zeal for his Father's glory, and perfectly displaying the purity and benevolence of God upon a human scale. I think of him as thus placed under law and acting the part of a Son, that God might have an opportunity to bestow on him, as the reward of a perfect obedience, all the positive good ever intended for a sinful world; that so he might preserve the original principle of Eden, (so honourable to the law,) never to bestow a positive good but as the reward of a perfect obedience. I think of him as descending thus low that by his sufferings, (manifestly inflicted by the Father's authority, because endured in obedience to his command,) he might answer all the purposes of our punishment, by giving God an opportunity to prove, no less than the perdition of all Adam's race would have done, that he was determined to support the authority of his law by executing its penalty on future offenders. The infliction on one so dear gave abundant proof of this, and maintained the authority of the law amidst unnumbered pardons. I think of him as coming up from Galilee to Jerusalem on purpose to resign himself into the hands of his enemies. I think of him as assembling with his afflicted family in the upper chamber, and there solemnly instituting a feast to be kept in remembrance of his dying love. He does not flinch as the dark cloud is rising. Unconquerable love bears him forward. He wipes the tears from his

orphan family when there is none to wipe away his own. I think of him as leading out his sad train to the Mount of Olives in the gloomy hour of night, and seeking the garden where he had often retired for prayer. I think of him as there beset by the powers of darkness, and so overwhelmed with a view of the wrath of God against a world he loved, as to fall in agony to the earth. Thrice he fell, and thrice he prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt;" while "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." I think of him as seized by a ruffian band and dragged to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, and then in bonds "to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and—elders were assembled." Here they suborned false witnesses to swear away his life. And having pronounced him worthy of death, they spit in his face and buffeted him and mocked him; and after blindfolding him, they smote him on the face, saying, "Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?" Even the servants smote him "with the palms of their hands." Do you think that night that he closed his eyes? Probably he was in an agony during all its gloomy hours. "As soon as it was day the elders of the people and the chief priests and—scribes came together and led him into their council;" and after drawing from him a confession that he was the Christ, they condemned him for blasphemy: but not having the power of life and death, they bound him and led him away to the Roman governor. Pilate sent him to Herod, who "with his men of war set him at nought and mocked him and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe and sent him" back "to Pilate." The latter, when he had called together the chief priests and rulers, proposed to chastise him and let him go. But their clamours and threatenings prevailed, and obtained permission to put him to death. So when Pilate had scourged him, (a process extremely excruciating,) he delivered him up to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took him into the common hall, "called Pretorium," and gathered unto him the whole band. And they stripped him, and put

on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns they put it on his head, and a reed in his right hand, and "bowed the knee before him and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews. And they spit upon him, and took the reed and smote him on the head." And after they had mocked him they took off the robe and put his own raiment on him and led him away to crucify him. For six long hours he hung suspended on the torturing spikes, with his life unbroken within him, and his soul most horribly darkened by the hidings of his Father's face. There he hung amidst the taunts of his enemies. There he hung in full view of his agonized mother. There he hung that you and I might never die. "O Lamb of God, was ever love, was ever grief like thine?"

He was laid in the sepulchre, but the third morning saw him rise. That resurrection was a public declaration that his atonement was accepted in behalf of sinners, and that he had no more occasion to suffer on their account. It was also a public approbation of his obedience, (as it was the commencement of his reward,) and betokened that he was entitled to the positive salvation of his people, which was the main part of the stipulated recompense. As the different parts of his reward were inseparable, his own resurrection stood indissolubly connected with the resurrection of his people to eternal life. It was like the head coming out of the grave and drawing the members after it. Hence he is said to have been "raised again for our justification." As soon as his filial obedience was ended, (which was done when he pronounced on the cross, "It is finished,") he became entitled by covenant to the whole inheritance of a Son, including not only the salvation of his people and every thing necessary for that, but universal empire. Hence we hear him say soon after his resurrection, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." As the very act of rising was his public entrance on the *inheritance*,—on the complete state of sonship,—his resurrection is called his *generation*, and the grave, whither his obedience carried him, is spoken of as the womb in which he was begotten. Thus he is called "the first begotten

of the dead," and "the first born from the dead."

If you ask me then what I think of Christ, I think of him as the "Heir of all things," which he became in reward of his obedience "unto death." In his inheritance is included, not only the Spirit to sanctify his people, but all the positive good intended for them in both worlds. All this was given to him as his reward and for their use. I think of him then as being, through his obedience, the ground of the title of his people to eternal life, as well as the ground of all their positive blessings here. Their crown of glory in heaven, and every morsel of comfort which they enjoy on earth, even to the least crumb of bread, belong to his inheritance, and come to them because first given to him.

I think of Christ as the Manager and Distributor of the whole estate. That he might sustain this office, and that he might press every thing into the service of his Church, he was made universal King. Angels, men, and devils, and the whole course of nature, were put under him: angels, that he might use them as ministering spirits to his elect; devils, that he might restrain, conquer, and punish them; and the whole course of nature, that he might make all things pay tribute to the Church. Of course he became the Guardian and Protector of his younger brethren, and took into his hands the charge of completing their salvation. As he possesses all things by a mediatorial claim, he distributes all things to them as mediatorial King. They are in the hands of their best friend, and they cannot want until his love or his treasure fails. In watching over them and carrying them forward, he has an opportunity to exhibit his tenderness and his faithful care. He goes before them as their Shepherd; he supports them when they are weary; he cheers them when they are faint; he brings them again when they have wandered; he marks out their way, and never leaves them until he has brought them home to his heavenly fold.

All this dominion he held by anticipation before his incarnation; and as the Mediator was not then fully revealed, he held it under the name of God. But when he ascended from the grave, with all his bonds cancelled, he entered more

visibly and fully into his dominion, under the proper name of Mediator. Taking along with him a human nature, and exalting that nature to the throne, he made the government and glory of the Mediator more visible in heaven; and as his kingdom was extended to the Gentiles, and soon made wide conquests among the heathen, his empire became more enlarged and glorious on earth.

For forty days he remained on earth, to complete the evidence of his resurrection, and to instruct his disciples in the doctrines they were to teach and in the order they were to establish in the churches. At length he led them out to Olivet and lifted up his hands and blessed them. That benediction was his last act on earth. He left the world with a blessing on his lips. "And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven," "and a cloud received him out of their sight." That cloud perhaps contained the regal robes in which he was to ascend as a conqueror to his royal city. During the forty days he had appeared without any external splendour, that he might not dazzle the eyes of his disciples; but now the time had come when he was to assume the habiliments which belong to the Son and universal Heir, and in which he had appeared on Tabor and afterwards appeared in Patmos: and thus arrayed, he began his triumphant march, attended by "twenty thousand" "chariots of God," and leading "captivity captive," while different companies of angels sung and responded to each other; "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." From that moment he is the Lamb in the midst of his Father's throne, bearing still the marks of the nails and the spear, but surrounded with indescribable splendour; and all heaven are casting their crowns at his feet, and "saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing." *There let him*

reign. We rejoice that he has found his honours and his home. It is the richest thought that ever dropt upon a human soul, that the Sufferer of Calvary has reached his throne. Let darkness cover the earth; let all my worldly prospects be overcast; but this thought shall cheer my gloomiest hours, that he who wore the crown of thorns now wears the diadem of the universe. I think of him, and *love* to think of him, as thus enthroned.

I think of him as our intercessor in heaven, whither he is gone "to appear in the presence of God for us," and where "he ever liveth to make intercession" for us. That is, the silent influence of his atonement and obedience pleads, and his desires plead, and draw out from God the pardon of which his sufferings were the ground, and the blessings which his obedience purchased, and which he distributes as a King.

I think of him as one whose name ought to be the sweetest music to every human ear,—whose griefs and whose love ought never to be forgotten while gratitude remains, and whose achievements and death ought to be perpetually celebrated in the songs of the redeemed and in the Church on earth. This is the business on which we have assembled this morning. And while we set forth his deep and awful passion, let our hearts break for the sins which made him bleed; let our souls be melted under a sense of his love; and let all our powers arise and praise him. Let us feel ourselves no more our own, and give ourselves away to him in a covenant never to be revoked. Let us feel nothing too hard to endure for him, nothing too laborious to perform for him, and be ashamed that we ever shrunk from the trifling self-denials and troubles of life. By that cross may the world be crucified to us and we to the world. Let us come to his table with deep humility, with strong faith, with weeping gratitude, with unutterable desires to be delivered from sin and to wear out our lives in his service. And may his love drop upon us and dissolve us all. May he be revealed unto us in the breaking of bread, and make this to us his banqueting house. And all the glory shall be ascribed to him who loved us and gave himself for us, world without end. Amen.

SERMON XXVII.

THE MANIFESTATION OF DIVINE LOVE IN THE GOSPEL.

SACRAMENTAL.

1 JOHN iv. 9.—In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him.

THE wife of Tigranes was among the captives on a certain public day when Cyrus, the conqueror of Asia, was reviewing his troops. While the captives pressed forward to see the conqueror, Tigranes presented himself before Cyrus and offered a thousand talents for the redemption of his wife. Among the observations afterwards made respecting the appearance and glory of the conqueror, this noble lady was asked what she thought of Cyrus. She had not seen him. On what then was your attention fixed? On the man who offered a thousand talents for my redemption. And on whom should the attention of Christians be chiefly fixed, but on him who gave, not a thousand talents, but his own most precious life, for their redemption?

Among all the benevolent personages of antiquity, there is none whose love or generosity can compare with his. Many persons have done virtuously, but our Redeemer excelleth them all. Greatly renowned is the disinterestedness of Abraham in consenting to offer up his only son to please his God: but Abraham never sacrificed his own life for the salvation of his enemies. There are those who have exposed their lives for the benefit of their people; and even for this their memory is embalmed in the grateful hearts of posterity. Deberah and Barak jeopardised their lives for the people of God. The son of Gideon thought he had a claim to the gratitude of the men of Shechem when he reminded them, "My father fought for you, and adventured his life far, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian." To the immortal honour of queen Esther it is recorded, that when her people were in danger, she put her life

in her hand and resolved, "So will I go in unto the king which is not according to the law, and if I perish I perish." But neither Deberah nor Esther, nor Gideon nor Barak, ever actually sacrificed life for their murderers. Their laurels fade and wither before the glories of that benevolence which, with the splendour of a thousand suns, radiate from the cross of Christ.

We admire the magnanimity of Judah, when we behold him, in concern for the sorrows of an aged parent, offering himself to servitude in the room of the favourite son of the deceased Rachel. But what was this compared with him who took the sinner's place under law, and so to speak, received the full discharge of wrath divine? The most remarkable instance of affection recorded in the life of David, was his regret that he could not have redeemed with his own life that of a favourite son, who had died with the guilt of intentional parricide upon him. "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom: would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son." But this was only a paroxysm of parental grief in the very crisis of its first assault: it was not a deliberate purpose, much less the actual execution of a purpose, to die to redeem an enemy and a stranger. His love for his own son was rancour compared with the love of Christ for his betrayers and murderers. When the disciples heard of the death of Lazarus, they said one to another, "Let us also go that we may die with him." And when we see the sorrows on their cheeks, we are ready to exclaim, "Behold how" they "loved him." But what was this compared with the love of him who hung six hours on the torturing spikes to melt, at

the very foot of the cross, the captain of that ruffian band which had mocked and spit upon him and driven every nail? Wonderful indeed was the love of Jonathan for David; but Jonathan never gave his life a ransom for his friend. The martyrs submitted to death for a glorious immortality; but they did not seek death to deliver their oppressors. No love so splendid shone from among the flames of the inquisition, as that which, opening on Calvary, put out the sun, as the rising sun puts out the stars. Let all the archives of antiquity be explored; let the historic page be drained; bring forward all the generous sacrifices of Greece and Rome; and what are they all to the amazing love here displayed? They are like the floating mote which can scarce reflect a single sunbeam, to the immensity of worlds which have burst from the creating hand. The love which we celebrate stands alone and without a second. The Lord whom we adore has no compeer among all the tribes of men or hosts of angels.

Unsolicited by man, unmoved by angels, and having no reward in view but the pleasure of doing good, the Eternal Mind fixed its love on us. The counsel of peace was held between the Sacred Three, and every thing relating to the salvation of the world was settled in the covenant of redemption. The Father assumed the rights of the Godhead, and the Son, by the anticipation of his reward, was constituted the Governour of all the worlds that were to be created by his hand. He was the God that transacted with Adam, with Noah, with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and with Moses. He gave the law at Sinai; he sat between the cherubims on the mercy seat; he repeatedly appeared to the patriarchs and prophets; in short, he was the God of the Old Testament. His advent was the great subject of the predictions: the whole typical dispensation granted to the patriarchs and to the Hebrew nation, and the very creation itself, was intended to prepare the way for his incarnation and death and glorious kingdom. At length when the fulness of time came, he, the Second Person in the Trinity, known, from his miraculous conception, his priestly office, and his inheritance, as "the only begotten Son

of God," left the bosom of the Father to weep in the manger, to converse with penury and toil, to bend under the pressure of public reproach, to yearn over a dying world, to sweat blood in the garden, to receive the spittings of Roman soldiers, to hang in ignominy between malefactors, to writhe on the torturing spikes, and to expire under the dreadful hidings of his Father's face. All this to support the authority of the law, by showing the universe that, though God pardoned sinners, he would execute its penalty on all future offenders not saved by Christ. All this that he might redeem us from eternal fire and eternal sin and despair, and raise us to immortal and ever-increasing holiness and happiness,—from the horrors of everlasting shame and contempt, to the glory of being for ever "kings and priests unto God and his Father." All this that he might learn from his own experience of pain to "be touched with the feeling of our infirmities," and from his own temptations, "to succour them that are tempted." All this that he might gather a Church from among the ruins of the apostacy, which he should love as "his own flesh," the members of which should be regarded as "members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones," and to whom he could say, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." All this that he might manifest his love to the Church in every age by communicating to it his word and Spirit, the enjoyment of divine ordinances, and the unspeakable privilege of feasting on his body and blood, and by supporting and enlarging it until its abounding glory should fill the earth "as the waters cover the sea." All this that he might sustain the most tender relations to the Church as her Husband and Head,—that he might pardon the daily sins of his people, subdue their corruptions, deliver them from their enemies, bestow on them every real good, protect them from every real evil, make them the happier for every event, and conduct them home to glory. All this that he might go forth "to seek and to save that which was lost;" that he might become a seasonable helper to open blind eyes, to bring out the captives from their prison-house, to bind up the broken-hearted, to "gather the

lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom," and to bring the wandering home. All this that abundant salvation might be prepared for a universal world,—that the offers of grace might be freely made to all,—and that the invitations of heavenly love might sound out through the four quarters of the globe, with "tidings of great joy—to all people."

What angel in heaven can tell why their apostate brethren were left in ruin and this great salvation was provided for man? We can only say, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." And shall angels join their songs at the Redeemer's birth, and shall men refuse to sing? Shall heaven ring with loud hosannas, and shall earth preserve a sullen silence? Forbid it, heaven; forbid it, O my kindred.

In this wonderful plan of mercy more of God is seen than in all other ways; his boundless *wisdom* in contriving to make an infinite person mortal, that by exacting the life of one infinitely dignified and dear, he might support the authority of the law by showing his unalterable purpose to execute its penalty on future offenders; his unspeakable *mercy* towards a world of sinners; his unbounded *benevolence* in supporting a moral law which brings him out to view and into connexion with creatures, and promotes their order and happiness; his *faithfulness* and *truth* in the unvarying fulfilment of all his promises. Of course he is more glorified by this wondrous plan of redemption than by all other means. "For God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*." From that face radiates more of the glory of God than from all the rest of the universe. And as the happiness of creatures chiefly depends on the manifestations of God's glory, the work of redemption has done more than all other measures to promote the general happiness.

It is altogether the most astonishing event that has ever taken place in the universe of God. It is wholly beyond the reach of finite comprehension. Creatures may study it to eternity, and may constantly see more and more of its glories displayed, but can never exhaust the subject. "It is as 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 sea."

It is the most profitable subject of contemplation that can occupy the mind. It carries you up to those views of God which are the most sublime, the most astonishing, the most instructive, the most transforming, and the most happy. It is the subject on which we ought chiefly to dwell. It should be the first to engage our thoughts; it is the last that should be dismissed. By this should we hourly climb into the heavens, to expatiate in the highest altitude to which a finite mind can soar.

What everlasting thanks do we owe to God for assigning us our existence in this selected and distinguished world,—the only world in which his Son ever became incarnate and died; the world which is destined to send out a report to enlighten and astonish the universe. Of all the worlds which God has made this is the most distinguished. It will be gazed at by an admiring and adoring universe. It is the moral centre around which they will all revolve, and into which they will pry with a never-tiring scrutiny. And this is the world which is soon to inscribe *Holiness to the Lord* on all its furniture. Then "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

Who can tell why it was appointed to us to open our eyes in a land of Gospel light, while five-sixths of our race are born in pagan or Mahometan darkness which ensures their destruction? And if by regenerating grace we have been distinguished from our former companions who were left to perish, what infinite obligations does this impose. Why is it that we are appointed to triumph in yonder heavens, while they must groan under the anguish of the never-dying worm? And what vast obligations are laid upon us by having our existence assigned us in this distinguished age, when the Church is waking up to action, when the heathen nations are coming in, and when the dawn of the millennial day seems almost to illumine the east.

On such an occasion, when about to behold our divine Friend set forth in the

consecrated elements, let us look back to those bitter sufferings by which our redemption was accomplished. How do our hearts glow within us as we survey those heaven-astonishing scenes. Is that the God who spoke these worlds into being, whom we now behold in yonder manger? He who is labouring at the humble trade of a carpenter, is he the architect who framed this stupendous universe? Is that poor man who has not where to lay his head, the being who owns the sun, moon, and stars? Does that wearied body belong to him who dwelt in eternal repose? Let heaven and earth stand amazed, it is the same; and love immortal has brought him down to this.

With mingled emotions of awe and transport we approach the sacred ground on which these divine wonders were displayed. We behold him, in the dark, sad, parting hour, with all his griefs upon him, seated at the table, supporting the beloved disciple on his labouring breast, and imparting to his orphan family the emblems of his own body which must to-morrow be violated by wicked hands. From the table our anxious eyes follow him across the vale of Cedron to the garden of Gethsemane. Here the powers of hell assault him. His "soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." Thrice he goes away to vent his griefs in prayers and tears. Thrice the heavy lids of those for whom he suffers, refuse to watch with him one hour. His whole frame is so pressed with torture that drops of blood are strained through the distended pores. With all our hearts we take his part as we behold the ruffians intruding upon his retirement to aggravate his distress. We remember that it is for our sake he suffers, and that these are griefs which belonged to us. Our weeping eyes follow him to the judgment hall. O spare that sacred body and lay your stripes on us. Let not that crown of thorns furrow temples in which was formed the plan of saving your inhuman souls. Spare him, spare him, for know he has become this willing victim that you might never die. Drive not those dreadful nails through feet which always went about doing good, and through hands stretched out to pluck you from the pit. See, the monsters have raised

him upon the cross. And where are all his friends? Are there none to form a valiant band to break through a thousand deaths to take him down? And is there no Friend in heaven who will come to his relief? And is there no sleeping justice beneath, to spring a magazine of wrath to whelm these murderers of a God? Alas justice is awake only to crush him who bears our sorrows. Astonished angels bend from the battlements of heaven to see their Creator die. It is a scene too dreadful for the sun to shine upon. He refuses to shed his light to aid these murderers of a God. The shuddering mount is rent; the great Creator dies. "O Lamb of God, was ever love, was ever grief like thine?"

To these dreadful sufferings it is owing that we are all this day in a world of hope and in the house of God, rather than among the wailing millions of the lower world; that we are thus hearing, thus worshipping, and thus expecting to feast on the symbols of a life-giving Saviour.

Brethren who hold communion with God, amidst the overwhelming awe which this discovery of God has excited, you need not draw the fearful conclusion of Manoaah, "We shall surely die because we have seen God." You may rather assume the confidence of Manoaah's wife, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have shown us—such things as these." If God were disposed to treat us according to the demands of justice, he would not have displayed on earth such marvellous scenes as these. Glory to God in the highest that though we are wretched sinners, we may yet live in his family and heart to eternity, as though we had always been as pure as angels of light. While our souls labour with unutterable emotions of gratitude, it should be our ceaseless inquiry, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?" When in the records of Persia, Ahasuerus found it written that Mordecai had saved his life, his first inquiry was, "What honour and dignity hath been done to Mordecai for this?" and he fixed on him as "the man whom" he delighted "to honour." With greater propriety may Christians fix on Jesus as the man whom they delight to honour.

When the Egyptians, by the providence of their king and his minister, had been preserved in famine, they came to Joseph and said, "Thou hast saved our lives; let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants." Shall Egyptians display such ingenuousness, and shall Israelites exhibit less? Shall not the children of Zion feel as great obligations to their Redeemer, and with equal ardour dedicate themselves and all that they have to him?

Being now about to approach his table, to behold as in a glass those sufferings which our sins occasioned, and to renew our vows of allegiance to him, let us come with hearts broken for sin and with a lively faith in his blood. With new and stronger resolutions let us consecrate ourselves to his service, and earnestly pray for grace to fulfil our engagements. Let us cast down all our sins at the foot of his cross, and there, as under the droppings of a Saviour's blood, swear eternal fealty and subjection to him. And may our hearts "burn within us" while we converse with him by the way of ordinances, and may he be revealed unto us in the breaking of bread. May our indifference be transmuted to warm and vigorous love, by the presence of him who changed the water into wine. May communications as plenteous as our scanty vessels can contain, and glory as clear as our visual organs can endure, be imparted by him who shed such resplendent lustre on the mount of transfiguration.

I must not conclude without dropping a few words on the ears of those whose hearts cannot be enkindled by all this blaze of love,—whose souls were never touched with the compassions of Jesus of Nazareth. It is a blot on human nature that one such instance has appeared below the sun. That a rational

being, who has incurred the wrath of God and is sinking into everlasting burnings, should reject this great salvation,—

"If angels weep it is at such a sight."

Despisers of the Lamb, what do you reject? "the only begotten Son of God." The Father has given his only Son to die, and he has no other son to give. If you turn away from him, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy;—of how much sorer punishment—shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing." Our heart is moved for you. With open arms and abundant joy we would welcome you to a participation of our privileges and of our eternal inheritance. We know that your necessities are as great as ours; and having found a "pearl of great price," it is not in our hearts to monopolize it to ourselves. We gladly offer you a share in all that we have found. We can do no more than invite you; and we do invite you with the most heartfelt regard. And "if ye will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride." O that you would now be persuaded. Cannot the boundless love of Christ melt your hearts? Cannot the authority of the ever-living God move you? Cannot an eternal hell and an eternal heaven offer one inducement? "Why will ye die?" This question may ring through the caverns of hell to eternity. What will be your answer then? What is your answer now? But I have done. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end."

SERMON XXVIII.

ONE THING IS NEEDFUL.

LUKE x. 41, 42.—And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.

THERE was a pious family at Bethany, on the Mount of Olives, consisting of Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary. This was that Lazarus who was afterwards raised from the dead; and this was that Mary who anointed her Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with the hairs of her head. On a certain day Jesus came to Bethany, and Martha, with affectionate hospitality, "received him into her house." While she was anxiously employed in providing him a supper, the attention of her more spiritual and contemplative sister was wholly engrossed by his heavenly instructions. It was the custom of that day for disciples to sit at the feet of their masters while listening to their discourses. This did Mary on the present occasion. Martha, who had committed one error by excessive anxiety to prepare a supper for her celestial Guest, added another by complaining of her sister because she lingered still at his feet. This was more commendable in Mary than any excessive care about the offices of hospitality. "But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to" Jesus, and with a bluntness surprising to a modern ear, "said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her," with a gentle but serious reproof, "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her."

It is not uncommon for persons of an active and worldly spirit to censure Christians for devoting so much time to religion. When the latter occasionally neglect their worldly business to attend

to devotion or to the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, the worldly charge them with uselessness and plead against them the sacred relations of wife and children. But what relative duties are more pressing than was that of hospitality to the person of Jesus? So Martha reasoned; and she blamed Mary for a seeming neglect of this. But Jesus protected her. He would not blunt those holy desires which he had excited, nor discourage that eager attention to divine things which cast every worldly object into the shade. Some fanatics have indeed made all religion to consist in meditation, to the exclusion of every active duty. They have retired to convents and deserts, where they have dragged out a useless life and were as good as buried before they were dead. This is the opposite extreme.

Martha thought it highly necessary to provide a supper for her heavenly Guest. In her opinion any thing could be postponed rather than this. And so would the greater part of ingenuous people have thought. Yet Christ told her that there was another thing far more necessary; that however *convenient* her hospitality might be, another thing was "*needful*." This was the care of the soul, or an interest in the Saviour.

This is the one thing needful for an immortal being. There is nothing else which a man may not do without. He may do without the praise of men,—without the love and respect of his acquaintance, and even without a good reputation provided his conscience does not upbraid him. These things are indeed valuable, and much of the happiness of life depends on the love and confidence of the wise and good. But a man may do without these. He may

make a shift to survive his character, to live under the contempt and derision of the world, separated from human society. Even in such a seclusion, a good conscience and the comforts of religion would render life tolerable and even happy. But though it were otherwise, yet three-score years and ten, and probably a much shorter space, would put a period to his mortification and introduce him into everlasting society and honour. A man may do without the gratification of the senses and the pleasures of imagination. These delights are by no means trifling. They constitute all the physical happiness derived from the beauties of nature and art and from the whole furniture of the globe. But a man may do without these. Blindness may convert the page of nature into a universal blank; he may be rendered deaf to the harmony of music and to the sweeter tones of human conversation; he may be dead to every fragrance that floats in the breeze, and insensible to every pleasure of taste and of touch; he may no longer find a mystic charm thrown around him by the spell of fancy. He may be wholly cut off from society, and may have no bodily sensation but that of pain. Could the outward condition of man be worse? Yet thus excluded from all connexion with the world without, his soul may enjoy, in a sort of separate state, much of the happiness of heaven. But if it were otherwise, yet the termination of his sufferings is at hand. A few years will translate him from a world of darkness, solitude, and suffering, into eternal light and vision and blessedness. A man may do without wealth, the great object which makes the universal race run mad. Poverty may do its worst upon him. And what can it do? It may make him hungry and cold and wet and friendless; but it cannot take from him the light of God's countenance. He may waste his solitary days in a prison; but there, like Paul and Silas, he may shout and sing for joy. And presently he shall have a release and full freedom to range the universe of God. Wealth cannot be pronounced the one thing needful so long as it is easier to spend half a century in prison than an eternity in hell. The worst that poverty can do is to terminate life

and hasten the consummation of the Christian's happiness, but the want of religion can inflict what is infinitely worse.

Religion is the one thing needful,

1. As it constitutes the duty and dignity of the immortal mind. As intelligence raises man above the brutes, so religion raises him almost to a level with angels. Sin is a derangement of all the affections,—a prostitution of all the powers. The most excellent things are abhorred, the most odious things are loved. Holiness is the composure of this derangement. It restores the soul to the most noble use of its powers. It unites it to God and to his vast and holy kingdom. It takes it up from the jakes of pollution to be a member of the body of Christ, an heir of glory. If the most dignified and glorious state of an immortal being be the one thing needful, religion brings him to that state.

2. Religion is the one thing needful as it is essential to present happiness. Nothing in heaven or earth can satisfy the mind but God. The poor weather-beaten wretch who has spent his life in courting the world, and has been only crushed by its frowns, finds in religion that balm to his wounds which he sought in vain in every corner of creation. His vagabond thoughts which wandered through the world and found no rest, return and settle in God, and there live together in the sweetest harmony. No desire which conscience condemns,—no object recommended by reason from which desire revolts. Long wandering from the centre of rest with a vacant and uneasy mind, he has at length returned and found that rest in God which the world denied him. Tormented with ungovernable passions and the restlessness of guilt, he was like "the troubled sea" which "cannot rest;" but now he enjoys the luxury of pardon, and a conscience purged "from dead works to serve the living God." Before, he was cursed with a feverish desire for objects which he could not obtain, and which, if obtained, could bring nothing but uneasiness. But now he embraces the eternal God, who, while he fills his arms, satisfies his heart. When he looks abroad into the works of God his eye is filled with grateful tears. He is assured that a

wise and faithful providence governs all. He sees that every thing valuable to himself and to the universe is safe under the shadow of the divine throne. When he lifts his eye to him whose love gave being to angels and fills all heaven with light and with song,—whose agency ranges through numberless worlds, upholding and governing and benefiting all;—when he plunges into the ocean of the divine perfections and loses himself in the immensity and eternity of God,—in his boundless love and mercy; and when he is conscious of being embraced by the everlasting covenant, and of having God for an eternal portion, he is entranced and feels immortality growing up within him. Then it is that he looks down and pities kings.

Religion is the one thing needful as a support under affliction. Do you see that poor widow, whose earthly stay was lately carried to the grave? Do you see her bending over the dying bed of her only child? What then on earth can bind up her breaking heart? I see your hesitating feet turn away because you cannot bear the sight. But go to her without fear. I see indeed the tear of nature fall, but a sacred calmness meets me in her eye. "It is the Lord," says she, "let him do what seemeth him good." "Bless the Lord, O my soul." Take and welcome the last offering I have to give. Would I had an only child to give thee every week.—I heard her afterwards say, *That* was the happiest day of my life.—Now is not such a religion the one thing needful in such a world as this?

But a still more trying hour is approaching. We must all die. What principle in nature can fortify the soul in that tremendous hour? When about to appear in the presence of God to render an account of our polluted lives, what but a well grounded hope in Christ can compose the agitated spirits? In that moment all the glories of the world fade from the sight, and nothing but an interest in Christ appears the one thing needful.

3. Religion is the one thing needful for happiness beyond the grave. Both the nature of things and the express conditions of the Gospel make religion necessary to future happiness. It is impossible for a man to enjoy holy ob-

jects and employments without a holy taste. Such is the nature of heaven that were there no express declaration of the Gospel to the purpose, an unholy man must necessarily be excluded from its happiness. But the Gospel is express on the subject. "Follow—holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." "He that believeth not shall be damned." What then can be needful as religion is needful? Of what importance is the comfort of a transitory life compared with the happiness of as many ages as there are spires upon the mountains and sands upon the sea shore and leaves in the forest and stars in heaven? During all these ages the righteous will be ranging "high in salvation and the realms of bliss,"—soaring with seraphim and cherubim,—holding high communion with God, and looking forward to an everlasting increase of their joy; while the damned will spend their eternity in unquenchable fire. At the thought that their torment will never end, but must for ever increase,—that they are never to have another moment's ease,—no, never, never, never,—but I forbear.

If these things are so, (and the half has not been told you,) what distraction to neglect religion for any other object. Ask the man of business why he does not attend to religion, and he has not time. Not time? and why is not every thing else given up? Will you be more anxious to make provision for children who may never live to enjoy it, than to provide for a deathless soul? Will you be more anxious to provide for old age which you may never live to see, than to provide for eternity whose glories or whose glooms *must* for ever surround you? Shall all your attention be turned to the time between this and three-score years and ten, and no part to that between three-score years and ten and four-score thousand years? But your calculation for present comfort is altogether out of joint. Secure present comfort by a neglect of God! What madness is this. Do you love your children? Seize then the promise which is to you and to them. Teach them by your example to pray. Secure an interest in

the affections of God that will give efficacy to your prayers for them. Get a heart deeply impressed with everlasting things, that you may faithfully instruct and efficaciously entreat them. And then if you are early called away, you will leave them a richer inheritance than all the treasures of this world could compose.

But it is a great mistake to think that you have not time to attend to business and religion at once, or that they stand in opposition to each other. An *idolatrous* attachment to the world stands indeed in opposition to religion, and religion stands in opposition to that restless care which accompanies a rage to be rich. But a *sanctified* attention to business, so far from being opposed to religion, is really a part of it. The command of God binds us to a course of steady industry. But it is one thing to attend to business from a supreme attachment to

the world, and another to perform it with an eye fixed on the authority and glory of God. Now then the weakness of this plea will appear. While you pursue your lawful business as a commanded duty, you *do* attend to religion. Have you not time for this? Your business is dispatched as soon in this way as though your heart was wholly engrossed by it. Have you not time to regard the divine glory in all that you do? Your neglect of this does not arise from want of time but from want of love. O remember that "the fashion of this world passeth away." Soon must you be torn from all your possessions on earth, and nothing will remain to you but your religion. This will appear more valuable in a dying hour than the wealth of a thousand worlds. O seek this; exercise this, and lay hold on eternal life. Amen.

S E R M O N X X I X.

THE WONDER THAT SPECULATIVE BELIEVERS CAN REMAIN STUPID.

JOHN ii. 23—25. Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man.

THERE is a speculative belief in the Christian religion which neither improves nor affects the heart. Men may yield an intellectual assent to all the truths of Christianity, without partaking of any of its holiness or any of its blessings. Such was the case with those mentioned in the text. They were constrained to believe in the messiahship of Jesus, and of course in the truth of his doctrines; but they were not his friends; for he who knew the hearts of all men would "not commit himself unto them." And they appear to have had no anxiety about an inter-

est in him, and to have been utterly unaffected by the truths of his Gospel.

A case like this presents the most inscrutable mystery to be found in the moral world. I do not wonder, considering what the human heart is, that men are infidels, or even atheists. Considering what the human heart is, I do not wonder that speculative believers are universalists or Socinians. I do not wonder that convicted sinners, with all their agony, still refuse to accept of Christ; because I know that no light or sufferings or fears can reform a selfish heart. But that men who admit the

existence of a God, a heaven, and a hell; who believe that none can enter heaven but those who are born again, and know that they themselves have never passed that change,—that they lie under the wrath of God, and, dying thus, must be eternally miserable; that men in such circumstances can remain stupid, and enjoy life, and scatter their thoughts upon the vanities of the world, and never make a serious effort to flee “from the wrath to come;” that they are not alarmed and distressed, and unable to, “give sleep to” their “eyes or slumber to” their “eyelids;” is the most unaccountable phenomenon in the moral world,—a mystery which, after examining it on every side, I have tried in vain to solve. If men are ignorant enough to believe that by a little moral honesty they can win the favour of God and secure his co-operating grace, or if they fall into any other essential error respecting the method and terms of salvation, I can easily account for their stupidity. But my eye is now fixed upon those who possess clear and correct doctrinal knowledge; who know themselves to be unregenerate, lying under condemnation, in absolute need of a change of heart, and dependent for that blessing on him who “is angry with the wicked every day;” who know that they have nothing by which they can induce God to exert a saving influence upon them, and that, calculating from the proportion of men apparently converted after their age, there is a clear probability that they must spend their eternity in hell. That such people can remain stupid,—that they are not overwhelmed with distress,—is the wonder about which I am inquiring.

How can such stupidity be accounted for on any known principles of human action? You say that in such a case the mind does not believe these things. But it does believe them with sufficient distinctness to risk property and life on their truth. Tell one of these men that his property and life depend on his expressing the truth in the cases to be proposed, and then ask him, Is there a God? He will answer, Yes. Is there a heaven and a hell? He will answer, Yes. Must you spend an eternity in one or the other? He will pronounce that he must. Are you without holi-

ness? Are you under condemnation? Must you be born again or lie down in everlasting sorrows? He will answer all these questions in the affirmative. And yet with all this strength of intellectual belief, he can live without an anxious thought concerning these stupendous realities. While he would risk every thing temporal on their truth, he can, with the utmost unconcern, risk every thing eternal on their being false. How can you account for this contradiction in the operations of a rational mind? How can the soul believe and not believe at the same time?

You say, it believes with the head but disbelieves with the heart; that is, the heart does not *feel* these things to be true. That the mind does not *realize* them to be true is doubtless a fact, and the only fact that can be offered to account in any degree for the effect. But this fact is the very difficulty to be explained. How a mind which so fully believes these tremendous realities, that it would risk property and life on their truth, can, by the action of the heart, or by any means not destructive of rationality, so keep out a realizing sense as to exclude every anxious thought, is the very question which causes so much perplexity. The heart must be regarded as the seat of feeling; and if that faculty does not feel, there can be no *realizing sense* in the mind. Now considering what the natural heart is, it is no wonder that it does not feel an ingenuous sorrow for sin, or a grateful sense of God's mercy, or an affecting sense of his loveliness. But that, with all its selfishness, it should be heedless of danger, when that danger lies so distinctly before the eye of the understanding, is the phenomenon to be accounted for. The proximate cause doubtless is, that the heart does not feel a *realizing sense* of those truths on which the danger depends. But how it can exclude this sense when the truths are believed by the understanding, and so deeply involve the sinner's own happiness, and can exclude it too by the power of selfishness, is the mystery which yet remains to be unfolded: in other words, how a rational soul can be otherwise than interested and alarmed by infinite dangers which lie directly before its eye.

This infatuation, as it is markedly condemned in the word of God, must be ascribed to the depravity of the heart, and is one of the decisive proofs of its desperate wickedness. But how any wickedness can produce the effect, is not so easy to explain. Where the taste or the passions are at war with reason, we know that nothing but inconsistency can prevail. Whether there is such a thing as an original insensibility or blindness of heart towards spiritual objects, not ascribable to direct aversion, but to be numbered, like selfishness itself, among the primary effects of the fall, I dare not absolutely determine. That good men still find it so difficult to realize the spiritual truths which they love, and which they long and strive to apprehend, certainly appears to favour this hypothesis. If there does exist such a blindness independent of aversion, we must ascribe it partly to this that convicted sinners, prompted by self-interest to bend an earnest attention to divine things, find it so difficult to realize them.

But a great proportion of this insensibility, (though not the less wonderful on that account,) is certainly the natural effect of aversion. In explaining the phenomena of nature, the most that we can do is to state *facts*. Now it is a fact well established, that a strong antipathy to a truth has a tendency to prevent a realizing sense of it. On this law is founded the well known maxim, That it is hard to believe what we are unwilling should be true. This principle has considerable influence to shield the soldier against the apprehension of death, in preventing the thief from realizing the dangers of detection, and in shutting the eyes of the sluggard, the drunkard, and every slave of vice to the temporal ruin to which his course leads. So in the present case,—the carnal heart loves to pursue its objects and hates to contemplate the danger attending the pursuit. The truths which bring to view a God and a judgment to come are unwelcome. It wishes them not to be true; and this very aversion, (such is the constitution of nature,) has a powerful tendency to exclude a realizing sense. How this is done we cannot tell. All we know is, that such an effect steadily follows such a cause. But after

all it is very doubtful whether this aversion could perpetuate the insensibility under the light of the Gospel without the co-operation of other causes. It is certain that where sufficient light is poured upon the conscience, as in the regions of the damned, all the aversion of the heart cannot exclude an overwhelming sense of truth. And where the Gospel shines on earth, it would probably be impossible for the heart to preserve its insensibility without summoning the whole soul to a voluntary, strong, and almost ceaseless effort to keep eternal things out of view. Hence the unwillingness of sinners to hear close and pungent preaching, and their earnest demand for smooth things. Hence the many self-justifying pleas which are raised when truth is forced upon their view. Hence the great exertions to bury the truths of the Gospel under systems of error. Hence the studious care of the multitude to keep aloof from the Bible and to hide themselves from its light in books of amusement. Hence their avoidance of prayer and divine meditation and religious conversation. Hence their eagerness to plunge into business and pleasure. Hence their dread of being alone. Hence the arts employed to secularize, (if I may so say,) funeral occasions, by filling the hour with frivolous conversation, lest, by the side of the monuments of death, the thoughts should break forth into eternity. Hence the indulgence of levity and sleep in the house of God, and the many attempts which in some places are made to banish all solemnity from religious assemblies and to turn them into cold reading schools for morals. Hence the exertions which most worldly men are conscious of making to dissipate the serious thoughts which certain occasions call up. Hence the deliberate choice of thousands to spend their days among worldly objects and away from society and scenes which would awaken reflections on eternity. Could a serious man be placed in a situation to take an extensive and minute survey of a busy world, he would be astonished to see the pains and arts which are every where employed, from morning to night, to keep the eye of the mind from eternal realities by filling it with worldly objects. And probably

nothing short of these strenuous and almost constant efforts could preserve an immortal being easy on his way to eternity, surrounded by the blaze of Gospel light, and with an understanding clearly won over to the side of truth. In short it costs a sinner more labour to remain stupid, than it would to become a Christian: but because the labour is in a line with his nature, he does not perceive it.

These, in addition to the soothing whispers of a subtle tempter, are, I conclude, the principal reasons why men who know themselves to be in a state of nature and under condemnation, can still remain unconcerned. From such a view of this mortifying subject I infer,

1. That sinners who have competent light are altogether to blame for their stupidity. They are prone to regard it, (if they regard it at all with uneasiness,) as their misfortune: but it is their fault. They sometimes tell you, when conscience disturbs them, that they would give all the world to be alarmed in earnest, while yet they are the guilty cause of their own stupidity. For first, if there is any such thing as blindness of heart not attributable to direct aversion, it is the mere effect of sin. They have put out the eyes of their mind, and by holding fast iniquity prevent the restoration of their sight. Secondly, so far as their insensibility depends on direct aversion, it is nearly identified with their enmity to God. It accompanies it as closely as heat accompanies light. But thirdly, they make voluntary and vigorous and almost constant exertions to exclude conviction. They are at immense pains to protect and fortify their stupidity. While they lament over it as a misfortune, and offer a world for conviction, and complain that they have no power, they are compassing sea and land to keep conviction out; and this very plea,—yes this very plea has no other object than to protect them against a sense of blame. The very pretence that they would be glad of conviction, is only a device to keep conviction out by laying the blame on another. And if they are not sensible of such a design, it only furnishes another proof that “the heart is deceitful above all things.” This is the origin and nature of their stupidity; and must it not be charged as their own fault? Yes, my

unhappy hearers, it is a sin great enough to deserve eternal rebukes. If you have remained unawakened this single hour in the house of God, for this one sin you deserve everlasting fire. And are you stupid still? I infer,

2. The utter unreasonableness of this insensibility. It rests on an impression altogether false. There *is* a God, who “is angry with the wicked every day:” this stupidity rests on a secret feeling that there is no God. You *are* immortal, and must spend an eternity in heaven or hell: this stupidity rests on a secret feeling that there is no future state. You *are* sinners, and lie this moment under the condemning sentence of the law: this stupidity rests on a secret feeling that sin is a dream and the law of God a fable. You *must* “be born again” or never “see the kingdom of God:” this stupidity rests on a secret feeling that there is no heaven, or if there is, that you can reach it without a change of heart. The whole foundation is false, and the stupidity itself is unreasonable enough for animals without souls. But for *you*, my beloved hearers, who are dignified with immortal powers,—for *you* to yield to an impression so utterly false,—for you to risk a soul, capable of infinite progression in happiness or misery, on a dream which you know to be the figment of a distempered imagination, is unworthy of a rational being,—is the highest frenzy of distraction. Where is your reason that you can thus sleep away a season of grace on which depends a whole eternity? Your insensibility does not alter one of those awful realities which it denies, nor prevent the rapid approach of that destruction which it hides from your view. God *will live and reign* while you dream, as much as though you waked. He *will* mark your sins, as much as though you were sinking under their overwhelming weight. The judgment day approaches as rapidly as though you saw it with your eyes and were prepared to meet it. Eternity is as solemn as though you realized its infinite joys and torments. You destroy not a single truth, you prevent not the approach of a single danger, by sleeping your lives away. Judgment and eternity will come upon you and find you asleep. My poor, dear hearers, start

from your slumbers ; the Judge is at the door. You will have time enough to sleep in your graves ; but while heaven is suspended on your vigilance, sleep no longer. O now awake suddenly and finally out of your sleep. Awake or you will soon sleep the sleep of death. Awake and live for ever. Amen.

SERMON XXX.

THE WORD OF THE OATH.

HEB. vii. 21.—For those priests were made without an oath ; but this with an oath, by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

THE great thing which is necessary for the pardon of sinners and for the life and comfort of Christians, is faith in Jesus Christ as the High priest of the world. There is no sinner so deeply sunk in pollution but this will raise him to purity,—no sinner so oppressed with guilt but this will set him at liberty,—no Christian so feeble or distressed but this will fill him with strength and joy. This then is the grand point to which I wish to draw the fixed attention of every class of my hearers. “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” The pardon, peace, and holiness which are provided for a sinful race, are all treasured up in Christ, and can be obtained from no other quarter,—nor from him in any other way than by faith. Though the foundation of holiness is laid in the soul antecedent to faith,—though faith itself is the effect of a divine illumination which in the first instance is sovereignly produced,—yet it is by the actual exercise of faith in Christ that we apply his blood to quench the tormenting fire in our conscience ; it is by faith that all accessions of holiness come to the soul ; it is faith, working by love, that purifies the heart and overcomes the world and produces good works. When by this eye we behold “the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,” we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory.” This therefore is the only way to sanctification, and it is the only path of peace. It is by faith alone that Christians can enjoy relief from guilt, assurance of hope, and joy in the Holy Ghost. This therefore is the grace to which it behooves all men to turn their chief attention.

What then is faith ? It is a sight and sense of a glorious way opened to the mercy seat by the death of Christ, who stands at the end of that way to introduce believing sinners to God by his prevalent intercession. In other words, it is a realizing and hearty belief that Christ is the High priest of the world, whose sacrifice, righteousness, and intercession are fully sufficient to prevail with the Father for the justification of believers. This sight and sense are founded on two things. First, on an implicit belief in that oath by which the Son was consecrated the High priest of the world, and by which God bound himself to accept his sacrifice and intercession in behalf of sinners. Secondly, on a discovery of the worthiness of Christ to be thus accepted by the Father,—a worthiness in view of which the soul can adopt the language of the apostle : “For such a High priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.”

Without this implicit belief in the oath of God, accompanied with this discovery of the worthiness of Christ, it is impossible to obtain a realizing sense of the way that is opened to the throne of grace. Speculative research can only teach the *understanding* what the *avowed* end of Christ’s death was ;—that he came to bear our sins, to cover

our bodies with his own, to receive the stripes which the law was ready to inflict on us; in order to convince the universe that though penitent sinners are pardoned, in all other cases God will execute the penalty of the law; thus preventing the authority of his law from being weakened by the mercy shown to a guilty world. Speculation can convince the understanding that this was the *avowed* end of Christ's death, and that the measure was calculated to answer the purpose, provided that mercy so amazing was really intended for men. Here speculation stops. It can never bring a realizing sense that the avowed end was the true end,—that God was sincere in promising to pardon sinners on account of the death of another. After the understanding has exhausted itself, there are still difficulties in feeling the reality and propriety of this substitution, and in placing unwavering trust in "the Lord our righteousness." To remove these difficulties, men have resorted anew to speculation; but all in vain. Speculation cannot bring a feeling sense of the reality and propriety of this substitution. How then can it be obtained? This is a question of the first importance. On this realizing sense depends the salvation of sinners and all the spiritual strength and comfort of Christians. How then can this sense be obtained? If you will listen with fixed attention I will endeavour to tell you.

It must be obtained, first, by lying down with a broken heart at the feet of God, and implicitly believing the testimony which he has given of his Son; resting with affectionate confidence on that oath by which he consecrated his Son High priest for ever. This implies a hearty belief in the love and mercy of God, as well as in his truth. Secondly, by an enlightened view of the dignity and obedience of Christ, and of his infinite worthiness to be accepted by a holy God as our representative and advocate. This implies a sense of the holiness of God and of Christ. Under these views it will appear a glorious reality that Christ has taken into his own hands the interests of his Church, that he is their proper representative, and that the question in heaven is, not whether they are worthy, but whether he is worthy.

Never before did the believer feel so utterly unworthy of God's regard; never did he see it to be so great a presumption for a polluted worm to rush into the presence of God without a Mediator. It is well, says he, that I have a High priest that has passed into the heavens to appear in the presence of God for me, and such a one as a holy God can accept. He could not accept such a filthy worm as I.—Thus revealed, Christ is a sun that casts light on every divine subject,—on our obligations, on our guilt, on all the perfections of God. The Bible and the world appear new. By this faith every other grace is received. Repentance, gratitude, love, submission, and trust were never such before. The soul, reposing on its everlasting rock, now feels "the full assurance of hope."

The worthiness of Christ is so clearly illustrated in the Scriptures that I shall say nothing on this subject. I must leave this to be discovered by a divine illumination; an illumination however which will always accompany an humble and affectionate belief of the oath of God. To this oath then I wish to draw your whole attention. In the room of laborious efforts of the understanding, this oath must be believed with the heart. If you cannot look through this great mystery, yet can you not believe God? If you find a difficulty in seeing how the sufferings of another could deliver you from punishment, yet you can believe that oath by which God consecrated his Son your High priest and bound himself to accept his sacrifice and intercession. Look to Calvary, says he: behold the Priest whom I have appointed and whose offering I have sworn to accept. If you cannot see *how* this offering can answer in the room of your destruction, trust me for that. If I am satisfied you may well be. That I *am* satisfied I plainly tell you. I declare that it was a sacrifice of my own appointing, offered by a Priest of my own choice. I have considered the matter well, and do pronounce the offering competent to answer the purposes of my government; and I do solemnly swear that I will accept it instead of your punishment if you will but believe my oath.—Is not this enough? And yet perhaps some of you may still hesi-

tate to believe God. I am therefore anxious to press this single point upon you; and in order to make it more familiar and irresistible, I beseech you to consider the following things.

1. The appointment of Christ to be the High priest of the world was made by God himself,—by the very being to whom the sacrifice and intercession were to be offered. This important circumstance was not overlooked by the apostle. “No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a High priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” We may then be assured that God will accept the offering of his own anointed Priest.

2. This confidence is confirmed by the oath of God,—an oath pledged both to Christ and to his people.

First, to Christ. In the eternal covenant of redemption the Son offered himself for the great work of the priesthood, and the Father promised to accept his offering and to give him a redeemed seed. This promise he publicly renewed in the presence of the Church by the mouth of David: “The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”

“The Lord hath sworn.” This denotes the thing to be almost incredible, as well as of great moment, as oaths are not to be taken in plain and trivial matters. But the oath of God himself was needed to convince men of the appointment of Christ to the priesthood, a thing most surprising in itself, and at the same time the great hinge on which their salvation turned.

“And will not repent.” He will not alter his purpose, nor change this priesthood as he did that of the sons of Aaron.

“Thou art a Priest for ever.” Not as the Levitical priests. “They truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come

unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.” He shall not leave his priesthood at his death to a successor, but shall carry it with him into the eternal heavens, there for ever to appear in the presence of God for his people.

“After the order of Melchisedec.”

This Phenician prince was king of Salem, the interpretation of which is *Peace*. His name was Melchisedec, the meaning of which is *king of righteousness*. Being thus named *king of righteousness*, and being also king of *Peace*, that is, of Salem, he strongly typified Christ. Furthermore, he is the only one mentioned in the Scriptures, (except his great antetype,) in whom were united the dignities of priest and king. Also, there is no pontifical act of his recorded except his *blessing* Abraham and receiving tithes of him. As he is presented in the history, he appears as a priest appointed only to bless, not to curse as the Levites sometimes did. And this was the object of the priesthood of Christ. Also he appears in the history as of greater dignity than the Levitical priests, as Levi himself, as it were, paid tithes to him in the loins of his father and received his blessing. “And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.” But the principal respect in which Melchisedec was a type of Christ, was the appearance he made in the history of being a priest for ever. “Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.” The latter appears in the history as without a predecessor or successor in office; without genealogy, as though he had no father or mother, but had always been a priest of the most high God; without any account of his death, as though he lived for ever. In order to set forth a type of the eternal priesthood of Christ, the Holy Ghost, in giving the history of this man, dropt him down, as it were, from above, and then took him up again. Though the principal subject of Genesis is the genealogy of different men, the genealogy of this man is purposely omitted. The Levitical priests must have a priest for a father and a Hebrew for a mother; and genealogies were carefully preserved as evidence of such a descent; and if one could not prove his birth to have been according to this law, he was

excluded from the priesthood.(a) In the very genealogies therefore it appeared that they were but temporary priests, as they derived the priesthood by inheritance from their fathers, and left it at their death, or at the age of fifty, to their sons. But Melchisedec, in marked distinction from all this, appears in the history as though he had no father from whom he derived his being or his priesthood, but had possessed both from eternity; and as though he never died and left his office to a successor. Thus in the history he stands "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but, made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually." Or in one word, his history, in which no hereditary succession of the priesthood appears, bears the typical mark of the eternal priesthood of Christ. Thus before the institution of the Levitical priesthood, there was a representation of an eternal, unchangeable priesthood, one day to appear in the Church. But the representation was not understood till David revealed the oath of God respecting the Messiah: "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." From that moment it was known that "another Priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron." The apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrew Christians, (who remained still attached to the Levitical priesthood,) makes great use of these words of David, to prove that the old priesthood was abolished, that Christ is the Priest consecrated by the oath of God, and that the meaning of his being a Priest after the order of Melchisedec is, that his priesthood remains unchangeable to eternity. And he takes occasion to show the superiority of Christ's priesthood, and of the covenant of which he was the Surety, over the old priesthood and covenant: "Inasmuch as NOT *without an oath* he was made Priest. For those priests were made *without an oath*, but this *with an oath*, by him that said unto him, The Lord swear and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. By so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better Testament." Again, "The law maketh men high priests which *have infirmity*; but the word of the oath, *which was since the law*, [being first uttered in the ears of mortals by David,] maketh the Son who is consecrated for evermore." Thus it appears that the Priesthood of Christ, to which he was consecrated by the oath of God, makes a most conspicuous figure both in the Old Testament and New. But for what purpose was he made a High priest if his sacrifice and intercession are not to be accepted? The oath which constituted him a Priest bound God unchangeably to this acceptance.

This covenant with Christ has been often repeated by oath in various forms. God swore by himself to Abraham that in his Seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed;(b) and he renewed the oath to Isaac and Jacob.(c) But the apostle declares that the Seed respected in that oath was Christ.(d) All the promises made to the Seed of Abraham, he tells us, were really made to Christ, and so through him to the members of his body.(e) God swore by his holiness to David that his Seed should sit upon the throne of Israel for ever.(f) But the apostle informs us that this Seed was Christ.(g) Now these oaths of God, sworn by himself and his holiness, that in Christ all the nations of the earth should be blessed, and that he should for ever sit upon the throne of Israel, reigning over redeemed subjects, were oaths plainly implying that his sacrifice and intercession for sinners should be accepted.

Secondly, this oath of God has not only been pledged to Christ, but to all those who trust in his sacrifice and intercession. All the oaths made to the Church are of this nature. "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.—I have sworn by myself; the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and

(a) Lev. viii. 1—13, and xxi. 14. Ezek. ii. 62. Neh. vii. 64.

(b) Gen. xxii. 16—18. (c) Exod. xxxii. 13.

(d) Gal. iii. 16. Rom. iv. 9—18.

(e) Gal. iii. 16.

(f) Ps. lxxxix. 3—37,

and cxxxii. 11.

(g) Acts ii. 30.

strength.—In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory.” “For this is as the waters of Noah unto me. For as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.”^(h) Every oath by which God has bound himself to show mercy to his people, is an oath to accept the atonement, obedience, and intercession of Christ. But the oath which I chiefly have in view, is that which was made to Abraham: “By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”⁽ⁱ⁾ In Paul’s comment on this passage he says, “When God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater he swore by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so after he had patiently endured he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife: wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a High priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”^(j)

3. To render the priesthood of Christ

more familiar to believers, the Levitical priesthood and typical rites were instituted; which served “unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount.” In those Levitical institutions you see a plain picture of the priesthood of Christ and of all that he does in the execution of this office. Is it difficult for you to conceive how the death of Christ could deliver the guilty from punishment? *There you have the very fact before your eyes*, which supercedes the necessity of all reasoning on the subject. There you see a trembling sinner bringing a lamb to the altar; you see the priest take the lamb and present it as a sacrifice before the Lord; you see the Shekinah brighten as a token of approbation, and the guilty sinner lives. *There is the fact before your eyes*. What if you cannot see on what principle a lamb slain could put away sin? Yet if you in fact see the Shekinah approve and the sinner go down to his house justified, will not that suffice? What need of reasoning when you have the very fact before your eyes? The apostle applies this directly to the point in hand. “For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.” And what did he offer? He stood before the altar of God and offered himself as “a lamb without blemish and without spot.” In the Levitical rites you see also the high priest go once a year, on the great day of atonement, with the blood of slain beasts, into the holy of holies, bearing the twelve tribes upon his heart, on the breast-plates, to intercede for them before the Lord. You see the Shekinah give tokens of approbation, and pardons and mercies are scattered among the tribes. *There is the fact before your eyes*. This is an exact picture of what our great High priest has done for us. “Christ being come a High priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place,

(h) Isai. xlv. 22—25, and liv. 9, 10.

(i) Gen. xxii. 16—18. (j) Heb. vi. 13—20.

having obtained eternal redemption for us.—For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.”

In the Levitical law you see the scape-goat, chosen to bear the sins of the congregation, brought to the tabernacle on the great day of atonement. “And Aaron,” it is directed, “shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel,—putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited.” If God was sincere in this institution, you see at once that all the sins of the true Israelites were borne from them by the scape-goat, to be charged against them no more. Only transfer this idea to Christ. “Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows,—and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” In the ceremonial law you behold the brazen serpent lifted up in the midst of the camp; you behold hundreds and thousands, while dying with the sting of the fiery serpents, fix their eyes on the serpent of brass; and as soon as they look they live. *There is the fact before your eyes*,—a fact distinctly applied by Christ himself. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life.” In the Levitical law you see a high priest taken from among the people, of the same flesh and blood, acquainted with the common feelings and wants of men; “who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way, for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.” In this again you see a picture of Christ. “For verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his

brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.”

“Seeing then that we have a great High priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a High priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

These and various other rites and facts appertaining to the old dispensation, were intended to spread the character and work of the Saviour so familiarly before us that we may see them with our eyes. *Can you now believe?* In the light of these familiar facts, and confiding in the oath of God, can you now feel it to be a glorious reality that Christ is at once your Priest and sacrifice? Can you go and lay your hand on the head of that bleeding Victim, and confess over him your sins, putting them upon him that he may bear them in your stead, and bear them from you for ever? Can you take that Lamb in the arms of your faith and go to God and say, Lord, here is my lamb for a burnt offering? May God open all our eyes that we may see and believe.

Finally, this is the Priest and King to whom alone is committed the work of building up the Church, which is the temple of God; and in his faithful hands we may safely and joyfully leave it. “Behold the Man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of the Lord. Even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a Priest upon his throne, and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.” *So be it.* Let all in heaven and earth say, *So be it.* Amen.

SERMON XXXI.

GOD'S GOVERNMENT THE SAME AS THOUGH THERE WAS NO DECREE.

PSALM xc. 2, 4.—From everlasting to everlasting thou art God.—For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

SOME of the greatest difficulties in theology arise from our not comprehending the mode of God's existence. For instance, as we exist in a succession of days, months, and years, we naturally attach the same idea to God, and almost necessarily ascribe to him the relations of *before* and *after*. We conceive of his knowing and determining things long before they come to pass, and therefore speak of his *foreknowledge* and *foredetermination*: and the Scriptures, in accommodation to our apprehensions, speak in the same manner. Hence arise difficulties about the *freedom* of salvation and the *freedom* of man. If God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, says one, all things are *necessary*, and how are we free? If I am elected to be saved I shall be saved, says another, let me do what I will. If I am not elected, says a third, my prayers will be of no avail: I will make no further attempt. But could we conceive of God as existing in one *eternal now*, it would be easy to see that he acts in all things from *present* feelings, and not from any decree which to himself is *past*; and that his feelings and government and the course of events are the same as though he began to exist in time, and neither knew nor determined any thing before the moment of its occurrence; and we should see that men are as free, and have the same encouragement to pray, as though God existed in succession, with a mind as impressible and changeable as ours, and with nothing which we call *foreknowledge* or *foredetermination*. I shall therefore,

I. Show from Scripture and reason that his existence is not in succession, but in one eternal now; and

II. Apply this truth to relieve the difficulties which have been mentioned.

I. I am to show from Scripture and reason that God's existence is not in succession, but in one eternal now.

By this I mean that all things exist before him from eternity to eternity; that he never has any new ideas or feelings or purposes, and therefore no succession; that he does not move down the current of time from moment to moment, (though he sees that creatures have this experience,) but is always stationary, and is no older now than when he made the world. To him there is no past or future: all is present. With him the relations of *before* and *after* do not exist, though he sees that they exist in respect to creatures. He bears no more relation to time, or a succession of moments, than a thought bears to extension. Accordingly the Scriptures speak of his eternity, not as what has been or is to be, but what now is. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." "Thou, O Lord, remainest for ever." "Art thou not from everlasting?" "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." It is therefore said, "A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night."

Reason confirms all this. To suppose an eternal succession of ideas, exercises, and moments, is as unphilosophical as to suppose an eternal succession of days and nights, of seeds and plants, of fathers and sons. It involves all the absurdity of an infinite number,—an infinity made up of finite parts,—a series with two ends, and yet infinite or without an end. Besides, succession of ideas implies imperfection, and stands opposed to all our notions of infinity, omniscience, and unchangeableness. If new ideas are received, there is a change

of thought, which will induce a change of counsel. If God is eternally receiving new ideas, he is not in possession of all ideas at once, and therefore is not omniscient. If new ideas are constantly coming into his mind, either the old ones are crowded out and forgotten, or he must grow in knowledge. On either supposition he is not infinite. The same may be said of a succession of *exercises* in the divine mind. This equally implies change and forgetfulness; for if new exercises arise which were not in the mind before, why should not the old ones, which go out, be forgotten? If then God has no succession of ideas or exercises,—no succession of thoughts, feelings, or purposes,—he has no succession at all, and therefore has no relation to time; for time depends on succession and is measured by it. God's existence then is not in succession, and therefore not in time, but in one eternal now.

II. Let us apply this truth to relieve the difficulties which have been mentioned.

In strictness of speech God has no *foreknowledge* or *foredetermination*; all is present knowledge and present determination, though both are eternal. But inasmuch as he determines and knows events which to *creatures* are future, we are accustomed to speak of his foreknowledge and foredetermination; and the Scriptures, in accordance with our apprehensions, speak in the same manner. Indeed in respect to creatures it is foreknowledge and foredetermination. A thousand years ago he was determined to create us, and knew that we should exist. In respect to us this was foredetermination and foreknowledge; but not so in respect to God; for our existence was as present to him then as now.

Having made these explanations, the way is prepared to lay down the following proposition. *The affairs of the world are conducted just as though God had nothing which we call foreknowledge and foredetermination.* They are conducted just as though he began to exist in time. Every thing is regulated by his present choice; for his present choice is the choice of one eternal now. Some seem to think that he has bound himself by an ancient constitution, so that he is not at liberty to consult his present will;

that however disposed he may now be to have mercy on an individual, he cannot do it if that individual's name does not happen to be enrolled in a certain ancient catalogue. Could they go directly to a God who is unshackled by any old decree, they could hope. Well then they *may* hope; for this is precisely the case. If he is now disposed to have mercy on an individual, there is no decree to prevent: he has no ancient constitution or catalogue to consult. Nothing to him is ancient. All is now. We should accustom ourselves to conceive of God as eternally acting from present choice, and never from a decree which to himself is old. In this way we may learn to conceive of his eternal will and of his action with as little confusion as we contemplate the conduct of a man acting from present impulse without any previous knowledge or purpose.

We may now see that God's decrees are as consistent with our freedom as though they were not only present but *new*,—as though he began to exist to-day. They who object to his decrees as opposed to our freedom, do in general allow that he at present governs the world, not only the natural but the moral world; that he preserves life as long as he pleases and then takes it away; that he makes one to differ from another both in natural and spiritual respects; that he changes one heart and leaves another unchanged. For God to do all this in the present time, they do not deny to be consistent with human liberty. All the difficulty arises from his having bound himself to do it by an ancient decree. Did he act only from present choice, they would not complain. Well, he does act from present choice, and not from any decree which to himself is old. He now wills to create a soul, and creates it: he now wills to take away life, and takes it: he now wills to change a heart, and changes it: he now wills to withdraw his Spirit and seal a stubborn sinner's doom, and seals it. To him it is all present and not past, though it is a will exercised in one eternal now. If he *does* any thing in the present time which impairs our liberty, so be it; but there is no *decree* which impairs it; there is no decree distinct from his present purpose. We

are just as free as though he acted from new impulses, without any thing that we call foreknowledge or foredetermination. His decrees are rendered past to us only by our mode of existing. Did we exist without succession or beginning, no decree would be old to us, and we could as familiarly see the consistency between the government of God and our freedom, as they seem to do who deny the eternity of his decrees. If then the mere antiquity of the decrees renders them inconsistent with our freedom, our freedom is destroyed simply by our having a beginning and existing in succession; for nothing else renders the decrees ancient to us. But will you say that we could be free under the government of God did we exist in one eternal now, and that we are not free under the same government merely because we had a beginning and exist in succession? If so, then it is the imperfection of our nature, and not the character of his government, which destroys our freedom. Could we dwell on this subject without confusion, we might plainly see the consistency between the freedom of creatures and their entire dependence on a government administered by *eternal* counsels: and when we come to view things in the light of eternity, we shall see that our difficulties chiefly arose from attaching to God the idea of succession.

In the light of our subject we may see the consistency between prayer and the unchangeableness of God. Such a difficulty as this is often raised: God's decrees have long since fixed my fate; of what avail then to pray? Certainly this is not the view which the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles took of the subject. The Bible no where holds out the idea that God has fenced himself round with impassable decrees to exclude the cries of a broken heart. It represents his throne and his very heart as accessible to humble prayer, from whatever member of the probationary family it comes. It represents him as more ready to hear the supplications of the penitent than parents are to hear the cries of their children. It represents his heart as really affected at seeing his children kneeling before him and casting all their hopes upon him, and feeling that if he forsakes them they have no

other helper. All this the Scripture teaches; and in the light of our subject all this is reconcileable with the unchangeableness and eternal decrees of God. The sincere prayers which are offered to-day, were eternally present to him, and eternally and unchangeably affected his heart. When earthly parents are moved by the entreaties of their children, they are *changed*. The petitions are new, and become the cause of new feelings in them. Not so with God. The prayers of his people were eternally present to him, and eternally and unchangeably affected his heart. One of the unchangeable features of his character is an eternal disposition too tender to deny his children their consistent requests. This disposition, though eternal, is neither past nor future, but now, eternally now: and the appeals which are made to it have been eternally made to it. There is no old decree to restrain his present choice; and your prayers may be addressed to him as effectually as they could be to an earthly parent susceptible of *new* impressions. As he has always been what he now is, and has always been affected by the prayer which you now offer, your prayer to-day will affect him as much as though he now began to exist, and none the less for his unchangeableness. How strange then is that language, If I am elected I shall be saved whether I pray or not; and if I am not elected I shall not be saved however much I pray. The language amounts to this: If God *now* chooses to save me he will save me whether I pray or not; and if he *now* chooses to reject me my prayers will not avail. But this directly contradicts the plain import of his word, and is also at war with his essential character. He does *not now* choose to save you whether you pray or not; he does *not now* choose to reject you however much and sincerely you pray. His *present* choice is, to save you if you pray sincerely, and to reject you if you do not; and every thing turns on his present choice unshackled by any former decree; because his present choice is the purpose of one eternal now. Who told you that the heart of God cannot now be affected by prayer? Not his word: that uniformly holds a different language. Who then made the report? None but

the defamer of God and the deceiver of man. The defamer of God, I say; for he represents the God of love and mercy, not only as implacable, but as absolutely a deceiver. Do you say that God is ready to hear the prayers of others, but not of you? This is equally reproachful. It charges him with respect of persons, which he indignantly denies. Your fate then will be decided by this rule: if you now present the cries of a broken heart in the name of Christ, you will really affect the heart of God, and will be heard and answered; if you do not you will perish. The question is not therefore whether you are *elected* or not, but whether you will offer the sacrifice of a broken heart.

Methinks I hear some one say, You have altogether mistaken my plea. I am a poor unregenerate sinner. I *cannot* offer an acceptable prayer. Nothing which I can do will avail. If he has eternally determined to give me a new heart, I shall have one whether I pray or not; if he has determined not to give me a new heart, it is in vain to pray. Ah, my unhappy friend, do you know what you say? From the light which our subject affords, we plainly see that your plea amounts to this: If God *now* chooses to give me a heart to pray, I shall be saved whether I now pray or not; and if he does not give me such a heart it is in vain to try. Or in other words, If God does not give me a heart to pray, I will not pray though he commands it. With as much reason another may say, If God does not give me an honest heart I will steal, or, If God leaves me unrestrained I will murder. And has it come to this, that though God commands you to pray, and to pray sincerely, you are determined to disobey till he constrains you? Are you determined to do nothing and to leave all the work to God? to wait for him to move first when *you* are commanded to move? What is this but to throw away your own agency and to make him the only agent? You have an agency of your own, which God commands you to exert in humble and believing prayer. That agency is now employed in rebellion. It ought not so to be. God forbids it, and commands you to love him with all your heart, to repent and be-

lieve the Gospel, and to pray without ceasing. All this you ought to do of your own accord. It is your own fault that it is not done,—that you are opposed to these duties,—that God has any occasion to meet and prostrate your wicked feelings. Your obligations to exercise your agency are so perfect, that a failure deserves nothing less than eternal agony and despair. If this obstinate withholding is not a deadly sin, there neither is nor can be sin in the universe. If it *be* so that you cannot be brought to *any* dutiful feelings towards God, to any relentings for sin, to any regard for Christ, to any humble desire to pray, why there is an end of the matter; you *must* lie down in everlasting sorrows. But if you have *any* humble desire to pray, *any* longings after reconciliation with God, and are afraid that you are debarred by some old decree, I return to my former position, and tell you that you have nothing to do but with God's present will, unrestrained by any past decree. And certainly it is not his present will to exclude any *who* look to him for life. O my beloved friends, perplex not yourselves any longer with the fruitless inquiry whether you are *elected*, but hasten to decide that great question on which your eternity turns, whether you will fall down at the feet of your Maker and implore his mercy through Jesus Christ. Since his heart is *now* open to your approach, go without delay. Besiege the throne of grace and resolve not to let him go. The way is open to the very heart of infinite Love. No statute or decree, old or new, bars the passage. What a glorious circumstance that there is *such* a God,—fully accessible to poor, guilty, ruined sinners. Glory to him in the highest that he is *such* a God. Let us *avail* ourselves of the infinite advantage, and not render it worse than in vain to us that there is a "God merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,—forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Let him not in vain be offered to us with all the riches of his grace. Let it not be in vain that, with more than a father's heart, he sits upon a mercy seat and invites and entreats us to come,—to come and receive all that he has to bestow,—all that poor, guilty, helpless

sinners need,—without money and without price. Let us go this day, this hour, and exchange our poverty for riches, our sighs for songs, and our hell for heaven. Let us make haste, lest the door of mercy be closed against us. Our time is uncertain; death is at the door. Let us not put to hazard, another moment, such an opportunity to make our fortune for eternity. The heart of infinite tenderness is now open to our approach, unguarded by any ancient decree. Will you believe it? Will you open your eyes and see his infinite readiness to receive you? O if you can believe, “all things are possible to him that believeth.” And now, from this moment, I call heaven and earth to witness, that if you perish your blood will be upon your own head: and let the recording angel take it down.—Amen.

SERMON XXXII.

THE GOODNESS OF GOD.

PSALM cxlv. 7.—They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness.

WHETHER men could have discovered the goodness of God without a revelation, is a question which has been considerably agitated for the last century; having been called up by the onset made upon religion by modern infidelity. It may probably be admitted that had men continued in a state of innocence, with minds unclouded by sin and prejudice, and living in a world unaffected with evil, they would have been fully persuaded of the goodness of God without a revelation, provided that without a revelation they could have discovered his existence and universal agency. But blinded as they are by the fall, and having daily proofs before them of the existence of sin and misery, there is reason to believe either that they could not or that they would not have learned the unmixed goodness of God without instructions from heaven. This opinion is confirmed by experience. No portion of the heathen world, with all the glimmerings of light reflected from the Church, have, in any age or country, formed correct ideas of the moral character of God. The character which even the polished Greeks and Romans ascribed to their Jupiter, was such as no decent man in the present age would be willing to sustain. It was reserved for the Holy Spirit, which knoweth the things of God as the spirit of a man the things of a man, to disclose the disposition of the Eternal Mind,—to show us a Being who is love itself, whose happiness consists in doing good, whose chief end is to form a holy, happy kingdom, full of the knowledge of his glory. It was reserved for the Holy Spirit to explain the tendency of those measures which God has adopted for this end. Enlightened by the truths which the Spirit of God reveals, we may look with clearer vision upon the heavens and the earth, upon the dispensations of God, upon his minutest works, and see in them all proofs, before unknown, of his amazing goodness. One of the great lessons which we were sent into the world to learn, was the goodness of God. It is a sweet and heavenly theme, calculated to melt and refine the soul, to raise it to high and ecstatic contemplations, and to change it “into the same image from glory to glory.” Could we now catch a glimpse of this glorious perfection, I foresee that our delighted minds would spurn the earth and lose themselves in elevated wonder, love, and joy. Un-

ble to view God either with an eye of sense or intuitively, as we see the face of a man or the truth of a self-evident proposition, we must search for evidences of his goodness in the works of creation and providence and in the administration of his grace, enlightened as they are by his word. In such a study the holy angels and "the spirits of just men made perfect" are continually employed as they make excursions through the universe, and it increases their admiration of the benignity and perfection of their heavenly King.

The evidences of God's goodness may be reduced to the following heads: the structure of the world, the preservation and care of his works, his providential interpositions, his bounties, and the administration of his grace.

1. His goodness appears in *the structure of the world*. On this theme more books might be composed than the world now contains, without exhausting the subject. A whole library might be written on the goodness apparent in the structure of the human body. The more the religious mind is enlightened by philosophy, the more it is lost in admiration of the wisdom and goodness which appear in every part of creation. The whole is one vast museum of curiosities, strongly evincive of wise and benevolent design. Every thing, (except sin and its immediate effects,) is admirably calculated to subserve the happiness of creatures. A Christian cannot view the sun, placed in the heavens to enlighten, warm, and influence the dependent planets, without seeing a constant monument of the goodness of the Creator. Nor without strong impressions of the same sort, can philosophy, baptised, contemplate the laws which regulate the heavenly bodies, their structure, motions, regularity, and various influence upon the happiness of the creation. Every star of night tells a tale which fills the pious eye with tears. The air in which we breathe is charged by the Creator to perform various necessary and important offices for man. The ocean has its numerous uses. The laws of vegetation which have so much influence on the beauty of the world and the support of animal life, every organ of the human body, every social affection and relation, the numerous instincts and

faculties of beast, bird, fish, and worm, so admirably fitted for their preservation and defence, the organization of every plant and spire of grass,—all conspire to proclaim the matchless goodness of their Author. There is more benevolent design in a single field of wheat,—I might have said, in a single blade,—than all the philosophers of the world can comprehend. There is more benevolent design in the faculties of yonder bird that hangs under the arch of heaven, or in the minutest limb of the insect which hums in the evening air, than human reason can ever fathom. On no point of nature's works can we fix our eye without seeing marks of amazing goodness.

"These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,

"Almighty; thine this universal frame,

"Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then,

"Unspeakable, who sitt'st above these heavens,

"To us invisible, or dimly seen

"In these thy lowest works: yet these declare,

"Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine."

2. God's goodness is discovered in *the preservation and care of his works*. The same power that constructed the universe, is necessary every moment to its continuance and order. When with the eye of Christian philosophy we examine the mechanism of nature, we see that goodness not only created the countless wheels of this vast machine, but exerts equal energy and care every moment to preserve their being, properties, and motions. The goodness of God sustains the sun in his place and sends out every ray that enlightens and warms the earth. The flood of light which flows from that luminary, is a flood constantly issuing from the fountain of eternal goodness. The goodness of God sustains and rolls all the planets, and sheds upon us the influence of every star. The action of the atmosphere in supporting animal life and vegetation, shows the constant agency of divine goodness. Every drop of the ocean, every property and law of that drop, receive their being, every instant, from divine goodness; and all the apparent and secret influences which the ocean exerts upon the world, indicate the constant action of the same goodness. All the minute and subtle laws of vegeta-

tion, and those which govern the animal economy and the social relations, result from the continued energies of omnipotent goodness. It is the constant care of God which continues the being, the instincts, and the faculties of man, which propels our blood through the arteries and veins, which secretes the various fluids of our bodies and carries them through vessels fitted to conduct them. It is the constant care of God which sustains the eagle in the midst of heaven, and supports the organs of the smallest worm. Every blade of wheat, every spire of grass, hourly receives its organization from the goodness of God. His care raises from the earth, or introduces from the air, into the vessels of each plant, every particle of nutriment. His care sends the salubrious breeze to refresh the lungs of the languishing invalid. His care supports the weak young raven, and "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." All the countless varieties of nature's operations, are but the effects of the infinitely diversified and constantly repeated efforts of divine goodness. We are lost in the boundless contemplation, and can only say, "This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working."

3. The goodness of God appears in his *providential interpositions*. Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without him, and the hairs of our head are all numbered. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." His throne, as represented in Ezekiel's vision, is erected over the wheels of providence, which, though in the highest degree complicated, like wheels within wheels, do, to those who attentively and filially observe them, furnish abundant evidence of divine goodness. The sacred history throws great light on this department of God's government. There we trace his dealings with nations and with individuals for several hundred years, and view his providence irradiated by a column of light from heaven. There we see the benevolent designs of his judgments upon wicked nations and individuals, and his agency in all the comforts bestowed on his people. There we trace his faithfulness to his saints, his sudden interpositions to supply their

wants, to deliver them from their enemies, to arrest evils on their way to assail them, and to turn all their afflictions to a good account. There the most mysterious and complex dispensations are analyzed, and the use of every part explained before our eyes. These are exhibited as specimens, to enable us to understand the designs of providence in every age. Instructed by these disclosures, we may daily read the goodness of God, not only in those great events which concern nations, but in those which relate to families and individuals. The whole skein of providence, from the falling of a sparrow to the revolutions of empire,—the whole skein of providence in all worlds,—is nothing but the constantly repeated action of divine goodness and the universal extension of divine care. Overcome by this boundless prospect, the mind seeks relief in a more circumscribed view. Well then, let a judicious Christian take his stand in the midst of divine operations, and attentively observe the providence of God within the narrow limits of his own vision for thirty or forty years, and what surprising disclosures will he witness of the care, compassion, and faithfulness of God. How many narrow escapes from death which the unseen and too little acknowledged hand of God brought about. How many surprising interpositions will he notice. *Here* he sees the divine care exercised over the widow and the fatherless; *there* a poor saint who trusted in God, supplied from year to year without his own care or foresight. *Here* he sees the divine hand interposing between a poor orphan and its merciless oppressor; *there* a Christian, through a long course of afflictions, experiencing the frequent and affecting interpositions of a Father's care. He sees the providence of God employed in ordering the seasons, in changing the winds, and in making a thousand things conspire to produce the healthfulness of a single town or the abundance of a single harvest. He sees the hand of God in every scene, and hears every thing unite in proclaiming, "How precious—are thy thoughts" towards us, "O God; how great is the sum of them."

4. The goodness of God appears in his *bounty*. One of the expressive titles which the ancient Hebrews gave to

God, was **SHADAH**, which signified "the pourer or shedder forth, i. e. of blessings." It seemed to represent him as the great fountain on the top of the universe, pouring out the streams of his bounty into all worlds. This representation was correct. He is the exhaustless ocean whence countless streams have flowed into all parts of the universe from the beginning of the creation. They have not flowed from blind necessity, but from deliberate purpose. Men are apt to ascribe the effects of God's beneficence to the laws of nature, and to lift their praise no higher. But there is not an ear of barley in the harvest, nor a spire of grass upon the mountains;—there is not an apple mellowing in the sun, nor a grape blushing in the vineyard;—there is not a fleece in the fold, nor one of the cattle upon a thousand hills,—but was produced by the particular effort and full intention of divine goodness, as really as though it had been the only thing created. It is his hand which spreads our table and fills our cup, as much as though there were no laws of nature, and our food, like the manna, was rained down from heaven. There is not an unfledged bird in the nest which is not fed from his hand; there is not a worm nestling under the clod, which is not supplied by his constant care. His eye looks creation through; he bears all his creatures upon his heart. It is overflowing love that feeds kings and that feeds reptiles. "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men."

5. The goodness of God appears in the administration of his grace. I have not time to dwell on that mighty effort of love which brought the Son of God from a throne to a manger and from the manger to a cross. I have not time to dwell on the gift of his holy word, on his dispensations to the Jews, or on any of the displays of himself to the Church in past ages. By all these means a monument was erected to the honour of divine goodness which the storms of time can never demolish. My object is only to glance at those proofs of God's goodness which daily appear in the administration of his grace, and which

Christians find in their course without going out of their way. Put your minds deeply to the contemplation. What goodness is that which daily looks after a revolted world,—which calls and entreats them to return,—which sends the Holy Spirit to overcome their obstinacy and to bring them back to God and to happiness. What amazing goodness is that which pardons all their sins, which admits them to the privileges of children and treats them with such ineffable tenderness and care. That the eternal God should condescend to hold communion with unworthy worms,—that he should hear their prayers and supply all their wants and defend them with a Father's care, and not only pardon their daily sins, but take upon himself the charge of subduing their remaining corruptions; that he should throw himself between them and their enemies and dangers, resolving never to forsake them till he has brought them home to his heavenly kingdom; all this is a manifestation of goodness which no finite mind can comprehend.

The more we reflect on these several topics with deep and pious scrutiny, the more will our minds be overwhelmed with the unsearchable, the infinite goodness of God. It is the miserable condition of man by nature to be blind to this amazing goodness; and this world, this benighted and guilty world, has but little sense of the glorious Being who reigns above and shines in all his works. But it will not be always thus. These astonishing measures by which God has expressed the benevolence of his nature, will yet fill the world with his glory; and men, in every nation and clime under heaven, "shall abundantly utter the memory of" his "great goodness." The grateful sound shall echo from mountain to mountain and from the valley to the hills,

"Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
"Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round."

Then shall the inhabitants of the earth celebrate that goodness which their fathers overlooked. Does not this reflection light up a blush in every cheek? Shall it be that after we are dead, a generation shall arise who shall be more affected with God's goodness to us than we are ourselves? Shall the world in future ages ring with the praises of that

beneficence which we enjoy but do not acknowledge? Ah, my beloved friends, a God of such immeasurable goodness does not merit such treatment at our hands. He deserves our highest love and praise. Will the most intrepid sinner justify the dishonour which many who breathe the air and live upon the bounty of God, cast upon him? You, my hearers, shall be judges between God and them. What say your rising hearts? Are *they* to be justified who live under the care of such a God and make no returns? who worship him neither in the family nor the closet? who profane his Sabbaths, hate his religion, and reproach his servants? I submit it to the conscience of every hearer, whether these are suitable returns to God

for all his goodness to poor, worthless, self-ruined sinners. The whole universe must pronounce it the basest ingratitude. Not a conscience at the last day but will condemn them. Ah, deluded souls, I forewarn you that incensed *goodness* will be an awful enemy to encounter. When you shall feel all the nameless woes of reprobation, were there any other hand to punish than that of *goodness*, you could bear it. But to be crushed under the indignant power of offended goodness, this will be the hell of hells. This will utterly confound and overwhelm you with a load of guilt and shame to which mountains and worlds are light. Let me meet any other enemy, but O deliver me from offended *goodness*. Amen.

SERMON XXXIII.

GOD RESTORETH AND LEADETH FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE.

PSALM xxiii. 3.—He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness  his name's sake.

As streams tend to the ocean, so the temper which is derived from heaven aspires to God. Our most delightful employment is to contemplate and worship him. This is also our most proper business; because to glorify God by knowing, honouring, and enjoying him, was the end of our creation. This is also our most useful work. Do you desire sanctification? While "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," you "are changed into the same image from glory to glory." Do you feel your need of strength? The strength of every saint is to know his own weakness and to live under a soul-affecting view of the fulness and life-giving efficacy of Christ. "When I am weak then am I strong." Do you long for happiness? The happiest state of a human soul is that of dependence on God and trust in him, under a sense of his infinite mercy and

faithfulness. The best state of a Christian therefore, is that in which he is conscious of his own entire weakness and casts himself upon God, and keeps his eye fixed on him and rests on him for the accomplishment of his whole salvation. Such appears to have been the habitual state of David's mind. The Psalms which he composed abound in expressions of his own weakness, of his dependence on God, and of his trust in him. None can read these sacred songs without perceiving that their author daily committed to the hands of God his whole interest for time and eternity. In this exercise he found his sweetest and most useful employment.

It is scarcely possible for a man to make too strong an expression of his own weakness or to trust too much in the exhaustless fulness of God. The nature of man is weak,—infinitely too

weak to accomplish, independently, any part of his own salvation. But God is strong, and his grace is sufficient for all who trust in him. That is the best religion which is the most conscious of human weakness and has the most confident and affectionate trust in God;—which delights to abase the creature and to exalt the Lord alone;—which, renouncing all self-dependence, fixes its only hope in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Think not that I mean to place all religion in contemplation, to the exclusion of the more active duties, or that I advocate a dependence on God which sets aside the use of our faculties. A proper dependence and trust are always connected with obedience, and call our faculties into the most vigorous and holy exercises.

It is a blessed truth which ought unceasingly to press upon our hearts, that God is worthy of our tenderest confidence. He is the Author of all the mercies which have filled our lives. His affectionate care is extended to us every hour. He calculates for us when we are unmindful of him. "He restoreth" our souls; "he leadeth" us "in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." In the whole business of man's salvation God is worthy to be depended on and trusted in as its "Alpha and Omega." The work is taken entirely into his own hands. It was entered upon "for his name's sake," to fill the universe with his glory, from motives growing out of his infinite benevolence: and when it is completed and understood, it will appear a work worthy of a God,—a work which at every stage made the most glorious manifestation of his perfections. From mercy unsolicited he at first formed the amazing plan. Before men or angels had existence, he entered into covenant with his Son, in which the great affair was settled and every part arranged. In the fulness of time he sent his Son into the world to make the great atonement; who without the aid of man having expiated human guilt, entered into the presence of God as our Intercessor, and as King of Zion for ever sat down at his right hand. It was God who first erected a Church in the world, and undertook to preserve, enlarge, and perfect it; and he regards

it as his own peculiar interest,—as the chosen means of spreading his glory before all worlds. This work he has been carrying on in every age. He provided for the Church a revelation, and he sent out his Spirit to convict, convert, and sanctify his people. And when he shall have accomplished the whole he will show to the universe a work worthy of himself.

David always delighted to ascribe his whole salvation to God, to place his entire dependence on him, and to trust in him for all things. The whole of the short Psalm from which our text is taken is an expression of these feelings. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.—Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

In our text no part of redemption is brought into view but its *application* to the souls of men in *restoring* and *leading* them; both of which God does for his name's sake. Let us take a nearer view of these two parts of the great salvation.

I. He *restoreth* the souls of men for his name's sake.

His restoring acts may be divided into two classes; those by which sinners are recovered from a state of impenitence to the character and blessings of God's people, and those by which wandering Christians are brought back to duty and to peace.

First, it is God alone who recovers impenitent men from the blindness and infatuation of sin to the character and blessings of his people. And this is really a wonderful and most affecting act of mercy. Could we have a clear view of the whole scene of his operations, by which he brings a sinner to the foot of his throne, we should have other apprehensions of his mercy than perhaps any of us now entertain. He begins with sinners when they are children; and in addition to all the external

means employed, he calls them often by his Spirit before they know who it is that calls them. He arrests their young conscience; he causes some serious thoughts to pass through their minds and forces them to secret prayer. When a wandering heart has got away from these impressions, he again interposes with greater power. Their agitated souls, not knowing what ails them, are compelled to resort to secret places to pour out their complaints before God. When they still resist the divine calls and plunge into the cares of manhood, the patience of God bears and pleads with them still. When all the common means of grace have proved ineffectual and his calls have been long resisted, he often resorts to other means, like a man trying every expedient to accomplish a favourite purpose. The sinner is thrown upon a bed of sickness and shaken over the eternal pit; or the life of a wife is threatened by painful and lingering illness, and her concern for her soul perhaps reaches his heart; or the life of a favourite child is attacked by a disorder which is appointed to do its fatal work by a lingering process,—a disorder which sometimes abates and then renews its violence, causing alternate hopes and fears, calculated to bring the afflicted parent to a sense of his absolute dependence on God. In the midst of these judgments perhaps some affecting mercies are sent, showing a determination in God to touch every string. Perhaps these dispensations take place at the critical time when the Spirit has made a new and more powerful onset upon him. Now when such a combination of circumstances are brought to bear on a poor rebellious worm whom God has determined to pluck from destruction;—when all these means are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and the rebel is overcome by superior strength;—when God will thus condescend to raise, by so much pains, a miserable creature from the depth of pollution to the dignity of holy existence,—from being an heir of hell to inherit all riches;—when he will deliberately and freely pardon all his sins out of rich and amazing grace, and adopt him for a son, and lay him in his bosom, and hold the tenderest communion with him; when all these wonders take place, what can the poor creature,

entranced at so great a change and at the still greater grace, what can he say but confess with a bursting heart, “He restoreth my soul—for his name’s sake”?

Secondly, it is God alone who brings back wandering Christians to duty and to peace. They never would return if not reclaimed by him. And when they have wandered and given their hearts to idols, and have wholly lost the power and almost the calculation to return; then he is planning, high in the heavens, the mighty work of their restoration. If the interest was exclusively his own he could not be more mindful of it. He calculates for them when they calculate neither for themselves nor for him. In other cases, while, under a view of their deplorable state, they give up all for lost, and, looking back to days of divine communion, pine at the recollection of what they dare not hope again to enjoy; even then his paternal love is planning to restore them to holiness and to peace. The covenant by which he has bound himself never to leave nor forsake them, still endures. However far they may have wandered, he will bring them back. “As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out my sheep and will deliver them out of all places where they have been. scattered in the cloudy and dark day.—I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick.” “I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant;—that thou mayest remember and be confounded and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord.” The people of God change, but he changes not. A thousand times they forfeit his care, but his love towards them is never weaned nor his patience exhausted. However much their ungrateful hearts may forget him, he never forgets them. While they are insensible to their own dangers, he watches them attentively to turn their feet from fatal snares. Though they should wander to the ends of the earth,

his eye would still follow them; his right hand would find them out and bring them again to his holy temple. It may cost them much. It may cost them many pains of conscience. It may cost them a wife, a child, all that they have in the world: but cost what it may he will bring them back. And when they are recovered, and review his care and the mysterious means by which he reclaimed them, they will repeat with feelings unknown before, "He restoreth my soul—for his name's sake."—Thus far in regard to God's *restoring* mercy.

II. "He *leadeth*" the restored "in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake." He not only restores them from all past wanderings, but he plans and provides for them for all time to come. Their corruptions would still rob them of their crown, but his faithfulness is engaged to prevent. When they see the difficulties and dangers which cluster in their path, they are ready to say, "One day" "I shall—perish—by the hand of Saul." When their enemies present themselves in strong array, they are compelled to say with Jehoshaphat, "We have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee." When for a moment they lose sight of their covenant God and fix their eyes on the difficulties around them, like Peter they begin to sink, and are forced to cry with the disciples, "Lord save us, we perish." And the Lord *does* save them. Amidst all their despondencies he changes not. He will go with them through all the dangers of the wilderness, to lead them as it were by a "pillar of—cloud by day" and "of fire by night." He will defend them from the wild beasts of the desert. He will protect them against all who seek their lives, and will give them wisdom and confidence to "speak with the enemies in the gate." He will impart to them all needed strength and discretion to perform future duties and to demean themselves wisely in their several stations, unless they forget their dependence and turn away from their Guide. When conscious of their indiscretions, the hastiness of their conclusions, their want of circumspection and wisdom, their

deficiency in natural and moral endowments, they often are afraid that they shall injure the interests of God and man. But "what time" they are "afraid" they may "trust in" God, who has said, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

Thus God will continue to "guide" his people by his "counsel and afterward receive" them "to glory." He will carry on his work until it is accomplished. And when it is accomplished, and its value, and the means and care by which it was accomplished, are understood, then it will appear a work worthy of a God. It will be seen to be the most glorious manifestation of rich and amazing grace. When the countless numbers of the redeemed shall stand before the throne and look back, as Israel did, on all the way by which God led them in the wilderness, and shall discover all their dangers and hair-breadth escapes, and the sins by which they frequently forfeited the divine aid; when they shall perceive how certainly they would have turned back had not God prevented, and shall be sensible of the tender care which he exercised over them every moment; when they shall look upward and see the infinite dignity of him who stooped to look after them, and the prints of the wounds by which they were redeemed; when they shall look down to hell and see from what they were delivered, and look down the descent of ages and contemplate the eternal glory before them; then how will their souls swell with wonder and gratitude at the sovereign grace and covenant faithfulness of God. Then will they own that "the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord,"—that it was God alone who brought them through and completed every part of their redemption. Then the divine attribute of mercy will appear most amazing, and heaven will for ever ring with the song of redeeming love. O my brethren, we have never yet discovered the heights and depths of the love of God. The world have yet to learn what a God there is in heaven. His mercy is not only *vastly* greater than they ever imagined, it is *infinitely* greater. In this world it is difficult for a trem-

bling sinner to believe that the mercy of God is sufficient for his pardon. But when he gets to heaven and beholds, in the light of eternity, the boundless compassion which yearned over a dying world,—which prevailed against all the treasons of men, and brought unnumbered millions to eternal glory; then will he know what mercy there is in God. O the infinite mercy of God. O that the race of men could know it,—that the race of men could put their trust in this divine attribute,—that every Christian on earth could be more sensi-

ble of his dependence, and of the safety and sweetness of depending on God. O that we might all feel that God is the Author of our whole salvation, and worthy to be loved and thanked and trusted in for ever and ever; that he is a solid rock on which to rest everlasting confidence. “For, [be it known to the universe,] the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.” Amen.

SERMON XXXIV.

LIKE GRASS WHICH GROWETH UP.

NEW-YEAR'S SERMON.

PSALM xc. 5, 6.—In the morning they are like grass which groweth up: in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down and withereth.

SUCH has always been the condition of human life. This complaint was uttered more than three thousand years ago, by one over whose grave a hundred generations have passed. In the climes of Asia Moses looked out with these eyes upon the vanity of man. David followed him with the same complaint many ages after. Thus, scores of centuries before we were born, they were making their moans over the transitory nature of this mortal state. When we arrive at an age to realize that life is “a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away,” it seems as though we had first made the discovery: but they were chanting their melancholy airs over this subject before Rome or Greece or Jerusalem was born, and have been singing it to the ears of the passing ages ever since.

The figure in our text is very striking. In a bright summer's morning you behold a verdant meadow. Its freshness and beauty charm your eye. Your imagination sees in it a perpetual Eden, and

dreams of reposing upon it from every care, and wearing out life among its charms. You return towards evening, and how changed the scene. The mower's hand has been there. The waving grass lies still. Its virgin beauty has fled. The lovely green that mantled over the plain lies faded in withered heaps. The whole enchantment is broken. You turn away with a sigh and say, How fleeting was all that beauty: how vain to reckon on it as a charm which was to last.

So man comes forth in the morning of life blooming with health and beauty; active and sprightly and winning; full of spirits and gladness; glowing with expectations, undisturbed with care, fearless of evil: but return a few years after, and his youth has faded; the traces of age are upon him; his sprightliness is gone; care and sorrow have furrowed his cheeks; his hopes have been disappointed; the world has not been found what he expected; the friends of his youth have fallen around

him; and instead of calculating on a long train of happy years, he is looking for a place where to lay his bones.

Such is the change which a few years make in a town or city. See those streets filled with youth and health, gay and sprightly and bustling with business. The persons who are flourishing there seem to expect and seem to promise that they shall long flourish such as they now are. But return a few years after, and most of them are removed; many of those that remain have been unfortunate in business and are reduced; and all of them are sobered and cramped and stiffened with age. Some are presenting a face pale with decay; others are alarming your ear with the hectic cough; others are supporting with a staff their rheumatic or gouty limbs. And when you look around, you find the streets mostly filled with new faces. A new race of men have occupied the places and engrossed the business. "Alas," you say, "where is the generation that lately flitted through these streets, so active and gay and expectant? So passes off the glory of the world."

Look at one of the courts of Europe. Mark the fashion, the splendour, the rival efforts to shine, the gayety, the dissipation, the ambitious aim at power, the shifting forms of pleasure: and is all this brilliancy and delight and glory to be so fleeting? Yes, return a few years after, and every thing is changed. Another monarch has ascended the throne; another generation compose the court. Not one of the old faces remains. The few that are left above ground are at their palaces and castles, groaning and dying under the infirmities of age. Let one who used to envy the former court be carried in by supporters and cast an eye around on the new group, and with what very different eyes would he survey them. Envy a butterfly, envy a falling rose as soon.

Look at Nineveh and Babylon and Thebes and Memphis and Palmyra. The splendour and strength of those ancient cities exceeded any thing that modern eyes have seen, and gave promise of enduring and shining for ever. But where are they now? Long since reduced to utter ruin, and the site of some of them unknown. Could you

have stood in their streets and seen the glory of their temples and palaces, and the activity and joy and hope of the bustling crowd, the enchantment would have been much the same as in looking, in a summer's morning, on the pride and glory of the meadow. How hard would it have been to realize that all that pride and glory would so soon be mowed down and withered.

The successive empires of Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome, sprung forth youthful and fresh as the grass, and waved their luxuriant beauty over their respective fields. Their power and grandeur successively filled every eye, and their fame and exploits were the theme for every tongue throughout the known world. How strange would the prediction have seemed that their authority and glory were to pass away. Yet the mower's hand has laid them low; and the very ground which sustained them, (except a small section of the last empire,) is now trampled by barbarous feet, and groans under the oppressive weight of Mahometan imposition. The lumber of ignorance and brutality is piled up on every spot which witnessed the splendour of Babylon, the pomp of Persia, and the polished arts of Greece.

Look at Egypt; once the mother and seat of science, inscribed all over by the arts, covered with cities, filled with wealth and with arms, reflecting back the sun from its unnumbered temples and palaces, astonishing the world by its excavations, its temples carved out of solid rock, its pyramids and its mausoleums; now dismantled and demolished, overrun by barbarians, ground down by oppression, buried in ignorance and in filth, and reduced, according to the emphatic prediction of Ezekiel, to be "the basest of the kingdoms." Who would have thought that all that glory would so soon pass away?

So it has fared with whatever has been great or glorious, beautiful or splendid, gay or delightful, in the genius, acquirements, or state of man, from the east to the west, from the north to the south, wherever the earth has been peopled, and in every age in which it has stood. Yesterday an Elysian field, waving its beauties to the sun; to-day cropped and withered, and all its come-

liness is gone. Ever since the flowers of Eden were turned to briars and thorns, *vanity* and *change* have been written on every thing which touches a soil accursed for sin. The earth exhibits beauties to show that God is merciful still, but she suddenly draws them back to teach us that this is not our home. She spreads them out to cheer us in our pilgrimage, but she wraps them up again to ring in our ears this perpetual warning, "Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted." She gives them to us to encourage us on to God, but she takes them away lest we should make a god of them.

Such is the fleeting nature of human life. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not.—There is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease;—but man dieth and *wasteth away*, yea he giveth up the ghost and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down and riseth not till the heavens be no more; they shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep."

Such, (to bring the subject nearer home,) is the fleeting nature of *our own* mortal existence. The other day we began life and came forth in all the freshness of the grass of the field. There was a charm in every scene around us, and we scarcely felt that the joy was ever to end. To look forward to old age, seemed like a little eternity. But many of us have seen the end of that delusion. While we were eagerly pursuing the dream of earthly happiness, and rushing on from disappointment to disappointment, fondly hoping that we should yet find in the creature what hitherto we had failed to find, we awoke and found that the thing sought, so far as it had any existence, was *behind* us and not *before* us,—that we had passed it in the pursuit,—that most of the happiness which the world could give had already been enjoyed,—and that age was coming on and the evil days drawing nigh of which we should say, We have no pleasure in them.

And now as we look back, we see that the other day we were children. We are convinced at last of what our fathers failed to make us believe, that "we spend our years as a tale that is told." Now we can feel the striking force of the figure in our text. In the morning of life we were "like grass which groweth up: in the morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the evening [of the same day] it is cut down and withereth." We see that our youthful joys were but this morning: we see them withered ere 'tis night,—withered to be green no more. The grass can be turned in one hour to withered hay, but the hay can never return to its former freshness. We look back on our early joys and say, They are "as a dream when one awaketh." How short was the vision, and whither has it fled? We were just preparing to *live*, but now we have awoke and found that we have nothing to do but to prepare to *die*. For what has happened to the joys of life, will shortly happen to life itself. "In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down and withereth" in the grave. We have already past the greater part of life's comforts; every hour is carrying us still further from them; we cannot return, but an irresistible current is bearing us down into the gulph of eternity. There is no return; there is no stop. It will be but a moment and we *must* go to our long home and leave the mourners to go about the streets. We cannot be younger, but we shall soon be dead: and on a dying bed we shall feel the truth of our text and the propriety of its figure more than ever. All our life will seem but a day. And having passed the short day of dreams and shadows, we shall disappear. We shall take an eternal leave of earth and wing our way to the bar of God. The places which now know us will know us no more. Our lands and houses will go into other hands. Strangers will occupy our substance and walk over our graves without knowing that we were buried there. Our names will be forgotten on earth. The world will go on as before. The sun will arise and set as usual. Mirth and diversion will be as brisk as ever. None will take thought of our pleasures or pains, while we shall be either mounting the regions of life

and soaring high in salvation, or shrieking to the ear of hell and sinking in the pit that has no bottom.

And now what shall we say to these things? A number of reflections crowd upon the mind which ought not to pass unnoticed.

1. It is in vain to seek for a paradise or a home in this poor, delusive world. This we are too prone to do. We covet a rest here. We covet a residence fitted up with as much care as though it were to last for ages. Whatever breaks in upon the pleasantness or permanency of such arrangements, discomposes us. But what would it profit if all Eden bloomed around us? With these imperfect minds it would not be an Eden to us: it would only imbitter our joys by drawing our hearts from God. But be it what it might, it would be but for a moment. How foolish to feel at home where we are to stay but for a night. How foolish to set our hearts on a world in which we can only find a grave. Under a realizing sense of the certainty and nearness of that eternity into which we are entering, let our hearts be weaned from this vain world. Let us neither seek nor wish for a home on this polluted and mouldering turf. Let us feel like pilgrims and strangers on the earth, and support a holy indifference to all its joys and sorrows; sending our affections far away from this mighty grave-yard, and lodging them in the heaven of heavens. Let us live above the world and cultivate a heavenly mind.

2. After all, we ought not to weep too much over the vanity of life. Human life answers the purpose for which it was given. It is short indeed, but it was never intended to be eternal. It is long enough, with a wise improvement, to prepare us for a better world; and that is all that it was designed to do. It was never meant to be our permanent state. This world was not made for our home. *Heaven* is our home, and eternity is the season to enjoy it. The shortness of our pilgrimage would not disturb us but for some guilty cause. It is the perversion of the design of life and our attachment to the world as a home, together with the weakness of our faith to discern a better country, and the consequent doubt of our preparation for it, which render the subject so gloomy.

The men of the world talk of the shortness of life and the decay of all things, as a subject which is only gloomy and allows of no transition to a brighter theme. Not so did the inspired writers. They used to pass from this topic to a happier one, delightfully set off by the contrast. Thus David: "As for man his days are as grass: as a flower of the field so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more: but the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children." Thus Isaiah: "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field.—The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord shall stand for ever." We ought not constantly to fill our eyes with bones and sepulchres. We should lift them from grave-yards to the regions of immortal life. The sickly hues of decay which are spread over all things here, should send our thoughts to the unfading bloom of the heavenly paradise. There is no need to sink into sadness in view of the fleeting nature of sublunary things. We ought to contemplate the subject, to prevent an undue attachment to earth; but we ought to cheer ourselves by a glance,—a gaze,—at that world where all is durable and satisfying. It is melancholy to read the inscriptions of decay and death on all the life and furniture of this globe; but we have abundant reasons to be satisfied with this order of things, yea to rejoice in it with exceeding joy. What Christian would consent to take up with earth and be forever exiled from heaven? It is an infinite privilege that a good man may die. Should a decree pass, dooming all that remain alive to this eternal prison, one universal groan would fill the abodes of Zion.

3. It ought not to be a ground of despondency to good men that they are growing old and beginning to decay, and drawing rapidly towards a termination of their course. It is gloomy to *nature* to find the better part of life gone, our strength beginning to fail, and every thing within us bending down towards the grave; to count how few the years before age must disable us and death

close the scene. To mere stupid sense the calculation is how long we are to *exist*: the approaching termination seems to be the end of all things. But to faith the prospect is very different. This discerns another and a happier country. There is another and a better life after this is closed. Death will not swallow up all. "There is a land above the stars and joys above his power." The good man has no reason to be sad that he is so near his journey's end. His eye may be dim that he can no longer see the enchantments of nature; his taste and his ear may be blunted, like those of old Barzillai, that he can no longer taste what he eats or what he drinks, nor hear the voice of singing men and singing women; he may have buried all his kindred in the same grave with his youthful joys, and may stand alone like a blasted oak upon the plain; he may have taken his last leave of an empty world, and may have nothing left but his Bible and his God; his tottering limbs may be supported on his staff, and every hour he may be looking for the final summons; and yet that aged saint has no reason to be sad. He has done indeed with the joys of youth; he has done with earthly comforts; the wide world has no more charms for him; but he is standing on the threshold of immortal glory. Like old Simeon, he is standing with the Saviour in his arms, saying, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." The king on his throne is a wretch to him.

4. The delusive and fleeting nature of all terrestrial things, and the afflictions which are largely mingled with them, ought to make us long more earnestly after heaven. When we cannot find here a place on which to rest the sole of our foot, it ought to endear to us the thought of our eternal home. This world of shadows ought to send our desires to that solid and enduring substance. Is the captive in Algiers goaded by his task-master to remember his father's house, and to pant after that circle where to him all is love and tenderness? And should not the vanities and hardships of the present life make us sigh for that world where all is reality and rest? Shall not the afflictions which here break our hearts, make us stretch out our hands towards that coun-

try where God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes?

5. The shortness of life and the unsatisfying and perplexing nature of all that it has to bestow, ought to stir us up to diligence in the proper business for which it was given us. So beset with evil, so annoyed by the vanity of the creature, life is of little value but as a season to do good and to prepare for heaven. To purchase the shrivelled joys and the pains of this scrap of time with the happiness of a whole eternity, what phrenzy. To linger among its thorns and lose our eternal inheritance, what fatal folly. If it has so little else to give, at least let us draw out of it something to make us blest when sorrow and sighing shall flee away. The work is great and the time is short. Greater the work than an Alexander ever accomplished, and how short the time is none of us can tell. At longest it is but a span, and it may cease before my sermon ends. Every moment then is of incalculable importance. O let us rise up to our business and work while the day lasts, for "the night cometh when no man can work."

6. I have a message from God to deliver to each one of you. "Thus saith the Lord, Set thy house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." This message I am commanded to deliver to you, one by one. I come to the fathers below. Thus saith the Lord, ye aged and ye middle-aged, set your house in order, for you shall die and not live. I go up to the youth. My dear young friends, you have been calculating on a long and happy life; but, flushed as your cheeks are with health and expectation, I have an errand from the Lord to do to each one of you. Thus saith the God that made you, Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live. It will be but a little while and not a soul in those seats shall be found this side of the eternal world. Others will come in to occupy your places, while you will be reviewing from eternity, with pains or pleasures indescribable, these sabbaths and these seasons in the house of God. Set your house in order. This is a mighty business, and the more difficult for having been so long neglected. All your business with God must be done; all your accounts with God must be

settled. All your debts to him must be paid or must be forgiven. All his gifts to you must be acknowledged. By humble repentance and application to the blood of atonement, obtain from him the pardon of your sins. Acknowledge before him his mercies and the talents which you have received from him. Arise and use those talents in his service. There is more still to be done. You must settle all your accounts with your neighbour. Whatever injuries you have done him you must repair; whatever neglects of his salvation are found upon you, must be deplored and renounced; whatever offences he may have given you must be forgiven; whatever differences exist between you must be adjusted and buried. Nor yet is your work finished. You must search into the state of your own soul. You are going to the bar of God to be tried for your life. The statute-book by which you are to be judged is in your house. The record of your actions is in your memory and conscience. The evidence which supports or destroys your title to mercy is in your hearts and lives. These statutes and documents must all be collected and arranged, that you may know beforehand what your sentence will be. If any part of all this work is left undone, it cannot be performed after your decease. It must remain eternally undone. Sinners, awake. The sentence of death has gone out against you,

and the executioner is on his way. Some disease commissioned to do this work, has already deposited its seeds in your veins, and is there maturing the aliment which is to nurture the deadly growth. You say you are well, but the poison is working within. Presently your faces will gather paleness. The efforts of your physicians are balked. You take to your bed. Anxiety begins to seize your friends. Your strength daily decays. At length it is pronounced that you must die. O the shock of that word. You dart a terrified eye forward, and cling to life. But every hold is broken, and now you know that go you must. Ten thousand worlds in that hour that you had not slighted the warnings of your minister. But it is too late. The Spirit which you have resisted refuses now his aid. You try to pray, but your words are cast back with this dreadful reproof; "Because I—called and" you "refused, I—stretched out my hand and" you would not regard it; "I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock" now "your fear cometh." Forsaken by God and man, you die. Shall I follow you further? Shall I mark the terrour when you first open your eyes in eternity? Shall I follow you through unmeasured ages? No, I will return, and cry to my living hearers, "Prepare to meet" your "God." By all the agonies of a ruined soul, "Prepare to meet" your "God."

SERMON XXXV.

THE TREASURE AND THE HEART IN HEAVEN.

MAT. vi. 19—21. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also.

If the world were to counsel us it would say, "Buy and sell and get gain:" lay no restraint on your desire of wealth, so long as you seek it by lawful means: the more you have the happier you will be. But the Gospel holds a different language. "Labour not to be rich." "Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have;

for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." It teaches us that great wealth, instead of being desirable, is rather to be dreaded, both on account of the cares and perplexities which it brings, and the dangerous influence which it exerts upon the soul. "The sleep of a labouring man is sweet whether he eat little or much, but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep." "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God. For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." So different is the counsel of God from the counsel of the world. No wonder then that God and the world are set in such strong opposition in the Bible. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." "The friendship of the world is enmity with God."

In the verses preceding the text our Saviour had been condemning the spirit of vain glory. In our text and through the rest of the chapter he condemns the other of the two strongest passions of the human heart, the inordinate love of wealth. He exhorts his disciples not to labour to be rich,—not to set their hearts on the world. He does not forbid the possession of property, nor the efforts of honest industry; but he commands us not to consider wealth as our treasure,—not to hoard it and withhold a due proportion from the poor, and from those public objects which stand connected with his kingdom. He exhorts us rather to lay up our treasures in heaven. What does he mean by this? A treasure signifies something that is laid up and preserved with care for a future day. In a larger sense it signifies any riches, temporal or spiritual, which men regard as their portion. The meaning of the injunction is, Neither seek overgrown estates, nor regard your worldly possessions as your chief good; but seek first and most earnestly the kingdom of God and the righteousness

thereof. Secure for yourselves the happiness of heaven, and consider God and the light of his countenance and the graces of his Spirit as your most valuable treasure. Make them the supreme object of your desire and pursuit. Value as your treasure those perfections and manifestations of God which are called "the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God," "the riches of his glory," "the riches of his goodness," "the exceeding riches of his grace," "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Esteem the service of God your wealth, and count the very "reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." Value as a treasure all the graces of the Spirit; not only the "riches of the full assurance of understanding," but "the full assurance of hope." Secure for yourselves that heavenly country which Abraham sought and found,—that "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,"—that "better and—enduring substance" which is "the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,"—"an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." This is the treasure in heaven.

The means by which this treasure is to be laid up, are those habits of piety and virtue and active usefulness which, though they do not purchase life, are the "things that accompany salvation." But what is more especially meant is beneficence, particularly towards the poor members of Christ. This clearly appears from the parallel passage in Luke: "Sell that ye have and give alms: provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also." That to devote our possessions to charity is laying up treasures in heaven, agrees with language very often used in the New Testament. "Go and sell that thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." "Charge them that are rich in this world,—that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come."

"Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations." "Ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.—And God is able to make all grace abound towards you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: as it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth for ever." "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was a hungered and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in; naked and ye clothed me.—Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." The wicked will then be sent to perdition because they withheld these charities from Christ's disciples. Men *must* devote a reasonable portion of their estate to charity: they cannot go to heaven on easier terms.

When the Scriptures are so explicit and positive on this point, it is truly surprising that those who shut their hearts against the calls of charity, should imagine themselves to be Christians. If you apply to them for their proportion to relieve the poor or to support any public measure, you must go hurt and mortified away. They are too poor, although their poorer neighbours can give liberally: they are in debt for new houses and lands, and consider not that they are positively commanded to sell those new houses and lands if the demands of charity cannot otherwise be satisfied. "Sell that ye have and give alms." This you may say is hard; and so thought the covetous young man who reckoned himself a friend of God while supremely attached to his wealth. When he was commanded, (that he might be undeceived,) to "sell" all

that he had "and give to the poor," with a promise that he should "have treasure in heaven," "he went away sorrowful," "for he was very rich." Our Saviour, seeing his reluctance, pronounced, "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle." It was a trust in riches which closed the hands of that young man and which closed the gates of heaven against him. No wonder then that we should be exhorted not to "trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." With such a trust in God the calls of charity would never be disregarded.

But some may say, I have never trusted in riches: I know that they cannot make me happy nor save me from death; and that the favour of God is far better: but charity begins at home: I must first provide for myself and my children.—But on what is your trust for these future provisions founded? Not on God, for you disobey his commands by turning the needy from your door. You evidently trust for these provisions solely to those riches which you hold with such an unyielding grasp. Could you be brought to trust "in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy," you would not have these misgivings about future poverty, but would cheerfully "cast" your "bread upon the waters," in confident hope of finding "it after many days." It is difficult to determine who *are* Christians; but I can easily tell you some that are *not*. They who, possessing as much property as their liberal neighbours, never hear a call upon their charity without pain,—never give but when it is wrung from them, and then with murmurs and sighs, and generally refuse to give at all. I know that some allowance is to be made for native littleness. Some were not formed by nature in the same mould with the liberal. But yet that faith which cannot produce fruits even in the most contracted, is not the faith of the Christian. I have wholly to learn my Bible anew if a man of this unexpansible contractedness can be a Christian.

Our text proceeds: "For where your treasure is there will your heart be

also." If you consider heavenly things your chief riches,—if you have, and know you have, stores of eternal happiness laid up for you above,—your heart will follow your treasure; your love, your desire, your care, your joy, trust, hope, and fear will centre in God. Your soul will tend heavenward, and will keep heaven in its eye, as men are wont to watch diligently their most valuable treasure. But, if your treasure is on earth,—if you consider worldly things your chief good,—then your thoughts, your desires, your cares, joys, hopes, and fears will be earthly. This verse is introduced as an argument to enforce the injunctions in the two preceding verses: "*For where your treasure is there will your heart be also:*" therefore your treasure should be laid up in heaven and not on earth. The argument stands thus: In proportion as you are devoted to the acquisition of one or the other of these treasures, your soul will be exalted to the highest objects or degraded to the lowest. You know that your heart ought to be in heaven: lay up then your treasures there; "*for where your treasure is there will your heart be also.*" You know that whatever has a tendency to detain your heart on earth, will prove your greatest curse: but overgrown wealth, regarded as your chief treasure, has an invariable tendency this way: "*for where your treasure is there will your heart be also.*" The inference is, that you ought to lay up treasures in heaven and not on earth. In this argument it is assumed as a self-evident truth, that it is the duty and interest of all men to keep their hearts in heaven. This truth is brought as an argument to persuade men to lay up their treasures in heaven. But alas, such is the human heart that a truth so self-evident needs often to be repeated, yea and enforced by every argument even on sanctified souls. All the remains of the old nature are "*of the earth earthy.*" Every object around us finds in us an appetite with which it can dally, and through which it can spread a charm to make us forget our God and our native heaven. O that we could break this enchantment and always keep our hearts on things above; that the invisible world could be opened upon us, as though our heads pierced through the

floor of heaven and saw all the glories of the upper spheres.

This subject shall be concluded with a presentation of sundry motives to persuade you, my brethren, to live daily with your hearts and eyes in heaven.

1. It is evident from the texts already quoted, that there is no other way to obtain evidence that you are Christians, because without this heavenly spirit you cannot be Christians. This simple position is indubitably proved by our text. That teaches you that if your heart is prevaillingly in heaven, it proves that your treasure is there; but if prevaillingly on earth, it proves that your treasure is on earth and not in heaven; "*for where your treasure is there will your heart be also.*" This is a solemn and decisive test. If your treasure is in heaven you may know it, by your high estimation of divine things, by the tendency of your hearts towards these objects, and by your diligent endeavours to obtain them. If a man will be candid he may know whether he is most earnest in seeking heavenly or earthly things,—whether his thoughts, desires, and cares centre prevaillingly in heaven or dwell mostly on earth.

2. It is the will of God, expressed in repeated and pressing commands; and therefore as respecters of divine authority, it is your incumbent duty to keep your hearts in heaven. "*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him.*" In your baptism you were by profession, by covenant, and by a sacramental sign, "*buried with*" Christ to the world and sin, and raised with him to newness of life and heavenly things. Hence is derived the apostolic exhortation: "*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*"

3. The things of the world are perishing. "*Your riches*" will be "*corrupted,—your garments—moth eaten; your gold and your silver*" will be "*cankered, and the rest of them*" will "*be a witness against*" those who hoard them and keep them from a charitable

use. Whatever precious things you lay up on earth, thieves will purloin. If you bar and bolt your treasuries, they will break through. Heaven is a safer store-house than your barns and your granaries; a better treasury than your vaults and your strong boxes. The goods which you deposite there are inviolable and incorruptible. Set not your hearts on this transitory earth, nor lay up your treasures in this crazy world which is tottering to fall. The fire of the last conflagration will presently come this way. The pillars of the earth shall tremble. The very fabric of the world shall be dissolved. Poor then will be that man who has not a treasure in heaven. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." "Look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." And then you may joyfully add, "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

4. Heaven is most worthy to engage your hearts. Here are wretches abandoned to crimes; there are "the spirits of just men made perfect:" here are beggars, there are angels: here are kings, there is God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: there is the glorified Jesus, who has exalted our nature to the throne of the universe: here are sighs and groans and tears; there is everlasting joy: here is a wilderness, there is a glorious city adorned with heavenly pearls. Why should the paltry trash of this poor world, smitten with the curse of God, enslave your hearts and keep them from such a heaven? Why should these worthless weeds keep you from the laurels which God is ready to intertwine about your heads? Why should they tie you to earth and loose you from Christ and God? Indignantly burst these insulting bands and rise to your native heaven. For,

5. Thence your birth is derived. The New Jerusalem is your mother, and God is your Father: and will you leave your Father and your mother to sort

with rogues and beggars? For shame tear yourselves from such company and employments. For one that is born from heaven and calls God his Father, to be lost among the rubbish of this world! O this is ignoble and disgraceful.

6. Consider that heaven is your home. You do not belong here; you are citizens of another country. You are abroad in a foreign land, and are only "strangers and pilgrims on the earth." As people when long absent from home and tired of intercourse with strangers, pant after the dear objects they have left behind, and often revisit in their thoughts the beloved spot; so will your thoughts and desires fly to heaven if you possess the spirit of the heavenly birth. These are strangers who are around you,—people to whom you have formed a temporary attachment; but you will soon leave them and see them no more. Your family friends, your permanent relations, around whom your heart-strings are intertwined, and who will be most dear to you for ever, are in heaven, or fast tending thither. How soon you will leave all things below and enter the heavenly country, and become familiar with those scenes, and feel that world to be your home, the centre of all your thoughts and affections, and find this earth with all its scenes strange, like the section of a half-forgotten road on a distant journey.

7. In heaven are deposited all your treasures: and to what spot is a man's heart so ready to return as to that where his richest treasures lie? You are the "heirs of God," "begotten—to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." What have you to do with dust who have such a "hope—laid up for you in heaven?" You are called upon to "rejoice and be exceeding glad," "and leap for joy," "for great is your reward in heaven." But how can you "leap for joy" in view of your inheritance, if you do not send your thoughts to survey it? With such a treasure in heaven will you brood over your poverty here,—over your lands and shops,—and lose the present enjoyment of your inheritance?

8. To live with your heart in heaven is to live a life of the greatest safety. It

is to keep your heart above the region of temptation. It is to lodge it in the fortified castle of Jehovah. Satan cannot enter heaven, nor prevail against a heart that lives above. It is when the heart roves into the territories of the god of this world, that it is found and seized by infernal tempters: and wandering thus alone, away from its heavenly Protector, it is easily overcome. O ye trembling lambs of Christ, who are daily hunted by the hounds of hell; if you would get out of the reach of their assaults, keep your hearts in heaven.

9. Such a state not only is the most free from temptation, but is the most favourable to sanctification. The most conspicuous object in heaven is the glory of God; and the heart which lives in heaven is chiefly occupied in contemplating this. But no view is so transforming as a view of God. "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." You may go to the grave-yard, you may go to your Bible, you may go to sacraments; but you will find no means of sanctification like the open vision of God. If then you wish to conquer your sins, to rise to "the full assurance of hope," and blaze in the glorious image of God, keep your hearts in heaven.

10. Such a life is sure to be the happiest life. The heart that dwells on earth is exposed to all the arrows which fly in this field of strife, and is daily tortured with cares, disappointments, and perplexities: but the heart that lives in heaven is out of the reach of them all. It abides "in perfect peace," and enjoys unclouded day above the storms which beat upon the world beneath. Faith, hope, and love are more highly excited by a nearer approach to their object. Faith feeds upon him, hope relies upon him, and love embraces him, while clearer light shed upon the divine character and government fills the soul

"with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Are those in heaven happier than those on earth? For the same reason the heart that lives in heaven is happier than the heart that dwells on earth. O how much do we lose by confining our affections to this world. How much of heaven might we enjoy if like Enoch we would walk with God. I would rather go forth with Isaac to meditate at the evening tide, and see the heavenly world opened to my view, than to be arrayed in imperial purple and make nations tremble at my name. If then you wish for the most exalted and soul-satisfying delight, you must keep your heart in heaven.

Finally, it is from that point that our dearest Friend is to make his final entry into our world. And how natural for strong desire to keep its eye on the way by which a beloved friend is expected.

"Our conversation," said the apostle, "is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." If we have a realizing sense that Christ will triumphantly come to destroy the world with all its idols, and to complete the salvation of his people; if we believe that all that men have to hope or fear will come from heaven; can we do otherwise than fix our eyes upon that glorious, awful place? Christians, will you not wait with an uplifted eye for your descending Lord? He *will* come, though he tarry long. Be not you like the virgins who "slumbered and slept" "while the bridegroom tarried." He *will* come. Yonder vault shall open and show him, with all his illustrious train, to the astonished nations. The last trump shall sound. Who then will be rich? For ten thousand worlds I would not be the wealthy worldling then: O thou hope of Israel and the Saviour thereof, when thou shalt make thy final entrance here, let our inheritance,—O let our inheritance—be found in thee. Amen.

SERMON XXXVI.

RETURN UNTO THY REST.

PSALM cxvi. 7.—Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.

DAVID experienced a great variety of changes and trials, which gave him an opportunity to learn much of the faithfulness of God, and much of the deceitfulness of his own heart. He was often in great perplexity, and was as often relieved by the interposition of his heavenly Father. Some recent deliverance called forth the tender and interesting Psalm from which our text is taken. "I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me. I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.—I was brought low and he helped me." His treacherous heart was often seduced from God by the allurements of the world. In this state of dejection he "found trouble and sorrow." From troubles of some sort he had been recently delivered. Melted by this experience of a Father's love, he broke forth into the grateful exclamation, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

Ah, could we learn the heavenly art of resting in God. Shall I attempt to describe a habit of soul in which lies the great secret of happiness?

To rest in God implies a cordial satisfaction with his character and government;—a delight in his benevolence, which cannot bear to see his creatures rise up in hatred and war against each other, and therefore hates sin and takes the form of holiness; which, because a moral government is necessary to bring God into connexion with his creatures and to secure the order and happiness of the universe, has established a law; and because a law must have sanctions

or be nothing but advice, has annexed a penalty to it; and because a penalty must be executed or lose its force, has built a hell. This is benevolence acting in the form of justice. In all this holiness and justice, in all this administration of a moral government, God is nothing but love. And then his mercy, his amazing mercy, in giving his Son to die for a world of enemies, and receiving them back from hell to heaven; and his truth, which remains inviolate from eternity to eternity; these are his glorious perfections. To rest in him implies a delight that such a God fills and enriches the universe, and that by being glorified, he will be seen and honoured and enjoyed by his creatures. Without such an approbation of his whole character and government, the soul cannot rest in him. ●

To rest in God implies submission and trust. Without submission to his will we can never trust him. We must consent that he should govern the world as he pleases, before we shall confide our interests to his care. If our own wills are supreme we can trust him for nothing. And we never can rest in him without such a confidence. We must trust him for different blessings; first, for a readiness to answer prayer, particularly for the Holy Spirit. Our Saviour, having displayed the effect of "importunity" in the man who would borrow "three loaves," took great pains to awaken this confidence in a prayer-hearing God. "And I say unto you, Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish,

will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." We must believe then that our heavenly Father is more ready to give the Holy Spirit to those who *importunately* ask him, than parents are to give bread to their hungry and imploring children. This faith is of the utmost importance to our success in prayer. Secondly, we must trust God for our daily support. Our Saviour is most explicit on this point. "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, neither for the body, what ye shall put on.—Consider the ravens; for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have store-house nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls.—Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass which is to-day in the field and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith." Thirdly, we must trust in him for a rightful ordering of his general providence towards us and the world. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." This prayer and thanksgiving are to be constant, when the mind is not otherwise necessarily occupied; and they unite in expressing a dependence on God and a trust in him for all things from moment to moment. And this is what the apostle meant when he exhorted, "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks." This is the most important of all habits, and will ensure that peace "which passeth all understanding." David had learnt to say, "O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man; thou shalt keep them secretly in

a pavilion from the strife of tongues." Every Christian who has been hid in the divine presence from pursuing troubles, knows the striking propriety of this figure. He can remember that he felt as safe as though there had been a literal tent pitched for him in the heavens, guarded on every side by the everlasting arms. O the blessedness of the man who is thus taken up and hid in God. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

To rest in God implies faith in Christ and an acceptance of him for our Saviour; a firm belief in him as the medium of approach to God, and in the sacred oneness between him and the Church. He is the Husband of the Church, and loves it as his own flesh. "No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." A firm belief in this relationship will bring rest indeed.

To rest in God implies a sweet reliance on the truth of his promises and on his covenant faithfulness. The soul in this act rests upon his unchanging truth, and sees this perfection as clear and as bright as the sun. It takes strong hold of such representations of covenant faithfulness as this: "God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." This faith will preserve the soul "in perfect peace." It will give assurance that God will keep his children "as the apple of his eye," and not suffer "any plague" to "come nigh" their "dwelling;" that he will withhold from them no real blessing, and make all things work together for their good. If cares or sorrows come, the believer flees into this hiding-place and is at rest. If spiritual enemies assault, he goes and complains of them to his Father and hears him promise that they shall not

prevail. If guilt rears its horrid form, he repairs to his Father and complains of himself, and hears him say, "Go in peace."

To rest in God is to be satisfied with him as our portion, to take him for our supreme good, and to feel that we have enough and abound while possessing him, though every thing else be taken away. Give me, says the believer, the enjoyment of my God and I desire no more. Give me to range the intellectual world and feast on heavenly truth, and I shall never complain that I am poor. Let worldlings divide the globe among themselves; let emmets contend for this little heap; I have a God and ask no more. Come wars and pestilence,—come poverty and death; ye cannot rob me of my portion.—Can this be otherwise than rest? Must it not be substantial rest to have the infinite God for a portion,—to have all the restless desires of the mind composed,—to feel no anxious apprehension for the future,—to know that if every thing which blast or mildew, time or death can destroy, were removed, the whole of one's portion would remain,—to feel that nothing can injure, nothing impoverish, nothing perplex or disturb. Ah, give me this instead of thrones and kingdoms.

It is the misery of man that he is so prone to wander from God in pursuit of idols. Some worldly good is set up which he thinks will make him happy. Until it is obtained he rests in the hope of obtaining it; and as soon as he gains it, he starts in pursuit of another object. If he does not obtain it, he will sooner settle down and rest in a wretched being than return to God. The ambitious man imagines that happiness lies on the summit of some preferment. The avaricious hopes that if he can accumulate so much property he shall be happy: in the mean time he dwells on the progress of his affairs towards that point. Every man at times is proposing some arrangement in the circumstances of his life which he secretly hopes will make him happy. In this pursuit after idols men wander from God and get into darkness and perplexity. None depart without an object. They are drawn away by idols.

As sure as the world is not our heaven,—as sure as heaven is made by the

presence of God,—so sure a departure from him will bring disappointment and sorrow. He who goes to worldly objects for enjoyment must be disappointed whether he obtains them or not. If he does not obtain them, or if he loses them after the acquisition, all is gone. If he acquires them and continues to possess them, they do not furnish the happiness expected. The soul, originally formed for the enjoyment of God, has desires which nothing but God can fill; and while scattering its affections on the world and indulging tastes opposed to God, it has desires which nothing in heaven or earth can satisfy,—(boundless desires after bounded objects,)—and is "like the troubled sea when it cannot rest." To these natural perplexities are added the pangs of guilt, and the superadded restlessness which is sent to punish idolatry. Were there no external affliction, he must be a wretch who departs from God. But these afflictions will come. They were appointed for discipline in this state of trial. These chilling damps of grief settle down upon this region of night. They are unknown above. The heart that lives above is out of their reach. But there are many daily incidents to vex the heart which has no wings to soar above them all. It may be admitted as an eternal maxim, that the man who is not above a dependence on the world for enjoyment, is not above disappointment and perplexity. To be a slave to the world is to be in league with pain. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Happiness has been hunted for in every corner of creation, in every scene of pleasure, in every grade of honour. But no where this side of God has it ever been found. The sea saith, It is not in me, and the land saith, It is not in me. And yet foolish man is as eager in searching for it on earth as though no disappointment had been. But still the voice of heavenly wisdom cries, "This is not your rest, because it is polluted." This is no place for the child of misfortune to find repose. When troubles arise, let the ambitious repair to his honours, the miser to his wealth, and the epicure to his pleasures: their gods will be as deaf as Baal. But let a Christian bear his aching heart to Jesus

of Nazareth, and all his anguish is quelled.

Who then are they that depart from God? It is difficult to convince careless sinners that this is the case with them. Having imbibed from education a general respect for religion, and exercising a selfish gratitude to the God of providence, they deem themselves his friends while they supremely love the things for which they seem to give thanks. Can they appeal to the Searcher of hearts that he engrosses more of their thoughts than the world? Do they delight more in him than in all creature comforts? However amiable their outward conduct,—however sweet their social affections,—if God is not supreme in their hearts,—if communion with him is not their chief delight,—they do not love him at all but are his enemies. As sure as the word of God is true, the affections of every unregenerate man, at all times, depart from him.

And it is a lamentable truth that even Christians sometimes wander for rest where rest is not to be found. From amidst the sweetest scenes of devotion, from the footstool of the mercy seat, from among the opening glories of heaven, they wander into the world and are found in scenes of rebellion. Yesterday rapt in divine communion, their faces beaming with heavenly light, and confident that they could never forget the scene; to-day searching for happiness among the lumber of earthly objects, anxious to acquire possessions, to make themselves a name, to prepare a paradise on earth, and almost saying, Here shall be my rest. And when they have thus wandered, there is no knowing into what follies they may fall. Ah the idolatry, the selfishness, the unbelief, the pride, the unsubmission, the ingratitude that follow. Ah, what is there not in man?

But in a happy hour, when they obtain a new view of the mercy that has followed them through all their perverseness, their hearts melt within them, their eyes are drowned in tears, and their trembling lips repeat, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

Let me seize the happy moment to strengthen this rising resolution and press upon the soul its obligations to re-

turn. Yes, "the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." In the face of all thy repinings "the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." He redeemed you from hell by the agonies of his beloved Son. He placed you in the midst of Sabbaths and sacraments, and put his word into your hands. By distinguishing grace he separated you from your former companions, and gave you a title to heaven while they were left to perish. He has blessed your eyes with the sight of his work revived. His tender care has preserved you every moment. Your food and raiment have daily come from his hand. Ah, how have you forgotten. Can you not remember the blessed hour when heavenly mercy first opened on your soul, and your glowing lips could say, "If I forget thee," O my Saviour, "let my right hand forget her cunning." And now all, all so soon forgotten! Ah, ungrateful and unkind! And rememberest thou not, in former days, when thou hadst wandered and lost thy way, and got entangled among the thorns, how thy heavenly Father came out to find thee and brought thee home and reinstated thee in comfort? And wilt thou now forsake that home where thou foundest comfort when not another spot in the wide world could afford thee rest for the sole of thy foot? When were you bereft of comfort and returned to seek it here and found it not? When your father and mother forsook you the Lord has taken you up. There is no friend so kind, no obligations so great, no rest so sweet. Ah, how much you lose by not dwelling always in God. "Return unto thy rest." The charming accent! It comes from lips which once trembled in death for thee. Let it enter thy wakeful ear and seize thy ravished heart, "Return unto thy rest." Return unto thy Saviour, thy love, thy life.

My dear brethren, who would have thought that you, so much beloved, so much obliged, could ever have forsaken your Father's house? Hereafter let duty and ingenuousness constrain you. Wander no more from God in pursuit of rest. Has he given you a cause? Has he "been a wilderness unto" you, "a land of darkness?" What need is there to wait and wait for rest till the comple-

tion of some worldly purpose? In God it is always to be found. You need not be comfortless and always waiting for comfort. The reason that you find it not, is that you seek it where it is not to be found. You go to one object and to another scene, when you ought to go to God. Do you hear a Christian complain of the want of rest? You may know he has been to seek it out of God. Had he fully renounced the world and determined to enjoy God or nothing, these complaints would not have been heard. Our heavenly Father is more ready to give the Holy Spirit, with all its consolations, to those who importunately ask him, than parents are to give bread to their children: and if any are straitened, they are not straitened in him but in themselves. My brethren, though sinners were able to find rest in the world, you are not. In that blessed hour when heavenly light first broke in upon your darkness, it ruined the world for you as a portion and place of rest. In that hour it was unchangeably settled that you should be happy in God or be miserable. You then received those insatiable longings which nothing but God can satisfy, and which can never endure a state of absence from him. You may wander, but your wanderings will be far more painful than those of other sinners. Though the raven could leave the ark and sweep blithely through the air, not so the meek-eyed dove. She could find no rest for the sole of her foot till she returned to the ark. Nor is this a misfortune. It is a mercy that every other way is hedged up. Could you find rest away from God, you might stray and never return. Could you find a paradise on earth, (an object for which so many pant,) it would prove the greatest curse. Would you not tremble to think of enjoying a paradise here that should deprive you of the paradise above? Be satisfied that your rest is not to be found on earth, and be content to wait for the "rest" that "remaineth—to the people of God." The promise is sure: "My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest." My dear brethren, I congratulate you on your superior happiness. In all your trials you have a resting-place at hand. You need not fear that any future afflictions will find you without a refuge.

When sinners are pressed with sorrow they must bear it as well as they can. They have no resting-place to which they can resort. But you have one that will never fail you. The voice is constantly in your ears: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

One word to poor sinners and I have done. Unhappy men, you have never known rest. You are orphans, with no Father to give you comfort. You are always restless, always hoping for better things to-morrow; but better things never come: "to-morrow" is "as this day." Still your hopes are stretching forward, and still disappointment returns. Then you say, I will arise and go to another place, into other company, into other business. I will explore other lands.—You go, but rest still retreats. Then you wonder, and half discouraged begin the round again. Ah, have you not learnt the cause? You are not in the way to rest. You are seeking it where it is not to be found. "The way of peace" you have "not known." You must return to God or you will never find what you seek. Let not that word again escape you, "What a weariness is it" to serve the Lord. This you say because you never tried. It is not weariness but rest; rest from the pangs of guilt, rest from agitating fears, rest from turbulent passions, rest from unsatisfied desires, rest from the sorrows of life, rest from conflicts with men, rest and eternal peace with God. There is a voice which invites you to return. Do you know what voice it is? Conceive of the integrity, the wisdom, the dignity of the most venerable bench of judges. Enlarge that idea to infinity, and that is God. Conceive of the tenderness of a mother's heart. Enlarge that idea to infinity, and that is God. And shall the voice of such a God invite you in vain? Another voice I hear. It is the voice which once cried in death, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Draw near and behold him on the cross. It is for you he suffers. Mark how the agonies distort his visage,—how the blood smears his beautiful temples. See his dying eye fixed on thee, with compassions which an angel never felt. For thee he prays: Father, forgive him, for

he knows not what he does. And this is the voice which now invites you to his arms? And will you refuse to go? *Can you, dare you refuse? It is the one* who will judge you at the last day. *Dare you refuse? I leave you with this voice of Jesus ringing in your ears, "Come unto me—and I will give you rest."*

S E R M O N XXXVII.

CHARITY SEEKETH NOT HER OWN.

1 Cor. xiii. 5.—*Seeketh not her own.*

THIS is one of the attributes of charity,—of that love which "is the fulfilling of the law,"—that love to God and man on which "hang all the law and the prophets,"—that love which is the soul of all religion. Love "seeketh not her own." Love seeks the happiness of its object, and not mere self-interest. I do not say that *all* religion is employed about the interest of others. Love for *character* is a love for that which regards our own interest as well as that of others. Some of the exercises of religion transact with God directly about our own interest, and contemplate God as standing related to our own interest, and consist in those feelings of gratitude, trust, hope, and dependence which have immediate reference to our own interest. There is certainly more in these exercises than mere love to others which has no respect to ourselves. But if love constitutes the soul of religion, there is in religion a principle of disinterested regard to the happiness of others.

There are many religions in the world; and among them all there is but one that came from heaven. That religion consists in loving God above every other object, in regarding his law and Gospel with supreme delight and gratitude, and in loving our neighbour in some measure as ourselves. Exposed as we are to fatal mistakes in this infinitely important concern, it is of immense importance to us to form right ideas on the subject. One may have a great deal of religion and yet possess nothing but conscience and selfishness and other natural affec-

tions. Thousands and millions, we must believe, have no other religion than this, while they cherish a confident hope of salvation. Dreadful must be their disappointment when they awake in the eternal world. Lend me then your whole attention while I endeavour to set before you some of the leading attributes of true religion.

Its vital principle consists in that love which "seeketh not her own." Although it has more to do with personal concerns than with the concerns of any other individual, yet so far as the interest of others comes into view, it does, when perfect, love a neighbour as one's self. It respects all beings that are clearly seen, according to their moral excellence. Of course it delights in the character of God more than in that of all created beings, and it regards his happiness more than theirs.

Here then you have the picture of a real Christian. His care is more for the honour of God and the interest of his kingdom, than for his own happiness. He really loves God better than himself. What a noble and lovely temper is this. How vast the difference between such a man and the sordid wretch who cares not what becomes of God or his kingdom provided he is safe. By the side of this heavenly charity how base does such selfishness appear. If you gather up all the filth of the moral world, you will see nothing in it worse than selfishness,—nothing but a temper to sacrifice the glory of God and his kingdom to gratify and aggrandize self. But hea-

venly charity regards the glory of God and the happiness of his kingdom more than self-interest. How lovely is this temper: how generous and exalted is the man who possesses it.

This will let you into a view of the character of God. Such love fills his heart. Look again at that interesting man who says, I desire the happiness of God and of his kingdom more than my own. You feel that you could press him to your heart. Enlarge this temper to infinity, and that is God. His whole heart is fixed on the public good. His own happiness consists in promoting that and in enjoying that. He has no malice towards his enemies, and would make devils happy if righteousness and the public good allowed it. Because he is benevolent, he cannot bear to see his creatures rise up against each other in rage and war, to destroy each other's peace. His benevolence therefore hates sin and takes the form of *holiness*. It was benevolence which founded a moral government, to secure the holy order and happiness of the creation. Had he left creatures to their own spontaneous course without law and without a King, he would have stood aloof from them and had no more sensible connexion with them than the supreme god of the Brahmins is supposed to have. And then all exhibitions of his glory and all intercourse with him, which together constitute the happiness of the universe, would have been lost. And what then would have prevented creatures from rising up against each other in everlasting war and confusion and wretchedness? Do you say, his sanctifying power could have prevented? And would not that have converted the whole creation into mere machines? No obligation imposed or felt,—no call for the exertion of their rational faculties in a way of duty,—only they are propelled to certain feelings and actions by a secret influence. Where is the operation of their reason or conscience? Where is their sense of right and wrong? Where is their holiness? Nothing rising above mere instinct. You say, he might have *told* them what was right, without command or penalty. But that would have left them without obligation,—certainly without the infinite obligations resulting from his authority. It would have left them alto-

gether loose from him, without any chance for the exhibitions of his glory or for intercourse and communion with him. And if there must be a law, there must be a penalty; otherwise it is no law, but mere advice. And if there must be a penalty, that penalty must be executed, or it is nothing. Let it be given out that the penalty is never to be executed, and the penalty is dead, and the law is turned into mere advice. There must be a hell or there is no moral government. Of course sin must be permitted. Without a moral government and sin and a liability to punishment, there would have been no chance for all that wonderful manifestation of God, and that unspeakable happiness to creatures, which result from the work of redemption. The benevolence of God was therefore engaged to execute the penalty of the law by an *eternal* hell. I say eternal, for if at any future time punishment should terminate, and it should be given out that the penalty of the law would no more be executed, that moment the moral government of God would cease. Now the execution of the penalty of the law is the exercise of God's *justice*. If then the support of government by the punishment of sin is benevolent, his justice is only another exercise of benevolence. Thus his holiness and justice are both comprehended in this glorious truth, "God is love." Because he loves the welfare of his kingdom, he delights in that holiness in creatures which tends to promote it, and abhors that selfishness which would sacrifice the universe to serve a private end. He hates it because it is the enemy of public happiness; and he will punish it for the same reason that a father would slay an assassin who was breaking in to murder his family. He has no partial fondness that will screen any when the public good demands their punishment. How glorious does the King of Israel appear in this light. And this is the God whom a wicked world oppose, and then ask, How *can* I love him? They hate him because he is so lovely, and then ask, How *can* I repent? Is it any wonder that a hell is provided for such creatures? Was it not necessary that a Saviour should die to redeem from guilt like this?

From this view of the character of

God we may discover the different motives which excite the Christian and the hypocrite to love him. The Christian loves him because he sees him to possess just such a character as has been described; because he is love, and has set his heart on the happiness of the universe. He delights in God's wisdom and power because it is their nature to contrive and execute glorious purposes for the general happiness. He delights in God's holiness, justice, faithfulness, and truth, because they have the same tendency. He is affected with God's mercies to our race, and particularly to himself, because mercies thus applied he can more sensibly apprehend. And so he verifies the words of the apostle: "We love him because he first loved us."

But the selfish man loves God *only* as a personal friend,—because he has done him good, and as he hopes, intends to save him. He loves to meditate on God's milder attributes, because he regards them as pledges and agents of his salvation. And now he is full of joy and praise and love, and is melted into tears by a sense of God's mercies to him, and is willing to do many things for his heavenly Friend. But his love is worthless because it is selfish. "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?" When such a man enters eternity and finds God his eternal enemy, he will, without any change of nature for the worse, rise up against him with the fury of a devil.

We may also see from what different motives the Christian and the hypocrite rejoice that God reigns. The Christian rejoices that all things are under the divine direction, because in this he sees a security that all things will be conducted for the glory of God and the good of his kingdom. The hypocrite rejoices that God reigns, because if his friend has the management of affairs, he trusts it will fare well with him. And a dozen more heirs differ about the division of an estate. It is proposed to leave the decision to a certain man. I consent with joy,—not because I think him wise or just, but because he is my particular friend, and I expect he will decide in my favour. There is no reason to doubt that a selfish man may rejoice in the

doctrine of election, from a confidence that he is one of the elect. Only take away his hope, and he will hate this doctrine as much as ever. Thus in the political world, men out of office are wont to complain that rulers have too much power. But put them into office, or into any condition in which they will be gainers by the strength of government, and they are well satisfied without a change.

The view we have taken of the nature of charity, will help us to discover the excellent nature of the divine law. Look again at that amiable man who loves the interest of God's kingdom better than his own; who would cheerfully sacrifice all that he has in the world to save his greatest enemy from perdition; who is ready to throw himself between a poor orphan and its merciless oppressor; who pities and relieves the hungry and the naked; whose heart is under the dominion of justice and universal benevolence. You fall in love with the very image as I draw it. Well this is the model which the law of God has formed. Were the law universally obeyed, it would fill the world with just such characters. It enjoins nothing but love and its fruits. And what does it forbid? Here is a selfish wretch who would burn a house and send a whole family to perdition for the sake of robbing it of a few shillings. Here is another who would demolish the throne of God and bury the universe under its ruins, for the sake of being independent. What a satanical temper is this. Well this, and nothing but such as this, the divine law forbids: and it is so earnest in the prohibition, that it forbids it upon penalty of eternal death. How clear it is that this law is the friend of the universe. Weigh, if you can, the eternal death of a sinner; and you have ascertained the zeal with which the law protects the rights of God and the creation. On the basis of this law rests the happiness of God, angels, and men; for if the temper of the law were banished from the universe, the bond of union would be dissolved, the whole system would be disjointed, and one infinite hell would swallow up all. And this is the law which an ungodly world abhor. I ask again, Is it any wonder that a hell is provided for such creatures? And yet

they ask, How *can* I repent? Let me rather ask, How can they *help* dying with shame and self-loathing?

Here again the true character of God comes out to view. This law, as lovely as it is, is nothing but the effusion of his heart. I seem to see him, like an infinite fountain on the top of the universe, pouring out this law from his very soul. This spirit must be in him or it could not flow forth in his law. It must be his own temper or he would not take such infinite pains to promote it in creatures. And yet this is the God whom a wicked world hate and blaspheme.

We now see how certain it is that a good man will love the divine law. He has the very temper of the law in his heart, and he sees that the happiness of the universe rests on the principles which the law contains. He therefore heartily thanks God for publishing a law so holy, just, and good. A thousand worlds would not tempt him, as he generally feels, to rise up in disobedience to this law. But the selfish man renders nothing but outward obedience, and that only from fear of punishment and hope of reward.

We may now see from what different motives the Christian and the hypocrite oppose sin. The good man abhors sin as being what it is, a transgression of the divine law, an enemy of God and his kingdom; but the selfish man, having connected together the ideas of sin and misery, resists sin merely as an enemy to himself. I cannot help exclaiming, What a glorious temper is that of the Christian, and what a sordid temper is that of the sinner. That men, at the same time that they strive by a thousand polite attentions to appear interested in the happiness of others, and not altogether selfish, should be ashamed to be really religious, is among those strange inconsistencies which sin and folly have introduced. It can arise from nothing else than hostility within, and known hostility in others, against that God whose service religion is.

We are now prepared to discover how charity will regard the atonement and mediation of Christ. It is necessary here to premise, that the atonement was intended to answer the purpose of our punishment, by showing, for the support of the law, that the penalty of that law

would be executed on future offenders. Had sin been pardoned without an atonement, it would have declared that the penalty of the law was set aside; which would have annihilated the law. A king makes a law against murder. Ten, twenty, a hundred, a thousand subjects transgress, and no punishment is inflicted. Who will believe after this that the law is any thing more than simple advice, which every one is at liberty to regard or reject as he pleases? Who will believe that the king is in earnest to protect his subjects against murder? Who will believe that he holds murder in any great abhorrence, or that he cares much for his law? If then the sinner is to be delivered from the stripes which the divine law would inflict, another must cover his body with his own and take the punishment in his stead. That substitute must be one infinitely dear to God. If a hundred subjects commit murder, and a worthless slave offers to die in their stead, and the king accepts the offer, who will see in that sacrifice any strong determination of the king to support the law by executing its penalty on future offenders? But if a number of subjects have committed murder, and the king's only son offers to die for them; if the king will not let sin escape to save his son from death, all must see that he is determined, notwithstanding the pardon of the present culprits, to execute the penalty of the law on future transgressors. When they see these penitent murderers escape, none will infer that they may now transgress the law with impunity. Thus by the atonement every lovely principle in the universe,—from this, Thou shalt not oppress that poor orphan,—up to this, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart,"—was sanctified and for ever established.

I cannot help adding here, that the death of Christ lays no foundation for the hope of the universalist, but utters directly the contrary doctrine. Had it proclaimed that the penalty should never be executed, it would have ruined the law, and the Sufferer might better have remained in heaven. But it pronounced exactly the opposite truth. The whole efficacy of the atonement consisted in declaring the doctrine of universalists to be false, and assuring the universe, just

as the punishment of the damned will do, that God will continue to execute the penalty of the law on future offenders.

The *obedience* of Christ likewise honoured the law. It was a principle on which God set out among the angels and in Eden, never to bestow a positive blessing, (except at the very commencement of one's existence,) but as the reward of a perfect obedience; for the moment obedience ceased or became imperfect, all blessings were forfeited. This principle, so honourable to the law, he has never relinquished. Christ's obedience gave God an opportunity to bestow all positive blessings intended for a fallen race, and particularly for believers, in this very way. And every positive blessing, from the gift of the Holy Spirit to the least crumb of bread, is in fact bestowed as the reward of Christ's obedience to the law, and comes to us as a part of the mediatorial estate, earned and obtained in this way.

When Christ had finished his obedience and atonement, he entered into heaven, there "to appear in the presence of God for us;" that all blessings being bestowed in answer to his public intercession, the full influence of his propitiation and righteousness might appear. And now when pardon comes to sinners in consequence of that intercession, it is publicly known that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." And when all positive blessings are bestowed upon the Church in answer to that intercession, none can fail to see the fulfilment of such texts as these. "By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." "By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows;"—hath made thee "heir of all things," that

believers might be "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."

Let us now examine the general grounds on which a benevolent man will approve of this way of salvation. He wishes well to the universe, and is prepared to approve of any measure which is conducive to the public happiness. He loves God and longs to enjoy his friendship for ever. He loves the holy law which he has broken, and bitterly laments his transgressions, and feels that he deserves eternal death. But how can he be pardoned without impairing the authority of the law? *There is the doubt.* He could not bear to have that law set aside for him. In this state the Gospel finds him. He hears that God has designs of mercy. Well, this is joyful news, for he longs to live with God. But how can he be saved without destroying the law? At last he hears the glorious news, that Christ has borne the curse for him, and that he can be saved in a way even to glorify the law. Now his heart is filled with joy. I cannot consent, says he, that my sins should be winked at. I wish to have it declared before the universe that I am a vile monster for transgressing such a law. I would willingly make the declaration myself in the hearing of three worlds. I wish to have it publicly understood that my sins did not escape the frown of God, but were condemned on the cross. I rejoice in receiving every blessing through the obedience and intercession of my Saviour, *that* being the only ground honourable to the law, and being highly honourable to Christ. And I rejoice the more in this way of salvation because it glorifies God. How did his love for his law shine forth on Calvary: how did his unequalled love for a rebellious world. How do all his perfections blaze forth in the Gospel. Therefore it is that I rejoice in this way of salvation and choose it above all others.

Now the happy man admires his Saviour's character, and thanks him that he would die to honour his Father's law and to save a world of enemies. He has firm confidence in the truth of God, and is assured that he will accept the mediation of his Son in behalf of sinners. He sees Christ to be just such a Saviour as he needs, all-glorious and all-sufficient. He casts his soul upon him and

trusts in him for every part of his salvation. He depends on his intercession to introduce him and all his offerings to God, and dares not approach immaculate purity in any other way. The more he examines this plan, the more he admires it as a grand measure for supporting the empire of Jehovah,—for promoting his glory and the eternal interests of the universe.

These are some of the ways in which that charity which “seeketh not her own” will act towards God, his government, his law, and towards sin and the Gospel. I pray you, my brethren, to bring your religion to this test. If it does not agree with this, cast it from you as a viper that will sting you to death. Without this charity the most distinguished gifts and splendid works are nothing. “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not

charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”

Let me exhort you all, my dear hearers, to exercise this charity. Become the friends of God and cast yourselves on the Gospel of Christ. Come and embrace this glorious way of salvation, so honourable to God and so happy for the universe. Could any other way so glorious have been devised? Were you the friends of God and man, could you wish for any other? And yet this is the Gospel which a selfish world reject; while they grope in the dark to find another way to heaven. How just that they should sink to a deeper damnation than the devils. Once more the voice of mercy invites you. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Amen.

S E R M O N X X X V I I I .

HOW TO DETERMINE WHETHER OUR LOVE IS SELFISH.

PSALM xcix. 9.—The Lord our God is holy.

WHEN it is considered that the natural man loves himself supremely, and has of course supreme enmity against God, and that the spiritual man loves God better than any other object, it would seem that Christians could never doubt to which class they belong. Yet in fact it is often difficult for them to determine whether they love God or not. This doubt seems chiefly to respect three points; whether it is the true God which they contemplate; and if so, whether they do not mistake the approbation of the understanding for the affec-

tions of the heart; or, if their hearts are sensibly delighted with his love and mercy, whether the delight is not selfish, or at best the effect of natural humanity. These doubts are increased by their coldness and sins.

With others the reason of their doubt is, that they do not love God, and are unwilling to believe it. They find no evidence of love, and therefore they cannot decide in their own favour; they are loth to give up their hope, and therefore they do not decide against themselves. The only way to solve this

doubt, is to admit, what but for their selfishness would be as clear as light, that they are still "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity."

To love God is not a light thing, "for the Lord our God is holy." "Joshua said to the people, Ye *cannot* serve the Lord, for he is a holy God." They who love God as *holy*, have genuine love to the true God; all others come essentially short. This is the grand criterion.

Many are confident that they love God, who yet possess "the carnal mind" which "is enmity against" him. Nothing is more necessary than to guard men against this soul-destroying error, by exposing the false notions of God which are common, and by developing those principles of selfishness and humanity which are mistaken for holy love. In the few remarks which I shall make on this subject, I will,

I. Explain certain principles in natural men which prepare them to relish a false or defective image of God under the name of the true God.

II. Show that there is a false or defective image of God which men do form and love without any higher principles than those of nature.

III. Point out some of the ways to try the genuineness of our love.

I. I will explain certain principles in natural men which prepare them to relish a false or defective image of God under the name of the true God. The greater part of these principles may be arranged under two heads, selfishness and the social affections. In the exercise of selfishness men delight in receiving benefits, are pleased with their benefactor, and are capable of strong gratitude and love to him. The veriest wretch on earth is not below something of this sort. In the exercise of selfishness men also feel a complacency in those who love them. An increase of selfishness and pride will only increase this effect. "If ye love them which love you,—do not even the publicans the same?" Now let the benefactor and the friend be united in the same person, and how will selfishness love him, irrespectively of his moral character.

By this principle of selfishness natural men are chiefly governed. The promo-

tion of their own happiness,—the gratification of their personal tastes and feelings,—occupies a great proportion of their time and thoughts; and whenever selfishness, (including a regard to their honour and the gratification of their private feelings generally,) imperiously requires it, they will sacrifice every thing to their own interest.

But this is not the only principle by which natural men are influenced. The *social affections* were implanted in their nature to check the operations of selfishness. Without these they could not exist in society: this world would be a hell. Now every affection values the happiness of its object, and is ready to make *some* sacrifices to promote it. Hence the kindness, and the self-denials for others, which true politeness exhibits, and which are daily found in natural men. The most extensive of these affections, and that which now falls under our immediate consideration, is *humanity*. This affection wishes well to all men where self-interest does not oppose. It is pleased with accounts of the prosperity of distant nations, and regrets their misfortunes. For instance, there is not a speculative believer in England who is not glad to hear that the Scriptures are spreading among the nations of the east, except those who apprehend an injury to their own interests by this means. In innumerable cases humanity will raise men above the dictates of selfishness in *small* matters. But here it differs from holy love: the latter alone can raise men above self in the great and essential respects which form the character. There are other points of difference. Humanity cannot reconcile the heart to the moral character and government of the true God, nor, without other aids, to the doctrines of the Gospel. It has no tendency to reduce pride, nor to weaken the love of the creature and bring the parts of the finite universe to one centre. But while it proves itself different from holy love, in several respects it resembles holy love to *man*. It is also capable of being affected with accounts of kindness from one person to another. The youth that is bending over his novel, can weep at exhibitions of generosity and compassion. He loves the generous hero who ventured his life to

rescue the oppressed, and the benevolent man whose charity relieved starving innocence. Yet that youth is an infidel.

From humanity, united with *conscience* and the *love of natural fitness* and a regard to personal security, most moral and enlightened men are pleased with a good civil government, and with order and decency in society, when these do not too strongly oppose their apparent interests. Without these instincts society could not exist.

There is also a principle of *sympathy*, by which the affections and the passions are communicated from one to another. When we see a person strongly affected with any emotion, or hear a lively description of one who is thus affected, we instantly catch the emotion. Is it pity? we pity the suffering object: is it grief? we weep at the distress: is it tender love? we are melted into tenderness, not only towards the object, but towards the subject of the emotion.

Here then are five principles, among others, which natural men possess: selfishness, which delights in a benefactor and a friend; humanity, which, when self-interest does not too strongly oppose, is affected with kindness to men in general; conscience and the love of natural fitness, which, with the aid of self-love and humanity, are pleased with a good government and social order, when personal interest does not stand in the way; and sympathy, by which the soul, in view of moving grief or the tenderness of love, is melted into compassion or tenderness. All these are found to a high degree in many infidels. I am now to show,

II. That there is a false or defective image of God which natural men often form, and which they love from no higher principles than those which have been stated. Among the great variety of natural men I will select two classes. The first think superficially, the other, more deeply and systematically. Those who think superficially, have little to do with the moral character of God as exhibited in a moral government. They contemplate him only as a benefactor to the world and a friend to themselves. The order of their thoughts is somewhat as follows. First they contemplate him

as a benefactor to themselves; as the one who preserves their lives, who sends them rain and fruitful seasons, who sent his Son to save them, and has filled their lives with mercies. This is pleasing to their selfishness. Fixing this image of God in their minds, with his moral character out of view, they love him, just as infidels love a human benefactor. They next consider his kindness to the world, and contemplate the generous being who pours his bounty upon all nations. This gratifies their humanity; and it does not disturb their selfishness, pride, or love of the creature. They therefore admire such a God, just as the youth admires the hero of a novel or a play. But his moral character, as manifested in a moral government, is still out of view. Now they conclude that they love God for his goodness as well to others as to themselves. They of course infer that they are Christians and shall be saved. From that moment they regard God as their friend and father, and love him as such. The selfishness that can delight in a benefactor and take complacency in a friend, fills their hearts with love to him. But it is not the God of Israel. It is as unlike him as a beneficent infidel is unlike him. It is a god without holiness or justice, and without a moral government. It is a god who, with no great aversion to sin, rather winks at it as an infirmity, than punishes it as an infinite crime. Such people are very apt to become universalists. They never had any deep sense of the evil of sin. They never realized that they deserve eternal punishment. Of course they hate that preaching which dwells much on the sin and punishment of men. There are multitudes who exactly answer to this description. And though their religion does not weaken their selfishness, pride, or love of the world, it is difficult to persuade them that they are not Christians. These may all be put down among the men of the world.

But there is another class of natural men who think more deeply and systematically. They of course cannot overlook the moral character of God as exhibited in a moral government. But even these may form a false image of God, and may love that image with a heart in no degree raised above natural

principles. Not discerning the spirituality and extent of the divine law,—not having any conception of the feelings which it requires,—they entertain a false idea of the law, and so of the moral character of God as expressed therein; and delusively suppose that they love that law and character.

Of those who make this mistake, I will select two classes; the one, more, the other, less ignorant. The more ignorant suppose that the divine law relates only to outward actions, (like human laws,) and requires nothing but that integrity, decency, and kindness in the different relations of life which all admit to be necessary to the order and happiness of society. Such a law every decent natural man approves, for the same reason that he approves of the government of his country and the manners of polished society. Such a law requires nothing which he is not willing to perform. The *precept* therefore raises no opposition in his heart more than the laws of the land: it presents the divine Lawgiver in no light which excites disgust. It is as easy for him to love this Lawgiver as to esteem the wise legislators of his country. Nor does the *penalty* rouse his opposition. Why should it, any more than the penalty of human laws against murder? He has no fear that he shall feel the weight of either. He sees nothing therefore in the divine law,—nothing in the moral character of God as there expressed,—which interferes with his selfishness, pride, or love of the world. Of course he loves the law thus understood, and the character there exhibited.

The less ignorant class are aware that the divine law extends to the heart, and requires them to love both God and man. Well, they *do*. Their natural humanity wishes well to their fellow men. They love God as a benefactor and a friend, and admire his generous munificence to the world. They are willing to exercise the temper which they think the law requires. The *precept* therefore is no burden. Nor do they dread the penalty, because they obey the precept. Such a law is just what they wish. They love it, and love the moral character of the Lawgiver as there expressed. Now put these things together and see what their

god is. They look abroad and see the munificent parent filling the world with his mercies. He has bestowed unnumbered favours on *them*. He has made them to differ from others by putting his love into their hearts. They love his goodness; they love his law, and of course his moral character. Thus they dream. But let the Holy Spirit suddenly open their eyes, and they will see that the feelings required by the divine law, and the temper of the Lawgiver, are altogether different from any thing they ever conceived. They have been contemplating a law and character which called forth only the selfish and humane affections, and the love of which, (self-righteous as that love was,) only inflamed instead of weakening pride, and had no tendency to wean them from the idolatrous love of the creature.

While men do not discern the spirituality of God's law, or know by experience the feelings which it requires, they can easily suppose that they love and obey it when they do not. And when they dream that they have the temper which the law requires, and of course that it requires nothing but what they are willing to render, and that therefore they are safe from its penalty, it is easy for them to love the law and the moral character which it appears to exhibit. And they will die under this delusion unless their eyes are opened to see what the law really requires. It is the easiest thing in the world to be deceived.

Further, conceiving that God is their friend, and that if he has the disposal of all things it will fare well with them, they can easily acquiesce in his *sovereignty*, in his discriminating decree of *election*, and in many of the dispensations of his providence. In some cases the power of conscience, added to a placid natural temper, has appeared to produce a sort of submission under very trying dispensations, without any pretensions to religion.

These mistakes are promoted in contemplative men by the approbation which an enlightened *understanding* and *conscience* yield to the character and government of God and to the Gospel of Christ; an approbation easily mistaken for the affections of the heart. This mistake is the more easy when, in ad-

dition to this approbation, the passions are awakened, by the power of *sympathy*, under strong representations of the love of God; especially when that divine attribute is painted in all the fondness of a creature love. The same power that carries us along with the hero of a story, that makes us weep when he weeps, and transfuses all his passions into our hearts, will melt us into tenderness when the compassion of God is described in the most striking forms of creature love. If this affection can be communicated from *man to man* by the power of sympathy, without the aid of religion, why not from God to man? I do not condemn all such representations: they are found in the Scriptures. I only say that while listening to them, we ought to be aware of our liability to mistake the commotions of animal nature for heavenly charity.

III. I am to point out some ways by which we may test the genuineness of our love.

But here a wide field opens before us which I have not time to traverse. I will only mention five tests.

1. Is the divine love in view of which we are affected, the mere fondness of creature love, fitted only to melt the animal affections? Is it mere kindness without a moral character, calculated only to please a selfish taste and to gratify humanity? Or is it that holy love which, under the guidance of infinite wisdom, hates and punishes sin? which maintains a vigorous moral government, requiring all to be holy under penalty of eternal death? Is it mere goodness: or is it goodness which is both holy and just? And is it *on account* of its holiness and justice that we love it? or merely on account of its kindness? Mere love, aside from its moral character, can affect the bad as well as the good: love, viewed as holy and just, can affect only the sanctified.

The love of God is not the partial weakness of an earthly parent, unwilling to cross his children by commands, and still more irresolute to punish. It is the well regulated love of a wise king, who, taking a large view of the interests of his subjects, does, from the best regard to their happiness, adopt energetic measures to maintain the or-

der of his kingdom; and to this end requires the exercise of every righteous principle in all relations, and strictly punishes the disobedient. It forbids all selfishness, pride, and idolatrous attachment to the creature; and requires his subjects to love him with all the heart, and their neighbour as themselves. It holds them deserving of eternal death for a single transgression of the law, and inflicts the whole penalty on the finally impenitent. This is the love of God. This is the moral glory of the true God. If the love by which you are affected is different from this, it is not the true God you contemplate. If you love the true God you heartily approve of all these principles of his government, and sensibly feel that you yourselves deserve eternal punishment.

2. If it is the true God you love, you will love all the essential truths which relate to him, as comprehended in the doctrines of the Gospel. As you cannot see God, all that you can know of him is from that description of his character and government which is contained in the truths of his word. If you do not love these doctrines, you do not love the true God. As far as you love and maintain false doctrines, you love a false god. Essential errors of faith afford as real evidence of enmity to God as immoralities in practice. See then whether you heartily love those doctrines which are most offensive to the carnal heart.

3. Does your love, as far as it goes, subdue your selfishness, pride, and love of the world? This is an infallible test. No love to a false god, in the least disturbs that supreme selfishness which is the grand treason of the world, nor in the least weakens pride or an idolatrous attachment to the creature, though it may give these principles a new shape and direction. The social affections, though they may *suspend* the operations of selfishness, do not weaken its power; and they have no tendency to weaken or suspend either pride or the love of the creature. But the love of God, as far as it prevails, is death to all these principles. It is itself directly the opposite of selfishness, the root of the other two. Pride is that regard for our own honour which selfishness engenders; and the love of the creature, or

of the world, is only the love of objects calculated to gratify our personal tastes and passions; and the undue love of these gratifications is selfishness. In proportion then as holy love prevails, it destroys, not only selfishness which is the root, but pride and idolatrous love of the world which are the branches.

Nothing is true love to God which can consist with supreme love to self,—nothing therefore which leaves pride and the love of the world unweakened. One form of selfishness, by no means the hardest to be detected, is supreme love of the world: and where this exists, there is no love to the true God. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” “The friendship of the world is enmity with God.” “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” By this criterion all that *humanity* which people, who deny the office work of the Holy Spirit, have foisted into the place of religion,—all that love of false gods which is cherished by the supporters of error,—is marked with reprobation. For after all their boasting, these principles leave selfishness, pride, and the love of the world, (the three grand passions of a depraved soul,) in their full strength.

4. Have you genuine love to man? “He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” If you have no genuine love to man, you have no sincere love to God. But all love to man is not genuine. To say nothing of the domestic affections, humanity wishes well to mankind where no self-interest is in the way, and therefore almost always is gratified with the prosperity of distant nations. But try your love to man by something nearer home,—something that comes most in competition with selfishness. Select your rival in business or honour; select your greatest enemy. Do you, in any sense or degree, love him as yourself? He is your *neighbour*, according to the explanation made by Christ in the parable of the good Samaritan. What are your habitual feelings towards that man? He has nothing but the relation of neighbour to recommend him. He is not your father nor your brother. It is a fair trial. If there is that man,—only

one—for whom you have not a cordial good will, you are not a Christian. What say you now? Have you genuine love to man? If not you have no true love to God.

5. Do you conscientiously and habitually obey God? I do not ask whether you are what the world calls moral. This you may be from the mere influence of natural principles. I ask whether you habitually act, from hour to hour, with a sensible reference to God's authority,—often asking yourselves, How would God have me do in this thing? Do you cheerfully perform the most self-denying duties from a sacred regard to his authority? Do you affectionately submit under the most trying dispensations?

In the light of our subject let us now see for a moment how far a man may go and not be a Christian. His understanding and conscience approve of the character and government of God and of the Gospel of Christ. His heart is affected with the mercies of God to him, and he loves and thanks his *benefactor*. Possessed of strong social affections, he regards the happiness of his friends, and will make considerable sacrifices to promote it. From humanity he wishes well to mankind in general, and will deny himself in some respects to advance the public good. He admires God's beneficence to the world. Contemplating his goodness in the light of creature love, his affections melt in sympathy. From the love of natural fitness and order, he approves of the outward morality prescribed in the divine law; and inferring from his various feelings that he has the temper which the law requires, he has no objection to any part of the precept; and being out of the reach of the penalty, as he hopes, he has no objection to that. Thinking now that God is his father and friend, his heart overflows with gratitude and love. He finds no difficulty in acquiescing in the sovereignty, and generally in the providence of his friend and benefactor. Blind to the spiritual glory of divine things, he attaches false ideas to such names as *holiness* and *justice*, and finds, beyond a doubt, that he approves of the things thus understood. And though he feels no glow of affection in view of these attributes, yet his

heart leaps when he contemplates God's beneficence to the world and love to him. And he ascribes his dulness on the other subjects to human imperfection. He goes through life using the language of Christians, commending the law and the holiness and justice of God, little thinking that he attaches false ideas to these names. Under the influence of all these causes, added to self-righteous hopes, the restraints of education, the influence of refined society, and a regard to character, he is kept regular in his conduct and in an attendance on the ordinances of religion. He gains the confidence of his Christian brethren, who are more likely to distrust themselves than him. He dies, and with astonishment opens his eyes in hell. Thousands of orthodox ministers, and millions of orthodox professors, doubtless go this way.

Professor, what have you more? What that cannot be accounted for on these principles? What *ought* I to have more? you say. I answer, that real,

disinterested, powerful love to God and man which shone in the life of Jesus and in that of the apostle Paul;—that heavenly charity whose attributes are so clearly described in the thirteenth of the first of Corinthians, which I recommend to your careful and frequent perusal.

We learn the importance of a deep and practical study of the Scriptures. In them the moral character and government of God are clearly set forth. In them true religion, as distinguished from all counterfeits, is lucidly explained, both by precepts and examples. The only way of safety is to study the Scriptures laboriously and prayerfully, and, with the greatest circumspection and diligence, compare our hearts with them. By them we shall be judged at the last day. By this standard let us judge ourselves beforehand, "that we" be not "condemned with the world." There are a thousand ways to get wrong, and one only to get right. "Happy is the man that feareth alway."

SERMON XXXIX.

DANIEL'S PRAYER.

FOR THE CONCERT.

DANIEL ix. 19—23. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not for thine own sake, O my God, for thy city and thy people are called by thy name. And while I was speaking and praying and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me and talked with me and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee, for thou art greatly beloved. Therefore understand the matter and consider the vision.

DANIEL was a light raised up to shine in a dark place and in a dark period. He was among the first that were carried to Babylon, (in the days of Jehoiakim,) according to some opinions eleven years, according to others nineteen years before the destruction of Jerusalem; and the last of his writings bears

date two years after the decree of Cyrus for the restoration of the Jews. So that he spent the whole seventy years in Babylon. His life filled up that gloomy interval, the darkest that the Church ever saw after her deliverance from Egypt. This luminary seems to have been lighted up to blaze in so dark a

time on purpose to teach the people of God, in all future ages of darkness, how to feel and pray for the oppressed and afflicted Church.

He was a man whose example ought to have great weight. In early youth he discovered uncommon wisdom and attachment to the God of his fathers. Though a captive and at the will of a tyrannical prince, he refused to break the law of God which regulated the diet of the Jews, and discarded the allowance furnished by royal bounty. He surpassed in wisdom all the wise men of Babylon, and saved them from destruction by interpreting the king's dream. After expounding a second dream which had a dreadful bearing on the king himself, he had the fidelity to charge the monarch to his face with his iniquities and to exhort him to reformation of life. When the hand-writing was sent to alarm the guilty Belshazzar, this servant of God, with his characteristic boldness and zeal, spread the abominations of the wicked king before him, and plainly told him that the kingdom was taken from him and given to the Medes and Persians. His great merits soon recommended him to the favour of Darius, the new Persian monarch, who raised him to the highest seat next to the throne. In this elevated sphere he conducted himself with so much wisdom and uprightness, that his very enemies, after searching him with eyes sharpened with envy, were forced to acknowledge that they should never find a ground of accusation against him unless they placed it in his zeal for his God. And when they made a malicious attempt to block up his avenue to the throne of grace, and annexed an unchangeable sentence of death to the performance of prayer, he was not restrained a moment, but in defiance of all the thunders of the Persian empire, kneeled three times a day in his chamber, and prayed and gave thanks to God as "aforetime." The Lord graciously respected his fidelity, and saved him, in the sight of all his enemies, from the jaws of the lions, to which they had cast him for his devotions. He honoured him still more by repeatedly sending his angel to converse with him and to reveal to him, (what had never been done to any man before,) the general

outlines of his providence to the end of the world. So highly was he revered, that Ezekiel, his contemporary prophet, made up a constellation consisting of Noah, Daniel, and Job, as standing foremost among those who had most influence with God. Such is the testimony borne by heaven itself in favour of him who has set us this noble example of praying for the afflicted Church.

It was no uncommon thing for this eminent man, notwithstanding all the burdens of public business, to set apart seasons for fasting and prayer, especially for the restoration of the Church. One concert of prayer was held by him and his companions on account of the king's dream. On another occasion, just before the visit from the angel who revealed to him so many wonderful things respecting the Church and the world, he had been fasting three full weeks. He "eat no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in" his "mouth, neither did" he "anoint" himself "at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled."

No sooner was the empire transferred from the Babylonians to the Medes and Persians, (which, according to Jeremiah, was the token that the seventy years were about to expire,) (a) than Daniel, having learned this from the writings of Jeremiah, (b) set himself, by fasting and prayer, to seek of God the restoration of the Church. This was in the first year of the new dynasty. Though the deliverance was rendered certain by the absolute promise of God, and was then, as the event proved, but two or three years distant, he did not deem prayer for it unnecessary. The certainty of an event does not supercede the necessity of prayer: for he who made the event certain, made the means as certain as the end; and an important part of that means is prayer. The future glory of the Church is certain; and it is equally certain that prayer must precede it: "I the Lord have spoken it and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord, I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." (c) If then the prayer could be neglected, the blessing would be lost. Antecedent-

(a) Jer. xxv. 11, 12.

(b) Dan. ix. 2.

(c) Ezek. xxxvi. 36, 37.

ly to the influence of prayer on the heart of God, he determined to excite a spirit of prayer in his people, for the same reason that he determined to make them holy. Situated as the Church is in this world, prayer is an essential operation of holiness, and is among the operations most necessary for the happiness of the saints. For creatures to contemplate God as the source of all good, and apply to him for what they want, and thank him for what they receive, is only to see things as they are and to feel as they ought. This going to God and receiving from him, is the ready way to make the impression that all things flow from him. And it is that state of communion with him on which the happiness of believers essentially depends. For these reasons he commanded them to ask in order to receive, and in his decree made the blessing to depend on the prayer. That blessing which, before he excited a spirit of prayer, he wished to bestow, he determined to bestow in answer to prayer, in order to show them that he is the source of all, and to encourage them to depend on him, and to draw them into communion with him. And as, after exciting holiness in their hearts, he feels complacency in the temper they exercise, so after exciting a spirit of prayer, his heart is affected by the prayers they offer. A desire to bestow the blessing is not indeed produced by the prayer; for had he not possessed that desire, he would not have excited the prayer. But when the prayer is offered, he feels the appeal to his parental heart as any other parent would, and feels for his praying children a tenderness that can deny them nothing but what would prove an injury. Nor does this imply any change in God. His existence is in one eternal now; and the prayers which are offered in time were eternally present with him, and eternally and unchangeably affected his heart. As therefore, on the one hand, the fixedness of events in the divine decree does not supercede the necessity of prayer, so on the other, the immutability of God does not prevent prayer from affecting his heart. In every point of view therefore, prayer is a necessary means of bringing forward those events which are fixed in the divine decree, and even those which are

revealed to the Church as certain. Whenever therefore God is about to bestow special blessings on the Church, he first pours out a spirit of prayer. When "the set time" "to favour" Zion "is come," his servants "take pleasure in her stones and favour the dust thereof." And in proportion as they feel this spirit of prayer, they have reason to believe that the time appointed is near.

The only prayer of Daniel which is recorded at length, is the one to which our attention is now drawn. This is written as a specimen of the rest, to show us with what earnestness he poured forth his soul, with what humility and awe he appeared before "the great and dreadful God," with what a deep sense of sin, with what acquiescence in the justice of God under his darkest frowns, how utterly he renounced self-righteousness and self-dependence, how entirely he cast himself and his nation on the mercy of God, and how much he was influenced in his desires for the prosperity of the Church, by a wish that God should be glorified.

He begins his prayer in these words: "O Lord, the great and dreadful God." He seemed to labour under an unutterable sense of the infinite majesty of Jehovah. He did not come with that offensive familiarity which marks the approach of some, but with an awful view of the grandeur and purity of him who had come out in such terrible wrath against his people. The superior piety of Daniel appeared in nothing more than in the humble and reverential sense which he entertained of "the great and dreadful God." When the angel of the Lord, on a certain occasion, appeared to him, he fell on his face and became as a dead man. He was not terrified as children are at the thought of an apparition. He had been accustomed to visits from the heavenly messengers, and had been frequently favoured with miraculous communications from God for the space of seventy years. It was not therefore a childish terror, but an awful view of the glories of the unveiled divinity.

But Daniel did not confine his view to overwhelming majesty; he loved to extend it to the mild radiance of grace and to the covenant faithfulness of God. After addressing him as "the great and

dreadful God," he immediately adds, "Keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him and to them that keep his commandments." We must come to him believing "that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Daniel was penetrated with a deep sense of his own sins and the sins of his people. Discovering in the light of the divine purity the horrid nature of rebellion against God, he dwelt with grief and abasement and confusion on those sins which had called forth so many tokens of wrath, vindicating the righteous severity of God, and taking all the blame to himself and to his nation: "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces as at this day,—because we have sinned against thee." Under these views he disclaimed all self-righteousness and cast himself and his nation on mere mercy: "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him." "We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies."

Another thing to be observed in this prayer is the peculiar ardour and earnestness with which it was poured forth. He knew that he was not asking for things forbidden,—that his benevolent desires might be indulged without restraint; and therefore he uttered himself with confidence and impassioned ardour: "O my God, incline thine ear and hear; open thine eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name.—O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not for thine own sake, O my God, for thy city and thy people are called by thy name."

But the most remarkable feature in this distinguished prayer, is the purity of the motives by which it was dictated. This eminent saint did not desire the restoration of the Church for any share which he expected to have in it on earth. He was now on the borders of heaven, and was never to return to Jerusalem. He did not desire that restoration merely or chiefly for the benefit which would result to a certain number of creatures. His chief motive was the glory and interest of the great Guardian of the universe. He knew that God

had gotten to himself a great name among the nations by bringing his people out of Egypt, which he would lose if the Church was to become extinct. He knew that God had called the Church by his name as his family, and had put himself at the head of it as a tender father in the sight of all the surrounding nations, and that a thousand malicious things would be said if his family was to be scattered and dissolved. He saw how the preservation and glory of the Church would in various ways redound to the honour of God. And hence his great importunity: "And now, O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and hast gotten thee renown as at this day;—hear the prayer of thy servant and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, *for the Lord's sake*.—O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not *for thine own sake*, O my God, *for thy city and people are called by thy name*." He interceded for the Church, not as a mere collection of men, but as "the holy mountain of" his "God." This part of Daniel's example lays a special claim to our imitation. The chief reasons for desiring the effusions of the Spirit and the increase of the Church, ought to be, that the benevolence of God may be gratified, that his perfections may be exercised and displayed, that creatures may be brought to see and acknowledge him as he is and to reverence and treat him as God. The honour and happiness of God are worth more, in the view of perfect benevolence, than the honour and happiness of the whole creation. But in no way can God be so completely gratified or his glory so fully displayed, as in the prosperity of the Church. The happiness of God however is not of a private nature. It is the happiness of the Guardian of the universe, and consists in the prosperity of his creatures. And however valuable that portion of the common blessedness is which is attached to the Divine Mind, this is not the limit of the motive for wishing God to be gratified. He is not gratified but by that which promotes the happiness of his kingdom. And however suitable it is, in the nature of things, that such a be-

ing should be known and honoured, and for his own sake respected as the head and glory of the universe; this is not the limit of the motive for wishing God to be glorified. In the manifestations of his perfections, and in that holy order which consists in regarding and treating him as the Head of the universe, is laid the foundation of all the happiness of creatures. When therefore we desire the happiness and glory of God, we desire the best good of the finite universe. But when we make the happiness of a certain number of individuals our chief object, however great that number may be, it is another thing. This Daniel did not. It was the interest of God, involving the prosperity of the universe, which constituted his supreme object.

Let us now see how such a prayer was regarded and treated in heaven. "At the beginning of" his "supplications the commandment came forth" from the eternal throne, to an angel standing near; and the winged messenger, "being caused to fly swiftly," reached the spot of the praying saint as soon as he could, and touched him "about the time of the evening oblation," having measured over the whole journey while the prophet was on his knees. God does not delay, and angels do not linger, when Christians are at prayer. That sweet visit from heaven would have been a recompense for a whole life of devotion. The angel came down to surpass the expectations of the prophet; not merely to tell him that his prayers were answered and that the Church should soon be restored, but to reveal a greater deliverance, and to tell him, what never had been told to mortal man, the very year of Messiah's advent, and the time and precise object of his death. God loves to exceed the expectations of his praying people.

And now, my brethren, let me call upon you to imitate the spirit of Daniel in a day like this. The Church is now in captivity to the customs and oppressions of the world. We want more Daniels to intercede with God. We want more Davids to look up to our Father and watch and wait and plead for his return. Hear how the Psalmist prays for the distressed Church. "Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and the eyes

of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God until that he have mercy upon us." Thus every one who has the spirit of David and Daniel will keep his eyes on God. We know that he has good in store for Zion. We may therefore pray for it with the unlimited confidence of Daniel, and with the unyielding perseverance of Jacob, resolving to hold him fast until we receive the blessing. God has not failed to answer the united prayers of his people in our day. And at the present moment the fields "are white already to harvest." Let us earnestly pray him to "send forth labourers into his harvest," and to make those faithful who are already employed. It is high time for us to engage more earnestly in prayer for the Church. Have we none of the spirit of Daniel, that can be called forth by his persuasive example? O my brethren, "why stand ye here all the day idle?" The people of God have been praying almost six thousand years for these wonderful times which are now at the door. If they could be affected with so distant a view, shall we remain indifferent when the glory is so near? God expects it of us that we should awake and wrestle with him for the future welfare of Zion. Christ expects it of us; and since he has poured out his blood for the redemption of men, he may reasonably require us to pour out our breath for the same object. Angels expect it of us. They are constantly engaged in ministering to the Church; and their activity shames our sloth, who have a so much deeper stake in the prosperity of Zion. My brethren, the churches of Christ expect it of us that we should pray for them; and multitudes of them are this day lifting up their voices and hands and eyes and hearts for us. What then will God and Christ and angels and the churches of the Lord, and the whole universe, say to us if we sit idle, with our hearts as cold as a stone, while so many hands are employed, in heaven and earth, to build up the cause of the Redeemer? What will David and Jeremiah and Daniel and Peter and Paul and all the martyrs say to us, if after all their prayers and sufferings for the glory of the Church, we will not lift our hands to save a world from death? What will

thousands of perishing souls say to us another day, who are now in the midst of us, and whose pitiful case summons our hearts to bleed and loudly calls for our prayers and tears? O my brethren, for what has God given us hearts and tongues, if it is not to use them for him? If we should now resolve to be henceforth more faithful in intercession for the Church, who knows what God might do for us in this place,—might do for our dear children whom we love and over whose lamentable condition out of Christ we have often wept and sighed in secret? Come, let not our resolutions be so faint as they have been. It is

high time for us to be in earnest. Of what incalculable value is a single soul. What then shall be said of the hundreds of millions that are perishing for want of the exertions and prayers of the Church? Think how much is involved in the beauty and grandeur and glory of Zion,—in the gratification of him who bled on the point of the spear,—in the glory of God which almost exclusively depends on the success of this cause. And if any of these infinite interests can move our hearts, O let us never cease to agonize for the redemption of the world. And may God hear and answer through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

SERMON XL.

ELISHA ASKING AND RECEIVING THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH.

2 Kings ii. 9, 10.—And it came to pass when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me. And he said, Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.

THE prophet Elijah was raised up among the ten tribes at a time when they were fast sinking into idolatry, and needed some distinguished witness for God to bring them back to the true worship. Having fulfilled his ministry, he was about to be translated to heaven without suffering the pains of death. Such a token of divine favour before all Israel, was intended to confirm the testimony which he had given for God. A secret revelation of this design was made separately to Elijah, to Elisha, and to the sons of the prophets. The interesting period had arrived. Elijah and Elisha were now at Gilgal, a city on the plain about three miles west of Jordan. This city, which had been distinguished as a place of public worship before the revolt of the ten tribes, was now equally distinguished for the worship of idols. And because it was a place of public resort, Elijah used fre-

quently to visit it. He or his predecessors had established a school of the prophets here, which made a conspicuous figure in the subsequent ministry of Elisha. On the morning of his translation, (or more probably the preceding day,) Elijah departed with Elisha from Gilgal. "And Elijah said unto Elisha, Tarry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Bethel. And Elisha said unto him, As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth I will not leave thee. So they went both of them to Bethel." This was a city in the mountains, about twenty miles to the west of Gilgal. As it was the residence of one of the golden calves, and a place of public resort, it was a proper station for the prophets of the Lord who were set to testify against the abominable rites of that apostate people. In this place were many who belonged to the school of the prophets. "And the sons of the pro-

phets that were at Bethel came forth to Elisha and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he said, Yea, I know it; hold you your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho." This was an ancient city delightfully situated on the plains of Jordan, a little to the south-west of Gilgal and seven or eight miles from the river. The city or the adjacent parts commanded a view of the plain and of Jordan. Here also resided many who belonged to the school of the prophets. "And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho came to Elisha and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day? And he answered, Yea, I know it; hold you your peace. And Elijah said unto him, Tarry, I pray thee, here, for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan. And he said, as the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth I will not leave thee. And they two went on. And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood to view afar off: and [Elijah and Elisha] stood by Jordan. And Elijah took his mantle and wrapt it together and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither; so that they two went over on dry ground. And it came to pass when they were gone over, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee before I be taken away from thee." What a glorious chance was here for Elisha to make his fortune. The great prophet, on the point of ascending to the throne of God, gave him leave to ask any thing his heart desired, with an intimation that it should be granted. What would have been thy request, O man? How many would have said, My lord, give thy servant to possess that beautiful tract of country; or, Grant thy servant that post of honour. But what said this man of God? There was nothing on earth he so much desired as the necessary gifts and graces to serve God as his prophet in Israel. "And Elisha said, I pray thee let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." That was a noble wish, Elisha; and if there is an ear in heaven that regards pious

requests, thou wilt obtain the desire of thy heart. And Elijah said, "Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." Here then I learn one great secret of holy living. Desires, even of the most pure and exalted kind, are not sufficient to procure copious measures of the divine Spirit without watchfulness. "And it came to pass as they still went on and talked, that behold there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces. He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him and went back and stood by the bank of Jordan," the sons of the prophets viewing the whole scene from Jericho. "And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters, and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? And when he had also smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither, and Elisha went over. And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him and bowed themselves to the ground before him." Elisha had obtained his request. When he received Elijah's falling mantle, he received with it a double portion of his spirit; and being thus constituted the chief prophet in Israel, he surpassed his master in the number of his miracles and in the respect which he received from the nation.

From this piece of history we are taught,

1. That it is the character of good men to desire greater measures of the Spirit more than any wordly advantage. The great question, what is true religion? what is the Christian spirit? what is it to be a good man? may be answered correctly if we examine the Bible and collect from its precepts, its examples, its history, all the light it sheds on this point. Bring together the different features of the Christian character which

lie scattered over the sacred pages, and you will form a complete and beautiful whole, in which no feature is wanting, from which no feature can be spared, and in the whole of which such harmony prevails as shows that the different parts were intended to stand together in one glorious countenance.

The particular feature now under consideration is a leading characteristic. It appeared in David; it appeared in Solomon; it has appeared in all the saints. Says David, "There be many that say, Who will show us any good? [Who will show us any *worldly* good? is the cry of the world at large. Our concern is different:] Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us." When God appeared to Solomon and said, "Ask what I shall give thee;" he chose wisdom in preference to all other things. And God said, "Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life, neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies, but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; behold I have done according to thy words: lo I have given thee a wise and understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour; so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days." This was the temper also of Elisha. He had an opportunity to take his choice among all possible blessings. But standing by the side of the holy prophet as he was ascending to God,—standing with his eye full of heaven,—he cared not for all the lands and honours of his nation. His soul arose above them all. Nothing less than the Holy Ghost could satisfy his desires. It was the first opportunity he ever had for such a choice; it was likely to be the last. His soul arose like a collected flood and burst forth in this aspiration: "I pray thee let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." This is the temper of all the people of God, and that not merely in some moments of special devotion, but habitually. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee," is the ordinary language of their souls. When we look into the

Bible, this is the delineation of a saint; but when we look into the lives of professors, we might suppose that a Christian was a very different being. But none will be acknowledged saints at the last day but those who sustain the character drawn in the Bible. Let those think of this who, while they make a profession, and at times have feelings which they call religion, are as eager as others for the gains, honours, or pleasures of the world. Perhaps they are not devoted to all these objects. One lust, like Aaron's rod, swallows up the rest. Covetousness may restrain the love of pleasure, and ambition may prevent the pursuit of wealth. The idols and vices peculiar to youth give place to others as men advance in years. But whatever new forms the body of sin may put on, while it has power to fix the heart on any object more than God, it remains still in full vigour. He only is a Christian who habitually makes the choice which Elisha made.

2. The reason that real Christians do not receive *more* of the divine Spirit, is that they do not desire it with *sufficient* preference. One may habitually regard spiritual blessings more than the world, and yet not regard them enough. The world may still occupy too much of his mind, may engage an undue proportion of his cares and time, and appear more valuable than it really is. This is indeed the case with all Christians, and with some to a lamentable degree. If put to make their election between God and the world, they would cleave to God, and if called decisively to the trial, would suffer martyrdom for his sake; but this preference is not so strong and steady as always to overcome the temptations of the world. Their case is frequently that of a man who sighs for liberty but is loaded with chains. Their calculations for the time to come are in favour of God, but their present affections are after the world. Thus entangled, they advance but slowly towards heaven, and every step costs them far more toil and trouble than it does those who are more unclogged and free. Many seem to have just religion enough to make them wretched; enough to distress their conscience in view of their sins, but not enough to give it peace; enough to prevent them from enjoying

the world as a portion, but not enough to raise them above its perplexities. Had I nothing but present happiness in view, I would give the advice in regard to religion which has been given in regard to human learning; "Drink deep or taste not."

This state of worldly incumbrance, which leaves little more than indecisive wishes, is the true reason why many Christians are limited to so small attainments. They sometimes wonder why they cannot arise to that communion with God which patriarchs and prophets enjoyed. Do you wonder still? Do you wish to learn how to acquire the spirit of Elijah? Let me lead you to Gilgal. Attend me as I follow the steps of those men of God to Bethel, to Jericho, to Jordan. Listen to their conversation. Mark distinctly the operations of Elisha's mind. His desires were stronger than death. None of this coldness which benumbs modern Christians; no division of mind between God and the world. His whole soul was intent on obtaining a double portion of his master's spirit. When repeatedly pressed to leave him, he persisted in saying, "As the Lord liveth and as thy soul liveth I will not leave thee." And when put to make his choice among all conceivable blessings, he did not hesitate a moment, but with an ardour which increased the interest of that parting scene, he urged the great request; "I pray thee let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me." Here the grand secret is out, in what manner the ancient saints acquired so much of the divine spirit and such high communion with God. They desired these blessings with their whole heart, and they prayed for them with all their desire. "With my whole heart," says David, "have I sought thee." "I entreated thy favour with my whole heart." "Blessed are they that—seek him with the whole heart." At the renewal of the covenant in the reign of Asa, "All Judah rejoiced at the oath; for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them." It was predicted of the Church brought back from Babylon, "They shall return unto me with their whole heart." These expressions do not imply a state of perfection, but a

decided purpose and an ardent desire, unabated by any other sensible affection. Those ancient saints made a business of religion. They did not calculate to take the world along with them to heaven. Their grand care was to obtain greater and still greater measures of the Spirit of God, and to employ all their acquisitions in advancing his glory. Christians, if you would obtain the spirit of Elijah, you must no longer be divided between two kingdoms; you must desire it *far* more than all other things. And you must pray for it as earnestly as you desire it, and frequently as well as earnestly. Could you be awakened to such desires and prayers,—prayers as warm and almost as constant as your breath,—there is nothing in the way of your ascending to as high communion with heaven as the ancient saints enjoyed. Desire as much and you shall have as much. To you as well as to them God has said, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." To you as well as to them it has been said, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.—If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?—If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

3. There is one more secret in the manner of acquiring the spirit of Elijah, which our text reveals. We must *watch* for it. Desires, however intense, and prayers, however ardent, will not avail without watchfulness. Even the desires and prayers of Elisha could not prevail without this. After he had urged his request, the blessing was still suspended on his vigilance. "Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." After this answer how vigilant do we conceive Elisha to have been. If I close my eyes, says he, or turn my head away, he may be gone. Every sense was awake. Methinks the groans of a dying child would not have called his eyes from his master. He watched him;—he cleaved to him;—he followed his steps;—he was attentive to every change in his countenance, to every ap-

pearance in the heavens. Every thing was at stake. How often did he pray that nothing might dim his sight or interpose between him and the ascending prophet. With the quickness of thought he saw the chariot and horses of fire in the air; he saw his master taken up; he cried, My father, my father, and received his falling mantle. With a more noble Master at our head, who has had a more glorious translation to heaven, we have equal need to fix our eyes on him and watch. We should watch every look, observe every motion, and catch from him every word. For want of watchfulness many good desires and prayers have in a measure failed. Prayer and watchfulness comprehend the most important secrets of holy living. These were all that our Saviour thought necessary to press upon his disciples in that most perilous hour when earth and hell were let loose upon him and upon them. "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." The apostle repeats the injunction: "Watch unto prayer." Do you ask what we are to watch? I answer, we are to keep our eyes attentively fixed on our divine Master, that we may learn his will and catch his smiles. We are to watch the secret motions of his Spirit, that we may learn to cherish them. We are to watch the effects of our prayers, that we may seize the blessings as they fall. We are to watch the objects around us, that we may be guarded against those which inflame the passions, and may also gather instruction from the providence of God.

We are to watch the approaches and wiles of our spiritual enemies, that we may not be surprised by their assaults. We are to watch our own hearts, that we may keep them with all diligence;—our thoughts, that they do not wander;—our corruptions, that they do not move;—our lips, that they do not transgress;—our actions, that they accord with the divine will. Without such a course of watchfulness we shall never pray to much effect. Our thoughts will have wandered too far to be collected for prayer; sins will start up which will grieve the Spirit and deprive us of his assistance. It is with great propriety therefore that prayer and watchfulness are repeatedly coupled together in the precepts of the Gospel. They are inseparable in the Christian life. He that does not watch will not pray, and he that does not pray will not watch; and he that neglects both will never attain to the spirit of Elijah.

And now, my brethren, who is there among you that feels a desire to possess the spirit and joys of the holy prophets, to share their communion with heaven, and to equal them in their eternal glory? Let him carry home these thoughts to his closet, and there mould them into his heart and transfuse them into his life. And it will be his own fault if he does not reach the holiness of Elisha. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Amen.

S E R M O N X L I.

FAITH NECESSARY FOR SANCTIFICATION.

MARK ix. 23.—Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

THERE was a young man who from a child had been possessed with a dumb and deaf spirit, and had been often cast into the fire and into the water. In his paroxysms he would wallow on the ground and foam and gnash with his

teeth; and so frequent and severe were his fits that he pined away. Hearing of the cures wrought by Christ and his followers, the father of the young man brought him to the disciples: but for want of sufficient faith from prayer and fasting, they were unable to cast the spirit out; a solemn warning to those who would be instrumental in expelling Satan from the hearts of men. The father next brought him to Christ. "And when he saw him, straightway the spirit tore him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oft-times it hath cast him into the fire and into the waters to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us and help us." That *if* stood in the way. "Jesus said unto him, *If* thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out and said with tears, Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief." This humble prayer to Christ for faith was a full acknowledgment of his Messiahship. Jesus therefore turned and said, "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried and rent him sore and came out of him; and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, he is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose."

The cures which Christ performed in the days of his flesh, particularly in casting out devils, announced him to the world as one sent to heal our *moral* diseases and to drive Satan from the hearts of men. As a condition of these cures he required faith in his ability to heal. This he required of the blind men of Capernaum; this he required of those who let down the sick man through the roof; this he required of the Syrophenician woman; this he required of the father mentioned in our text. From this account I draw the following

DOCTRINE,—That men must by faith apply to Christ for deliverance from the dominion of Satan.

In illustrating this doctrine I shall show,

I. That it is the work of Christ to deliver his people from the dominion of Satan.

II. That the effectual and only way to obtain deliverance is to apply to Christ by faith.

I. It is the work of Christ to deliver his people from the dominion of Satan. He came into the world "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage." The cross, the weapon which Satan had prepared for his destruction, proved, like Goliath's sword, the instrument of his own ruin. Christ conquered by dying; and when he ascended on high he triumphed over "principalities and powers" and "made a show of them openly." Satan had been entrenching himself in the world from the fall of man. His visible kingdom had once been destroyed by the flood; but it had soon risen again in new vigour. For many ages it had comprised all the nations of the earth but one. He had obtained full possession of the thrones, the temples, and the schools of the pagan world. He had moulded their superstitions and their customs. Like a God he had set up his oracles, after the pattern of that in Mount Zion. He had gained unrivalled sway over the understandings and hearts of the heathen. He had even extended his power to their bodies. Not content with this, he had invaded the visible kingdom of God and fortified himself in the pride and traditions of the Pharisees. He had found few even in the Church disposed to resist his dominion. Proceeding from step to step, he had begun to make his power more visible by his control over the bodies of men, even over bodies which had been marked with the seal of God's covenant. He had grown bold by success, and had openly assumed the badges of supremacy, and seemed to consider himself the undisputed master of a world from which his rival had apparently retired. All this was permitted to give the greater triumph to the coming Messiah.

At the moment when his enemy had attained his highest elevation, the Son of God appeared on earth. "I beheld Satan," says he, "as lightning fall from heaven." And so it proved. He conquered him in single combat in the wilderness and on the temple. He triumphed

ed over him on the cross. There he gave a fatal blow to his power, which ever since has been on the wane. He expelled him from the bodies of men; he silenced all his oracles; he banished witches and wizards and enchantments; he sent out his Gospel and his Spirit to drive him from the hearts of men; he marched into his dominions, overturned the temples of the pagan world, converted their schools into churches, took possession of their thrones, and made as many temples for himself as he found hearts of the elect. Moving on as a mighty conqueror, he will not stop till the whole world are brought to his feet, and his enemy is imprisoned and enchained. He will not stop till he has delivered unnumbered millions of captives from their chains and raised them to everlasting thrones. "Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" to deliver a captive race. "Hosanna in the highest." Let all nations hail his approach, and all the music of the world attend his march. Go, and God speed thy course, victorious Prince. Go, and the praises of a grateful world attend thee.

But Satan, though vanquished, is not yet bound. He rages the more for the empire he has lost. He has called all his legions into action to spread snares for incautious souls, and to vex and harass whom he cannot destroy. He roars against the saints like a lion from the vineyards of Timnath. He often terrifies and sometimes wounds them. He fastens his eye on some poor sheep of the flock, and pursues it till he has hunted it down, and then he vexes and tears it till the great Shepherd comes to its relief. And when he wounds, he gives a smart which no other wound can give,—a smart which no weapons can produce but those which are poisoned with the venom of hell,—a smart which none but a fiend could bear to inflict. His wounds are such as nothing can heal but the balm of Gilead. He hunts the saints through life and pursues them even to the grave. They are terrified when they see in how many forms he assails them. With amazing subtlety he addresses their imaginations, their passions, their appetites, and all their corruptions. If for a moment they re-

mit their vigilance, he causes them to stumble or fall; and then he triumphs over them and tells them that he will make them his prey. Through his vexations they are often weary of their lives and long for the grave where they may be at rest.

How precious to such is the thought that Christ has come to pluck the prey from the jaws of the devourer,—to rescue his lambs from the paws of the lion and the bear. They have no occasion to flee to the grave; they may find a nearer shelter in his arms. He sees all the wiles of the enemy before they are conceived. He knows all the trials of his people and deeply feels for them, having been "in all points tempted like as" they "are." He knows all their weaknesses, and what they can and what they cannot bear, and has pledged all that is sacred in him not to "suffer" them "to be tempted above that" they "are able, but—with the temptation" to "make a way" for their "escape." It is for their good only that he leaves them to be tempted,—that they may know what is in their hearts,—that they may be fitted for a world of everlasting humility,—that they may be excited to greater exertions,—that they may learn the preciousness of a Saviour and be prepared to join the songs of the upper world. When they understand this they will "count it all joy" that they "fall into divers temptations," and will say with Paul, "Most gladly—will I rather glory in my infirmities, [my *sinless* infirmities,] that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

II. The effectual and only way to obtain deliverance is to apply to Christ by faith.

But what is faith? It is a cordial belief in Christ and a dependence on him in his whole mediatorial character, as a divine prophet, priest, and king,—as one set up from everlasting to be "the brightness of" the Father's "glory and the express image of his person," to reflect the lustre of his character upon the eyes of the creation,—to be the organ of God to execute his will in all worlds, and the grand medium of all his communications with this,—to teach mankind the knowledge of God, to support the authority of his law by atonement and intercession, to govern the

Church and the world, to receive "gifts for men" and to distribute them as king of Zion,—as bound by sacred covenant to watch over his people, to sanctify and defend them, to give them every real blessing, to protect them from every real evil, to make them the happier for every event that befalls them,—as one who fills an amazing space in the counsels of God and in the religion and hopes of the Church,—as the grand subject of the Old Testament and the New. Among the leading objects which faith contemplates and loves, are a holy God whom Christ revealed and honoured, and a holy law which he supported. It cordially believes all the truths which relate to Christ,—all the truths which Christ has revealed. It heartily accepts him as the Saviour, and depends on him, not in one part or two parts of his character, but in the whole that he is in the great and complicated work of redemption. It applies to him for pardon, sanctification, guidance, protection, and comfort.

This is the faith required. And now to illustrate the necessity and power of a believing application to Christ to deliver us from the dominion of sin and Satan. There must be an *application* to Christ because all spiritual blessings come from him, and from God through him. He gives in answer to prayer that he may show that the blessings come from him, and may encourage others to apply to him. Hence the promise, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." And the application, to be effectual and purifying, must be accompanied with *faith*. "Faith—worketh *by love*," and love is purity itself. The very spirit in which faith is enclosed, does therefore purify the heart and overcome the world and produce good works. Faith knows "that when" Christ "shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And every man that hath this *hope* in him purifieth himself even as he is pure." The truths which faith discovers are the very *motives* which move the heart to love, gratitude, renunciation of the world, self-consecration, and obedience. They are the motives which animate the soul against sin and excite it to laborious and self-denying service. In this sense it is

that the views of Christ which faith brings are transforming. While with this eye we behold "as in a glass the glory of the Lord," we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The Spirit works by motives that he may move men as rational beings, and the motives by which he works are drawn from objects presented to the eye of faith. Hence the expression, "Sanctify them through thy truth." The transforming views of Christ which faith obtains and the application to him which it makes, are involved in each other and are inseparable. Without the views there is no application but in words; without the application there are no views at all, as the failure to apply sufficiently proves. The holiness received by application results from transforming views,—results from that taking hold of Christ and of God which is comprehended in the actings of faith and inseparably attends believing views. Going to Christ is nothing more nor less than having these views with the exercises which inseparably attend them; and it will as certainly obtain new strength from him as the seeing of "the glory of the Lord" will change us "into the same image from glory to glory;" as certainly as looking at the brazen serpent brought health to the dying Hebrew. These views and applications are fitly called *looking* to him, and on this looking salvation is suspended. In looking to him we see him to be the prophet from whom all light is derived, the priest through whom alone pardon is received, the only king that can sanctify, reward, and protect us. We feel the same dependence on him for hourly supplies of spiritual life that the branches have on the vine for natural life, and we stretch out our hands to him for supplies. The supplies invariably come. That is, while we behold "the glory of the Lord," and put forth those exercises of love, gratitude, and supplication which are inseparable from the view, we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory." This is the only way to grow in grace, because a view of no other object in the universe is transforming, and because no other being can sanctify in answer to prayer. But if we do not look to him with spiritual discernment, no applica-

tion *in words* will obtain supplies of holiness, because there are no transforming views and no sincere supplications. We must not go to him in prayer and come away without seeing him, and expect him to send the blessing after us. Let me illustrate this thought. Christ is called the bread of life and faith is called eating that bread. Now if with sound health you eat common bread you are strengthened; but if you go to the bread and *ask* it to strengthen you, and come away without eating it, what will it avail? Such are they who pray to Christ for holiness and come away without transforming views of him. That motion of the lips cannot sanctify the heart nor procure any thing from Christ. All *other* means, (distinct from a believing application to Christ,) to which men resort for the purity and comfort of religion, are equally unavailing. Some will fasten their eyes on their sins and plunge into gloom; but this is not the way. We must indeed look at ourselves enough to show us our need of Christ, but more than this can never tend to sanctification. Others will attack sin directly; but this is like beating the flame instead of applying the opposite element. I admit the necessity of watchfulness and struggles against sin, for these are some of the instruments by which faith works; but these without faith will not avail, nor will they long continue. The motives to watchfulness, and the considerations which are to stimulate and give success to our struggles, must be drawn from views of Christ. No holiness can be obtained without a believing application to him.

Unbelief and self-dependence are the great causes why Christians have so little grace and comfort, and derive so little benefit from prayer. If they go to the mercy-seat full, they are sure to return empty; if empty, they are likely to return full. "When I am weak then am I strong." This Joshua believed when he attacked Jericho with trumpets of rams' horns. This Gideon believed when he went up against an innumerable host with a handful of men, and with no other weapons than pitchers and trumpets and lamps. This David believed when he refused Saul's armour, and went forth against the steel-clad giant with a sling and a stone, "in the name

of—the God of the armies of Israel." This the apostles believed when they marched against an embattled world with no other weapon than the word of God. Unbelief and self-dependence are the Delilahs that shear the lock of our strength. Like simple children we attempt to go alone, and must have many falls before we can learn to lean on our heavenly conductor.

My dear brethren, you are in an enemy's camp, with infinite interests at stake, with no strength in yourselves, and unable without Christ to do any thing. You still remember the smart of those wounds which your spiritual foes inflicted when they found you away from Christ. Are you willing to have those wounds opened afresh? If not, keep near your Redeemer; believe heartily, depend wholly, and apply earnestly to him. Let it not be necessary to smart under new wounds to teach you wisdom. The matter is brought to this point,—you must lay aside your own strength and lean wholly on Christ, or fall before your enemies.

Who among you are giving up all for lost in view of the strength of your spiritual foes? Here is encouragement for you. You see why your enemies have so often prevailed in spite of your resolutions, vows, and prayers. It was because you went forth in your own strength and did not fully depend on Christ. Your corruptions and enemies, notwithstanding all their former rage and success, may yet be conquered. "If" you can "believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Gather courage then and go to the Captain of your salvation. "Commit" your "way" to him, "trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass." Let not past defeats discourage you; but let them teach you the folly of trusting in your own hearts, and let future experience teach you the omnipotence of faith.

Parents, would you learn how to bring your dear children to Christ, take a lesson from our text. "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." The want of faith is the great reason why so many prayers for children and friends prove ineffectual. Did parents exercise the faith they ought, their hearts need not so often bleed over their perishing offspring.

And what a pity that our children and friends must perish through our unbelief.

Poor Christless sinners, here is a word for you. How long will you depend on your own righteousness and strength, and reject the only way of salvation? While you do this you have no more interest in redemption than though Christ had never died. What is your strength but a strong attachment to sin? What is your righteousness but filthy rags? Come off from all these dependencies and try the righteousness and strength of the Redeemer. You can receive no saving benefit from him unless you renounce every other refuge and apply with a broken heart to him alone, and cordially believe in his suffi-

ciency and willingness to save. Without this you must eternally perish. Open your eyes upon your guilt and wretchedness, and then fall into a Saviour's arms. Thousands, as poor and wretched as you, have tried the experiment and found him able and willing to save. If you will apply you will find him the same to you. Delay not a moment. Death waits on every step. Dangers and difficulties are thickening around you. Listen at once to the voice of redeeming love. While your guilt is crushing you to the lowest hell, and the Saviour is standing with open arms to receive you, seize the precious moment. O come, and all heaven will bid you welcome, and all the Church on earth will say, Amen.

SERMON XLII.

HUMILITY.

LUKE xviii. 13.—And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

This is a precise description of that approach to the throne of mercy which God approves. Our Saviour, whose discourses were always replete with meaning, cast more light on the Christian temper in this single sentence than is sometimes done in volumes. Not a clause nor a word but is full of significance: every attitude and motion of this humble penitent has a language full of expression; and the effect of the whole is to place before our eyes a perfect specimen of the spirit and demeanour of a praying saint.

Through the whole of his ministry our Saviour had to contend with the disgusting pride and self-righteousness of the Pharisees, inflated with ideas of their own unrivalled sanctity. In the parable before us he introduces one of that order in company with a wretched publican, one of those Roman tax-gath-

erers who were reputed by the Jews, and not without reason, to be among the most oppressive and profligate of men. They both went up to the temple to pray. To pray? What has the Pharisee to do with prayer? He has not a sin to confess, not a favour to ask, not a mercy to acknowledge. What then is his business in the temple? It is to trumpet forth his own wonderful sanctity, and to betray his haughty contempt for the rest of mankind. "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess." Thus began and thus ended this singular prayer. It was far different with the publican. He had no good works to plead. He had been a great sinner, and he was now made sensible of it. His eyes were opened to see the awful me-

jeasty and purity of that God in whose presence he stood. He had awoke in a new world, and was astonished to see the number and aggravations of his sins, and the authority and holiness of the great and dreadful God whom he had offended. These objects appeared, as they will appear to every newly enlightened sinner, so plain and so near that he wondered where his reason had slept that he had never seen them before. Overwhelmed with shame and awe, he did not press forward to the wall of the inner temple, but stood afar off, as unworthy to approach where others used to pray. How unlike was this to the multitude who rush with airy minds into the house of God, and there rise to pray with all the ease and assurance of men transacting their ordinary business. How unlike was this to those who betray greater anxiety to pray in an eloquent manner than to offer the prayers of the destitute,—whose language, tones, and gestures bespeak greater study to shine before men than to be abased before God. In the modesty of his self-abasement he “would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven.” He made no demands on justice, but only sought for mercy. Nor did he present himself for mercy as a *reformed sinner*, nor as a *penitent sinner*, nor even as a *praying sinner*, but as a mere *naked sinner*, stripped of every rag of righteousness. With a single gesture strongly expressive of self-abhorrence, he “smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.” A sound more pleasing to the ears of God never proceeded from polluted lips. “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.” Our Saviour intended to make a distinct impression that the vilest sinner, if penitent, is readily forgiven, and is far more dear to God than the bigot whose scrupulous strictness and zeal, great as they may be, are only the gilding of his own righteousness.

The peculiar charm which surrounds this interesting character is humility. The spirit which this parable represents as essential to the Christian character, is an humble spirit. By the emphasis laid on humility in this account, it appears that this is the grace which chiefly distinguishes the children of God, and that those in whom it does not prevail,

whatever may be their pretensions, cannot be Christians. In the person of this publican our Saviour evidently intended to show us at one view the distinguishing nature of his religion,—the whole of his religion in miniature. I am therefore authorized to deduce from the text this doctrine, that humility is an essential property of true religion. In pursuing this subject I shall,

I. Illustrate the doctrine.

II. Offer some reasons for the great want of this grace in the religion of professors.

III. Exhibit some motives to humility.

I. I am to illustrate the doctrine.

Humility, though it is called a grace, is not a distinct exercise, like repentance, faith, and love. It is rather a state of mind resulting from all the graces and from right views of divine truth in general. It is a low but just opinion of ourselves as creatures and sinners, arising from correct views of divine things, and from proper feelings towards God, his government, and Gospel. It is the opposite of pride, and therefore is never desirous of vain glory. It is the opposite of self-will and the proud desire of independence, and therefore cheerfully yields the government of the world to God. It is patient under trials and provocations, and regards all men with the meekness of Christian charity. It is unlike that unnecessary degradation of ourselves which in Scripture is called “voluntary humility,” and that morbid despondency which undervalues the talents and graces which God has given us. From this account it is evident that humility is an essential accompaniment of true religion. It is the necessary effect of right views of God, ourselves, and divine things in general. If our religious views do not produce humility, they are essentially defective. Every divine truth is calculated to humble the soul. The Gospel stains the pride of human glory and lays men low before their Maker. God has so constructed his plan of grace “that no flesh should glory in his presence,” that he who glories should “glory in the Lord.” In like manner what we call our graces, if they do not humble us, are radically defective. Every Christian grace in its very nature is humble. Humility then

is the scale by which the degree of our religion may be known. Men do indeed inherit from nature different degrees of pride; and some require more religion than others to keep them humble. But other things being equal, our piety is exactly in proportion to our humility. There are those who, while they possess a great deal of religion, have very little of the right kind; as appears from their want of humility. Their imaginations are sprightly, their animal feelings are warm, and they talk vehemently of religion and of the love of God burning in the heart. What they say is truth, and truth forcibly expressed; yet there is something wanting in their language which renders it unsatisfactory to the humble. Persons of such a warm temperament may contemplate the death of Christ with many tears, and with as little humility as would attend the reading of any other tragedy; because they view the subject superficially. Did they contemplate the death of Christ in all its relations to other truths, they would draw from it abundant reasons for humility. They would see in it the majesty and justice of God, the condemnation of sin, their own ill deserts, and how much was necessary to be done to save them from eternal death. But their views being superficial, their minds are ardent and tender, but not humble. And when they *talk* of the death of Christ, they address nothing in others but animal feelings; and though they may be vehement and eloquent, and make their hearers weep, they never make them humble.

There are two very different kinds of religion even among men generally reputed orthodox. One is connected with enlarged spiritual knowledge, with solemn, reverential views of God, with a deep sense of the ruin and dependence of human nature, and of the danger of self-deception. It is judicious, deep, and cautious. It is retired, modest, unassuming, and scarcely lifts so much as an eye to heaven. The other kind is more ignorant, superficial, and showy. It consists chiefly in animal feelings and flights of imagination. It is vehement, brilliant, and rash. It has little self-distrust, because it has little knowledge. If it prays, its breath is ardent and its manner may be popular, but the humble

always feel that something is wanting. If it talks of religion, the very truth in its mouth is chilling, and shines and glares without heat. It is always on wing, displaying its splendid plumes, but never creeps silently along in the valley of humility. It evidently appears more studious to shine than to be abased. Such a religion, though it may attract the eyes of men and cover its possessors with glory, will never do any good, but will do incalculable mischief. It will never convert or save a soul, but will gradually introduce a fashion in religion which, if not checked, may lead to a general apostacy as great as that of Rome. Humble religion has unspeakably the greatest power over the consciences of men. When you are in company with humble Christians, and mark their self-distrust and reverence for God, you feel that religion is a sacred thing, widely different from the spirit of the world, and you tremble at the danger of self-deception. Sins which appeared trivial before, now appear great. You are filled with a solemn anxiety to examine the foundation of your hope, and begin to pant with unusual desires after growth in grace. But when you return to the company of superficial Christians, your conscience is relieved, your self-distrust vanishes, and almost any thing passes current for religion. It is not a fiery, splendid religion which God approves, but one that is deep, humble, and still. He loves the man that trembles, not indeed under morbid constitutional glooms, but at his word;—who, with a calm and heavenly mind, lies abased before the majesty and purity of the infinite God. A pompous, radiant religion is the most attractive to men; but a broken heart is the most pleasing to God. The kingdom of God is widely different in its principles from the world. To be great in the eyes of men is to mount a showy height; to be great in the eyes of God is to lie low in the dust. The more the Spirit of God moves upon the mind, the more humble men will be; but the more the spirit of the world swells in their heart, the more they will affect those properties of religion which have the most lustre. Let us beware. The best men have pride enough without the aid of a proud religion. With all the influence which an

humble religion can yield, they find enough to struggle with in their own hearts; but when religion itself becomes proud, what is there left to check the pride of man?

II. I shall offer some reasons for the great want of humility in the religion of professors.

I am not about formally to account for the pride of man: no reason can be given for this but his selfishness. I am not about to assign general reasons for the remaining pride of Christians: the single reason is that they have not sufficient holiness. My object is to offer some reasons for the great want of humility in the religion of professors.

1. The most obvious reason is the want of spiritual knowledge. All divine truth is humbling, and as far as it is understood and applied, produces solid and humble piety. But a contentment with superficial views is calculated to cherish a mere animal religion, replete with passion and pride. For want of a deep knowledge of God, men fail to be awed by his adorable majesty. For want of a more thorough knowledge of themselves, they see not the grounds of self-distrust. For want of a more distinct knowledge of the nature of religion, they neither perceive how difficult it is to be Christians, nor discriminate between the motions of animal nature and sanctified affections. Having little dread of the wood, hay, and stubble of natural passions, they are contented with a religion which is chiefly a commotion of animal nature, and which has no power to humble the soul. Their religion is passionate and fiery in proportion to their ignorance. It has been often remarked that the passions of men are most easily excited in the first ages of society, when knowledge is extremely limited. And I have often observed that Christians whose knowledge does not transcend the first principles of religion, are more easily thrown into religious commotions than Christians of more deep and substantial attainments. Their superficial knowledge of the interesting subjects of the Gospel supplies them with abundant themes for warm and passionate talk and popular declamation; and in this way they delight to give vent to their ardent feelings. Thus the same ignorance which is the

nurse of pride, promotes a passionate religion which leaves pride unhumbed.

2. Another reason is, that animal religion, which is always proud, is more congenial with human nature than the humble religion of Christ. Men are more pleased to have their natural feelings excited, than to be convicted of sin by clear views of a holy God. They would rather hear a sweet, melting tale, than a pungent, soul-humbling sermon. The excitement of their natural passions does not disturb the serenity with which they pursue the world. Animal religion is therefore far more natural and pleasing to men than the soul-abasing religion of the Gospel. No wonder then that so much of it prevails even in minds imbued with a better principle.

3. A total want of genuine piety is doubtless the reason in many cases of the prevalence of a proud religion. Men whose natural pride and selfishness are not reduced by the power of God, wish to take the world along with them to heaven. They wish to have a religion which will not disgust worldly men nor disturb their own worldly minds. They seek a religion that will shed a lustre around them, while it accords in so many respects with the natural feelings of men as to excite no disgust. Precisely such a religion is that of the imagination and passions. This therefore is the religion which they choose. This they can wear without any mortification to their pride. It even gratifies pride by the lustre which it sheds around them. But the meek, unassuming, retired religion of the publican, which has little value in the eyes of men,—this they do not choose. It would be an intolerable cross to their pride. It requires great self-denial for a man who is able to attract attention by the brilliancy of his religion, to descend to the noiseless tenour of Christian humility.

4. In some parts of the Church I doubt not that this evil is promoted by the manner of preaching. Instead of wholesome and humbling doctrines, addresses to the imagination and passions are so often made, and so elegantly wrought, that people get accustomed to go to the house of God to admire talents rather than to offer the prayer of the publican. When they sit in their seats, they are waiting for an arrow that will

glitter in their eye, rather than for one which will pierce their hearts;—for something that will make them weep, rather than for a truth which will make them humble. And if they make any exertion upon themselves, it is to constrain themselves to be affected rather than to be abased. Their pleasure is greatest when they can go from the sanctuary commending the elegance of the sermon; and it is least when they go away penetrated with a sense of their own guilt. A manner of preaching which tends to nourish these propensities, tends strongly to promote a religion void of humility.

III. I shall briefly present a few motives to humility.

1. This is a grace most lovely in itself and very dear to God and good men. The approbation which *men* yield to the humble man is not altogether pure. It is partly because his modesty in their presence flatters their pride. Yet they *do* approve and love him. While they most *admire* the splendid, they most *love* the humble. And the humble are the *only* men that are beloved of God. "Though" he "be high yet hath he respect unto the lowly, but the proud he knoweth afar off." "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

2. The opposite of humility is a most restless, contemptible, and ruinous sin. Pride is the parent of the most corrosive passions of the human heart. It is the parent of anger, envy, mortification, discontent, self-will, impatience of contradiction, tyranny, insatiable thirst for distinction and applause, and all the pomp and pageantry of luxury. Destroy pride, and you wither at a stroke all these abominations, and free the soul for ever from their torture and pollution. Besides these direct effects, pride leads to many falls, which are permitted to humble the haughty heart, and are sometimes necessary to humble even the children of God. It is pride which

prevents our submission to the government of God, and our acquiescence in the Gospel of Christ. By the undignified petulance and meanness of its malice towards men, it often shames and defeats itself. Its impotent vaunts under mortification, form a most impressive contrast with the dignity of what the apostle emphatically calls "the meekness of wisdom."

3. Humility is recommended by the peace which it brings. When the soul sits calmly under its sheltering shade, no tumultuous passion, no restless desire disturbs the composure of its peace. It sweetly resigns the world to the direction of God without an opposing wish. It acquiesces, with a fulness of joy, in the Gospel of Christ, and smiles with serene and silent transport as it leans on his bosom. If any thing can breathe upon the soul the airs of paradise, and spread over it the calm and the sunshine of heaven, it is this same blessed humility,—this meek-eyed child of Jesus.

4. We have all cause enough for humility. We have sinned against God; we have sinned against Christ and the Holy Ghost; we have sinned against our own souls. We have committed the same sins that have plunged many of our race in eternal burnings. Could we witness their agonies,—could we hear their cries,—it might break our hearts to think that we have sinned as well as they. In the light of hell, in the glass of Calvary, the nature of our sins is seen. O for a word from heaven to humble the pride of man and to lay a blushing world silent and weeping at their Redeemer's feet.

5. Humility is the only means by which we can obtain pardon and communion with God. No man since the fall ever saw a smile on the face of heaven but when he lay prostrate in the dust. No convicted sinner, no wandering and benighted saint, ever found peace,—no feeble Christian ever had his strength renewed,—in any other place or posture. To be abased is the first step towards relief, whatever be our character or whatever be our wants.

Suffer me then, my dear hearers, to entreat you to humble yourselves in the dust at the feet of God. There lie and mourn for your sins. Take all

shame and blame to yourselves, and settle your purpose to walk softly before him all the days of your life. There lie till he shall lift you up. And he will lift you up when with the humility of the publican you shall smite on your breast and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

SERMON XLIII.

THE SUBMISSION OF DAVID.

2 SAM. xv. 25, 26.—And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city. If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again and show me both it and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.

THE account of the punishment which pursued the sin of David in the affair of Uriah, is a most instructive portion of sacred history. He had been guilty of the complicated crimes of adultery and murder; which, though secretly committed, had become so far known as to give "great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme." The prophet Nathan was sent to say to him, "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house.—Thus saith the Lord, behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes and give them unto thy neighbour.—For thou didst it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun." Although David humbled himself so deeply that the prophet assured him, "The Lord—hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die;" yet repentance could not prevent the threatened chastisement. If good men will sin they must be corrected, their penitence notwithstanding; and their correction, in an ordinary way, is so peculiarly adapted to the nature of their sins, as to convince them why it is that the Lord contends with them. David had a child, the fruit of this iniquity, and that child must die. He had destroyed the peace of an unoffending family, and the peace of his own family must be destroyed. Rape and incest must be committed among his own children. He had slain Uriah with the

sword of the children of Ammon, and one of his own sons must assassinate another,—one of his own nephews must assassinate another nephew,—the son whom he most tenderly loved must seek his own life and perish under circumstances almost to break the father's heart. He had violated the order of God's kingdom, and his own kingdom must be disturbed and brought to the verge of ruin by two successive rebellions. He had been treacherous to his faithful Uriah, and his most intimate friend and counsellor must prove treacherous to him. The child died,—Tamar was deflowered by the violence of her brother Amnon,—Amnon was assassinated by his brother Absalom. Absalom fled and was in exile three years; "and the soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom." At length he sent Joab to bring him back. Absalom returned and raised the standard of rebellion against his father. Ahithophel, David's friend and counsellor, joined the rebellion. Almost all his kingdom revolted, excited perhaps by resentment at the affair of Uriah. Destruction seemed to surround him on every hand. He fled with a small band from Jerusalem. Absalom entered the city and openly committed incest with ten of his father's concubines. Ahithophel, having lost his influence with Absalom, went "and hanged himself." "David," in his pitiful flight, "went up by the ascent of

Mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot," in token of humiliation; "and all the people that" were "with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up." Shimei, of the house of Saul, came forth and cursed him and cast stones at him and reviled him as a bloody man and a man of Belial. Absalom pursued him across Jordan, and there in a pitched battle was slain in an awful manner, leaving the father to lament a favourite son sent unprepared to his last account, and to cry over him, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom; would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son." The first rebellion being quelled, Sheba raised another; and while Amasa, David's nephew, was leading an army against the rebels, he was assassinated by his cousin Joab. All these rebellions and murders and incests and treacheries, were in consequence of the crimes of David against the house of Uriah. Though God had so far pardoned him as to shield him from ruin, yet he inflicted upon him these grievous calamities. The sins of David produced effects which no penitence could prevent or reverse. *He could be again restored to his throne; he could again enjoy communion with God; but nothing could restore his two sons and his counsellor to life and to innocence; nothing could restore the former state of his daughter and of his ten concubines. They must consume their life in seclusion and widowhood. Nothing could recall Amasa from the dead, with all the men who fell in those civil wars. Nothing could efface the remembrance of those misfortunes, nor of the many unkindnesses and injuries received from men in that scene of confusion and crime. Christians may sin and may be forgiven, but the evil effects of their sins it is often impossible to reverse. Ah, let them shun those steps which cannot be retraced. Let them fear to offend him who could deal so severely with "the man after his own heart."*

We cannot well conceive of a man in more trying circumstances than David was when he fled from Jerusalem. Few instances can be found in the records of time of so much greatness and meekness united in a conflict with so deep

misfortunes. It is interesting to behold the royal prophet, the sweet singer of Israel, struggling with such complicated adversity, with the temper, not of a king, but of a saint; not with a stateliness of resentment, but with tender and humble submission to his Father's will. He was then under the first impression which the news of his son's rebellion and of the revolt of almost all his kingdom had produced. He had no time to deliberate. He said to the little band that remained faithful to him, "Arise and let us flee, for we shall not else escape from Absalom. Make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword." So all the people that were with him made haste to depart out of one of the eastern gates into the valley through which Kidron ran, between Jerusalem and Mount Olivet. And all the people passed over the brook Kidron in the way towards Jordan. And Zadok the priest, and all the Levites, were with them "bearing the ark of the covenant of God, and they set down the ark of God" in the valley "until all the people had done passing out of the city."

Let us pause a moment and reflect on the trying condition of this fugitive prince. Driven from the beloved city which God had chosen,—cast down in one hour from the pinnacle of glory to the condition of an outcast,—dethroned by his own favourite son,—suddenly ejected from the pre-eminent seat he had held in the hearts of his people,—his whole kingdom running to arms to pursue his flight,—without one ally on earth,—with all the neighbouring nations his foes,—with only a small band to accompany and share his fortunes,—having no place of retreat, and not knowing where to go;—what prospects could he have but to be overwhelmed by a world in arms? There seemed to be but one hope. The ministers of God, the priests and Levites, remained faithful to him, and he had the ark of God with him. The ark of God had ever been considered a defence against every enemy. Besides, could he make good his flight and arrive at a place of safety, carrying the ark of God and all the priests and Levites with him, a man of human calculations would have counted

that this would have been his only hope. All the pious people in the nation, unable to enjoy sabbaths and divine worship without the ark and the ministers of God, would have fled to him and strengthened his hands. The whole nation would have been obliged to sue to him for the restoration of the ark, and must have submitted to any terms to procure this indispensable blessing. But then Jerusalem was the place which God had appointed for the residence of the ark, and no man had authority to remove it to another position. This then was the condition of the pious king. Every principle of human policy would have dictated to take the ark with him. But the measure would not have been strictly right. If ever he could be induced to resort to an unlawful measure for his own defence, one would think it would be at such a time, while under the paroxysm of his first alarm. But how do we find him? In the confusion of the first impressions,—in the pressing straits to which he was suddenly reduced,—we find him calm and resigned. He would not resort to the crooked devices of human policy. He would avail himself of no improper advantage put into his hands. He resolved to do that which was perfectly right and cast himself on the divine protection. “Carry back,” says he, “the ark of God into the city. If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again and show me both it and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.” He was still and quiet “as a child that is weaned of his mother.” He was sensible that this storm had burst upon him for his great transgression. He saw the displeasure of God written, as it were, with the blood of Uriah. This was the most dreadful part of his sufferings. Had he been persecuted for righteousness’ sake, he could have borne it. But to be driven out from the holy city and from his kingdom by the displeasure of God, this was a terrible ingredient of his misery. But how did he demean himself under this awful visitation? Come and behold, ye who would learn a temper of submission to heaven under a combination of circumstances the most trying and

awful. He resigned himself unconditionally and entirely to the disposal of a holy and offended God. “If he thus say, I have no delight in thee;”—if for my heinous offences I am to be for ever banished from my kingdom and cast aside as a polluted thing, and see no more his holy tabernacle and altars,—no more come before him and commune with him in company with his people, but be cast out from his presence to wander a vagabond in another land of Nod; “behold here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.”

His meekness and submission were to undergo another severe trial. The same day, as he was fleeing barefoot and with his head covered, Shimei came forth and cursed him and cast stones at him and said, “Come out, come out, thou bloody man and thou man of Belial. The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul in whose stead thou hast reigned;—and behold thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man. Then said Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, unto the king, Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head. And the kind said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?—Behold, my son which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life; how much more now may this Benjamite do it: let him alone and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be that the Lord will look on my affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day. And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill’s side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him and cast dust.” But all this insult could not disturb the equanimity of David. He viewed his sins to be so great as to deserve all this reproach and misery. He looked beyond instruments and saw the hand of God in all this. He loved supremely the government of his heavenly Father. He had a deep sense that infinite wisdom, rectitude, and goodness held the throne. It was his deliberate choice that God should govern, whatever became of him. It is

evident also that he still cherished a secret hope in the mercy of that holy God whom he had offended. The aggravations of his guilt and the sudden burst of the storm, were indeed almost enough to overwhelm him with an exclusive sense of wrath, and would have completely overwhelmed the hopes of one of less faith. But he still ventured to cast an eye towards the mercy-seat. "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again and show me both it and his habitation." "It may be that the Lord will look upon my affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." No combination of circumstances could produce a much more threatening state of things,—could seem more pregnant with ruin; and yet he could not only submit, he could commit himself to the mercies of God with humble and sweet reliance. He had often experienced the faithful interposition of God in his favour. He had been assisted in his conflict with the lion and the bear, and in his encounter with Goliath. He had experienced remarkable interpositions of providence under the persecutions of Saul, and in reaching the throne, and in all his wars with the neighbouring nations. His whole life had been one continued proof of divine faithfulness; and in his sweet and tender Psalms he had often poured forth the effusions of his gratitude and confidence, and celebrated the mercy and faithfulness of God in strains as though an angel sung. This God who had been his stay and protection in all his trials,—“the Angel which” had “redeemed” him “from all evil,”—how could he distrust him under present calamities? He calmly committed to him his cause, his kingdom, his life. He did not send abroad to Moab or Ammon. He sought no allies beneath the heavens. He cast himself solely upon the protection of that God who had been his refuge in trouble all his life long.

And what was the effect? Let the ends of the earth come and look, and never distrust God again. The traitorous son was slain: “and” immediately “all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the

hand of the Philistines, and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom: and Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?” And all Judah and one half of Israel came down to Jordan to meet the king and to escort him to Jerusalem, while the other half were grieved and offended that they had not been invited to share in this honour; and in the end they fell to quarrelling among themselves on the moot-point, Who had the most interest in David or who had the best right to their king. The history of the world has scarcely recorded an instance of such sudden and astonishing reverses of fortune in so rapid a succession. When God had occasion to punish his servant, he let loose the passions of the nation; and from attachment which approached to adoration, they all joined in revolt. Rebellion ran from heart to heart like an electric shock, till the whole nation were in arms. But when the purpose of chastisement was answered,—when David humbled himself before God, submitted to his chastising strokes, committed himself to his hands, and trusted in his mercy and protection; he who has the hearts of all men in his hands “as the rivers of water” and “turneth” them “whithersoever he will,” as suddenly drew the hearts of the people again to their king and reinstated him on the throne. Who after this will ever hesitate to submit to God in any case, or to commit themselves to his faithful care? In what condition can we ever find it more difficult to submit than David found it? And yet David submitted. In what circumstances can danger and ruin more loudly threaten us, or can we find it harder to trust in God? And yet David trusted. From what straits and difficulties can deliverance seem more unlikely? Yet David was suddenly delivered by the God in whom he confided. What reason then have we for everlasting reliance on the God of David under every possible trial, yea in the very eye of ruin.

There is something very sweet in contemplating the life and experiences of David,—in observing his wonderful trust in God, and the tokens of divine faithfulness by which that trust was rewarded. One can scarcely view these things

without finding the roughness of life smoothed and every anxiety relieved by a new confidence in God. Those were blessed days, says the Christian, as he reads the triumphant expressions of the Psalmist's confidence and joy. And while he reads, a dawn of the same blessedness breaks upon his own soul. The triumphs of those days might be brought down to modern times would Christians now as peacefully submit and as sweetly rely on the faithfulness of God. Nothing is necessary to make life happy but such a submission and trust. How smoothly would our days glide away,—how lightly would the ills of life sit upon us,—what a new relish would be given to prosperity,—what cheerful spirits,—what rich and heavenly comforts,—could these graces be kept alive in our hearts.

And then, my brethren, what *reason* have we for submission and trust and the commitment of all our concerns to that kind and merciful and faithful God. On this delightful theme I could sweetly enlarge. I could set before you those glorious perfections on which the people of God have reposed in every age, and on which they may safely rest their everlasting confidence. I might show you that they who submit to God's disposal and commit all their ways to him, are delivered from a thousand evils, and are for ever safe. But I will only refer you to your own experience. It was a remark of the blind and pious Mr. Prince of Boston, *that they who will observe the providence of God shall never want for matter of observation*. How often has your heavenly Father interposed in your favour in a manner that filled you with wonder, gratitude, and joy. How often has he remarkably interfered to deliver you from your sins, and sometimes from ruin, and often from straits and difficulties. If you have not been conscious of such interpositions, it was because you

did not heed them. A review of those wonders of divine faithfulness which have filled our lives, will be a delightful and affecting part of the employment of heaven. And shall not such a God be trusted now? This dear faithful Lord who has delivered us from so many sorrows, who has conferred on us so many blessings, who never deserted those that put their trust in him, though the world and even friends forsook them; shall not he be trusted? It is enough to make one weep that any should refuse to honour and confide in such a God. Hither let the afflicted direct their eyes. Here let them cast all the burdens which they are carrying through this vale of tears. Hither let them resort in every time of trouble. Here they will find their only peace and rest,—peace which the terrors of dissolving worlds cannot disturb. It is an infinite privilege that they have such a shelter from the storms of life,—a shelter so indispensable that they know not what they could do without it. I pity the man who has to encounter the ills of life without a God to rest upon. This is the wretchedness of impenitent men. Poor souls! When troubles arise they must bear them as well as they can. They have no God to go to. Little do they know how much they lose by doing without a God. Ah, what prospects can they have when they look forward to the afflictions of their future course,—the loss of friends, the loss of health, the approach of death? What will they do without a God? O my friends, let me press upon you one fervent entreaty,—that you would instantly seek a God whose smiles can brighten the darkest shades,—whose favour is everlasting life. Seek him while yet he may be found. Seek him with all your heart, and you shall not seek in vain. Find him and you are made for a long eternity. Amen.

SERMON XLIV.

TRUST IN GOD.

ISAIAH xxvi. 3, 4.—Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.

IN this vale of tears, in this world of guilt and conflict, in this state of awful suspense, while hopes and fears are bending forward to investigate the darkness of the grave, we greatly need the consolation which is found in a covenant God. Having vast concerns at stake on the present and eternal fate of those we love,—on the uncertain questions whether we shall be saved,—whether we shall be preserved from disgracing religion by crimes or injuring it by indiscretions,—the soul looks out of itself for some ground to rest upon. It does not look in vain. There is One, who, as though he lived for no other purpose, offers himself for our help, our hope, our rest. Although to the eye that reads the law and sees only the purity and justice of God, he appears a consuming fire, yet he is a God of the tenderest compassion, and is unchangeably resolved, and is bound by oath, to exercise this compassion towards a guilty world. With the most perfect sincerity he has proclaimed these intentions, and offered himself to us all as security for every interest committed to his care; reserving to himself the right of managing the deposite in a way most subservient to his glory and our final happiness. A door is therefore open for one as much as another to come and cast themselves, and all their interests, upon God. None are debarred on account of their sin. None need to feel excluded under an apprehension that they are unregenerate. The unregenerate themselves are invited to come and place unwavering confidence in God. Whatever opinion we may form of our own character, if we find a disposition to commit our interests to God as the rightful King and the merciful and faithful Sa-

viour, we may do it without hesitation or reserve. Whatever distrust we may have of ourselves, if the true God, as revealed in the Gospel, is indeed the object of our confidence, we may safely trust him without reserve. We may indeed indulge a false confidence of our interest in his mercy; in which case, not the true God, but a god created in our own imagination, is the foundation of our hope. The trust required must have for its object the true God as he shines "in the face of Jesus Christ," and must be the acting of a heart that approves of the whole character, law, and government of God and of the Gospel of his grace, and chooses him for a Guardian, and cheerfully commits the management of all affairs to him. In full belief of his wisdom to select the best measures for the happiness of his great family,—of his benevolence to adopt such measures,—of his power to carry them into execution,—of his justice that can do no injury to any of his creatures,—of the unchanging truth of his promise to bestow upon his children every real good, to defend them from every real evil, and to make them the happier for every event that does occur,—Christians feel it to be an infinite privilege to live under his government, and with unspeakable delight elect him for their King and Saviour, and commit to him every thing dear to them for time or eternity, assured that he will manage all affairs as they would do did they possess infinite wisdom, love, and power. They discover in the Gospel ample provision for their pardon and salvation. They perceive an infinite fountain to which they may bring their friends. They are confident that the interests of the Church are safe. They regard their

worldly troubles as the salutary chastisement of a Father's rod.

In the blessed hour when this trust is predominant, they are "in perfect peace." Assured that under the reign of infinite wisdom and love, there is no cause for the universe to be sad, but every reason for it to be full of gladness, they are at rest whatever comes. If riches, honours, or friends depart,—if diseases assail them,—they can compose themselves in God. Their confidence in him and acquiescence in his will raise them above all the storms of life, and keep them calm while tempests beat upon the world without. Sweet is their peace, sweet their devotions, and sweet their very trials. With almighty strength on their side, they would not "fear though the earth" were "removed, and though the mountains" were "carried into the midst of the sea." This trust made Daniel cheerful in the lions' den. This supported the three children in the fiery furnace. This caused Paul and Silas to sing for joy in the caverns of a dungeon. This cheered John in the desolate abodes of Patmos. This converted the tongues of the martyrs into harps while stiffening in the flames on which they ascended to glory. Ah, how much of the vexations of life should we shun by thus staying our minds on God. What serenity did this give to David in all his afflictions. With what divine luxury it taught his lips to sing, "Many sorrows shall be to the wicked, but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about." "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

There is something very expressive in the phrase, "whose mind is *stayed* on thee." The weary traveller sits down upon a bank and stays himself upon it. The soul that thus rests its whole weary weight on God, how composed and safe must it feel. What a glorious foundation is infinite strength, wisdom, love, and faithfulness on which to rest.

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee," for this very act of reliance composes every tumult; and another reason is added: "because he trusteth in thee." It is pleasing to God for men to trust in him because this is a reasonable and holy act, and he has pledged himself to re-

ward it. No duty is more frequently enjoined in his word, and to none are greater promises made. Indeed this is the very *faith* to which *all* the promises are made. It is worthy of remark that the word *trust* is seldom used in the New Testament, because *faith* is there substituted for it. And in the Old Testament *faith* is scarcely used, but *trust* is every where employed. The reason seems to be, that in the time of the Old Testament the great object of faith was so indistinctly revealed, that men could do little more than trust generally in a merciful and faithful God.

A still more forcible idea seems implied in the reason assigned, "because he trusteth in thee." Were you to hear a father say, I will assist my son because he has believed my word and made dependence upon me, you would understand him to imply, that he was bound in *honour* and *integrity* not to disappoint the confidence thus reposed. So here. The honour of God seems to be considered as pledged to reward the confidence of his children. And it is pledged. What would the world say, if after encouraging his children by large and numerous promises and oaths,—oaths sworn by himself and his holiness,—to commit themselves to his care,—he should disappoint all their hopes? if he should leave them to wander about neglected orphans? The attachment of God to his sacred honour will prevent all this. Such an idea seems implied in the following words of David: "O how great is thy goodness—which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee *before the sons of men*."

Here I perceive the humble heart to take alarm. What, shall God be *bound* to reward my worthless confidence after all my sins? Shall it be deemed *dishonourable* in him to crush such a wretch beneath his feet? No, against myself I will maintain, and will die with the testimony on my tongue, that he is just in taking eternal vengeance.—Hush your alarms, ingenuous soul. No one is violating your Father's honour. I know it is surprising boldness to speak as I have done; but has not amazing grace permitted it? Though we are vile as the dirt, yet he who broke us off from the first Adam and made us members of his dear Son, allows us to urge claims,

though not on his justice, yet on his grace and truth, for all that is due to Christ. By grace the relations of father and child are restored; and no account is made of our pardoned sin to prevent us from calculating on his tenderness, as a son might calculate on the tenderness of a parent *unoffended* and bound to him by love and promise.

We may therefore be confident that God will not disappoint the hopes that rest upon his promise. It is perfectly safe to trust in him, however guilt may reproach the boldness as presumptuous. It is safe to trust in him for pardon, for deliverance from sin, for guidance, comfort, and final salvation;—for every needed worldly blessing, and for the upbuilding of his Church. Even in hours when the soul is overwhelmed with guilt, and anticipates destruction in its most horrid forms, trust in God will bring relief. In hours of affliction it will bring either a mitigation of the distress or support under its pressure. Often has it brought sudden deliverance from straits the most perplexing and from trials seemingly insupportable and not to be shunned. It is common for God to reward the confidence of his children with relief and comfort far exceeding expectation. They who wait on him for *spiritual* growth “shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary,—they shall walk and not faint.” And they who rely on him for *temporal* comforts, are not likely to “want any good thing.” “Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed.—Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.—Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him:—for—those that wait upon the Lord shall inherit the earth.” “Our fathers trusted in thee; they trusted and thou didst deliver them.” “They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed but abideth for ever.” “It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.” “Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.”

In the chapter preceding the text, the prophet had been representing the great

salvation which in the latter day would be accomplished for Zion. Standing on the mount of vision and looking down the lapse of time, he saw across the billows of many troublous years, the Church standing on the field she had won and triumphantly singing, “Lo this is our God, we have waited for him and he will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” He caught the hallowed flame, and while the amazing scenes of divine faithfulness lay open before him, he exclaimed, “Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.” Vast ideas seemed to struggle in his mind for utterance. He appeared to be full of the grandest sense of the everlasting energy and faithfulness of God. Overcome with the great discovery, he could only say, “Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.” He did not exhort us to trust in a feeble arm, but in Jehovah; not in one who would be exhausted by a single effort, but in him who has “everlasting strength.” He did not exhort us to trust in the Lord for a season, but “for ever.” Some seem willing to commit their *present* circumstances to God, but dare not venture their *eternal* interests in his hands. Others seem willing to trust him for an hour, but their confidence is like the “morning cloud and—early dew.” Neither of these fulfil the command. Our trust must be as everlasting as his strength.

And now, my beloved hearers, whatever be your trials, fears, or discouragements, here is a pillow on which you may cast yourselves. Gather up every care and whatever disturbs your peace, and lay all to rest here. Here is an antidote for all the ills of life, and for all the apprehensions respecting a life to come. “Who is among you that feareth the Lord,—that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God.” Are any agitated with the vexations of care or the apprehensions of want? Let them listen to that heavenly voice: “He that putteth his trust in me, shall possess the land and shall inherit my holy mountain.” Are any heaving in secret the mourner’s sigh? The veriest solace in nature is the temper of

the afflicted Job: "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him." Come hither, ye children of grief and care;—from every hovel and dungeon come: here you may "fix" your "last abode and drown the sorrows of" your "soul."

Weak and tempted lambs of Christ, it is my special desire that this remedy may be applied to you. Instead of these sinking spirits, you ought to trust in the Lord for ever, and never have another distrust of him to eternity. How can infinite love and strength, and heavenly truth, fail you? Former saints trusted in him, and none ever found unfaithfulness in the Holy One of Israel. They can all testify to his frequent interpositions to deliver them from perplexities and trials because they trusted in him, and to his faithful supply of all their wants through a long succession of years. Jacob can tell how a covenant God preserved his trembling children from the sword of the incensed Esau. Abraham can tell how he attempted to sacrifice the heir of all the promises. He doubtless has told a thousand times in heaven, what feelings he had when he saw the ram caught in the thicket to ransom his son from death, and when

his full heart broke forth and called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh. He can tell how determined he was in that affecting hour never to distrust God again. Moses can tell of the deliverance at the Red Sea, the opening of the rock when waters failed, and the bread from heaven. David can point from the skies to the places where he was repeatedly delivered from the pursuit of Saul. Daniel can tell of the lions' den, and the three children of the seven-times heated furnace. Paul and all the army of martyrs can tell of the extracted sting of death. Heaven and earth are full of monuments of the faithfulness of God. And none of those who have got home to glory now repent that they placed such unwavering confidence in him. Nor will it be a grief of heart to us another day that we committed all our interests to him and stayed ourselves on his faithful arm. O then, my beloved hearers, let us bring up our hearts to "trust—in the Lord for ever;" that from blessed experience we may be enabled to testify in all future times, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." Amen.

SERMON XLV.

CHRISTIAN BOLDNESS.

PHIL. i. 12—14. But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

LIKE the burning bush, the Church has frequently been on fire, but not consumed. The rage of the enemy has only promoted her purity and growth. It is recorded of Israel in Egypt, that "the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew;" and it became a proverb in the early ages of Christianity, that the blood of the mar-

tyrs was the seed of the Church. It has always happened that the persecution of the ministers and disciples of Christ, has advanced the interest which it was intended to destroy. A remarkable instance of this is noticed in our text. Paul had been seized by the Jews and sent a prisoner to Rome. This only gave him an opportunity for "two

whole years, in his own hired house," to receive, in the metropolis of the world, "all that came unto him; preaching the kingdom of God and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him." And lest the church at Philippi should be tempted by false brethren to despise his ministry on account of the reproach heaped upon him, he tells them that the things which had happened to him had fallen out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel; that it had become manifest in the imperial palace and in all other places, that his bonds were imposed, not for evil doing, but for his fidelity to Christ; that though some of the professed supporters of the faith, envying his influence, had preached the Gospel "of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to" his "bonds;" yet many others, encouraged by the constancy which he had exhibited and the divine supports he had enjoyed, or moved by a generous sympathy and emulation, had waxed confident by his bonds and become "much more bold to speak the word without fear." Nothing but the cruel death of Christ brought out the timid Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. And it was not till the Jews of Pisidia openly contradicted and blasphemed, that Paul and Barnabas waxed bold to say, "Seeing ye—judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo we turn to the Gentiles." The apostle next declared his own unshaken constancy, and his "earnest expectation and hope that in nothing" he should "be ashamed, but that with all boldness" he should continue to magnify Christ, come life or death. His solace was that "many, waxing confident by" his "bonds," were "much more bold to speak the word without fear."

"Much more bold to speak the word without fear"! Could this be deemed necessary in the days of apostles and martyrs? in days when every professor had to encounter the hazard of confiscation of property and of death? in days when the incarnation and resurrection of Christ were so recent and attested by witnesses still alive? when inspired men were exhibiting in their own example the undoubted will of God to every eye? "Much more bold"! What, amidst all the intrepidity of the apostolic age?

The Christians of that day *were* bold,—bold to a degree which many in these times, could they see the same exhibition now, would pronounce rash. Yet so violent were the hazards to be encountered, that in general they did not venture so far as the Holy Ghost saw to be right. They went beyond any thing that we have ever done; and yet it was deemed by the holy apostle, and deemed in heaven, an object of desire to raise them to a still higher pitch of Christian heroism. It was accounted worth all the pains of his imprisonment to render them, not only *more* bold, but "*much* more bold to speak the word without fear." And this high state of intrepidity was the very means by which "the furtherance of the Gospel" was effected. There is no way to avoid the conclusion. Our text throws down upon the table before us, as written with a sun-beam, this incontrovertible

DOCTRINE,—*That the ordinary boldness of the apostolic age was not sufficient to satisfy the Holy Ghost.*

Let this doctrine stand before us. I shall not attempt to illustrate it; but under its countenance I shall proceed,

I. To distinguish true Christian boldness from its counterfeits, and to set forth some of its leading attributes.

II. To show the extent to which boldness is encouraged and required in the Scriptures, especially in the New Testament, and to hold up some of its most illustrious exemplifications.

III. To consider the great want of this virtue at the present day.

IV. To present some motives to rouse Christians to this holy and elevated frame, and to a corresponding course of conduct.

I. Let us distinguish true Christian boldness from its counterfeits, and set forth some of its leading attributes.

There is a false and hurtful boldness which may arise from either of the seven following causes.

1. Ignorance. There is such a thing as an unmannerly rudeness,—loud, coarse, impertinent, obtrusive, unseasonable,—without delicacy and without decorum,—untaught in the first principles of rendering honour to whom honour is due, fear to whom fear; which, under the notion of being plain-hearted, becomes offensive and sinks into downright im-

pudence; and which is practised because the subjects have no other way to attract attention.

2. A bad judgment. To this may be ascribed a great part of those mistakes which are ranked under the general head of imprudence. The boldness which is ruined from this cause, is not well timed nor well regulated; and although it may originate in proper motives, it is likely in the end to do more hurt than good.

3. Native rashness. There is such a thing as a constitutional hardihood which never fears and seldom thinks; which never takes the trouble to make itself acquainted with the operations of human nature and to regulate its motions accordingly; which stops not to consider the existing attitude of things or the probable tendency of measures, but plunges headlong in the dark, impelled by nothing but its own intrepidity. Such boldness is the madness which leaps the precipice. Nearly akin to this is,

4. The pride of courage, which scorns to fear the face of man. This is native rashness no longer left to its own thoughtless ravings, but reduced to a principle and bottomed on pride.

5. Mere natural resolution;—an invincible purpose that will break through every thing or thrust every thing aside that comes in the way of its own plans, and when selfishness directs it, I may add, at whatever expense to the feelings of others.

6. A wilful obstinacy, which is determined to have its own way in spite of every one else, and in resentment will go the faster for the interferences of others. This is natural resolution stiffened by a proud and unyielding will.

7. A domineering spirit, which wishes nothing so much as to make itself feared.

Under the influence of some or all of these causes, a man may be very bold with a boldness most offensive to God and most disgusting to men. The boldness of Christians themselves, in this imperfect state, may be mixed more or less with these false ingredients; and they cannot be too cautious and jealous of themselves in watching against this wood, hay, and stubble. Native resolution and native courage may indeed be sanctified and form ingredients in the

composition of the most elevated and useful characters, as in the instances of David and Daniel and Paul and Peter and Luther and Wickliffe and Whitefield. But after all, the boldness which God approves must be chiefly drawn from other sources, and possess higher and more ethereal attributes.

1. This boldness must be bottomed on holy love,—love to God and love to man. Further than it is this, it is a mere natural property or something worse. It must be a course of self-denial, in which our own interest is purposely subjected to the glory of God and the good of men. It must be prompted by a dutiful regard to the divine authority. We must be bold because we understand it to be the will of God that we should expose our own ease and reputation for his sake. So far as our boldness partakes of this character, it will be free from every thing bitter towards men; and though it darts severe and awful frowns against sin, it will do it with the most placid serenity towards the person of the sinner. The boldness of Paul, as set forth in his Epistles, appears wholly free from human passion. The absence of all resentment, the patience, the fervent love, which appear in his Epistles to the churches of Galatia and Corinth, from whom he had received severe injuries, exhibit a specimen of holiness the most elevated and wonderful that ever appeared in a mere man. Except the single instance of Christ; nothing this side of God himself appears so much like God.

2. This boldness must be humble. Though opposed to a morbid timidity and shame-facedness, it does not break up the genuine humility of the character, but consists with the utmost gentleness, meekness, and true modesty. These traits never appeared to better advantage than in the intrepid Paul. Never did genuine humility and ingenuous modesty more gloriously shine in a mere man, than in his second Epistle to the Corinthians; in which, to vindicate himself and his ministry against unjust imputations, he was compelled to assume the appearance of boasting. Every word in his own defence seemed uttered with a blush. He discharged the duty with evident distress, and frequently stopped to apologize, and as though

disgusted with his own words, he repeatedly said that he spoke like a fool. Yet amidst all this wonderful modesty, his boldness never appeared more conspicuous. "Great is my boldness of speech towards you," he says in this very Epistle. How different is the boldness coupled with such humility, from the impertinence of ignorance, from foolhardy rashness, from the pride of courage, from mere native resolution, from wilful obstinacy, or from the overbearing spirit of domination.

3. This boldness must be delicate and regardful of all the rules of decorum. Holy love is the most delicate of all principles. It is that sacred sense of propriety, and that tender regard for the interests and feelings of others, in which is founded the most correct taste. With what ingenuous respect and decorum did Paul demean himself before Agrippa. Far from blustering and bluntness, the serenity, the sweetness, the dignity of Christian love, joined to a liberal education, rendered him courtly and polite.

4. This boldness must be wise, discreet, and prudent. Under this head I observe, First, in general, that it ought to be under the direction of a good judgment and a general acquaintance with men and things. It ought to be exercised warily, with a vigilant attention to the operations of human nature, to existing circumstances, to time and place, and not without weighing the tendency of all measures pursued. Secondly, it ought not to overlook any opportunity, by lawful means, to disarm prepossessions and to enlist them on its own side, instead of needlessly running foul of the prejudices of men. It should strive to disarm prejudices against the truth and prejudices against the man who administers it, so as to prevent, as far as can consist with fidelity, both an obstruction to his usefulness and an injury to his person. Paul furnishes an example of prudence in all these respects. To disarm the prejudices of the Athenians against the truth, he seized the inscription on one of their altars and a sentence of one of their poets, to convince them that the God he preached was not a new Deity in Athens, but one whom they already ignorantly worshipped. To prevent pre-

judices from attaching to his person so as to impede his usefulness, he studiously conformed to the harmless customs of the different nations among whom he travelled. To the Jews he became as a Jew; to those who were without the ceremonial law, as without that law; to the weak, as weak. In this sense he became "all things to all men." An instance of this appears in his yielding to the ceremony of purification in the temple. And to prevent a similar prejudice from impeding the usefulness of a young minister, he circumcised Timothy. Equally skilful was he to protect himself against prejudices which threatened injury to his person, and even to draw those prejudices over him for a shelter. When he stood before the enraged Sanhedrim, perceiving that a part were Sadducees and a part Pharisees, "he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." From that moment the Pharisees could find no fault in him, but insisted that if a spirit or an angel had spoken to him they ought not to fight against God. And so he escaped. Thirdly, this boldness should be seasonable. We are not to bring out all truth at once, nor the truth in all companies. Not all at once. Our Saviour taught the disciples gradually. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." "No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment;—neither do men put new wine into old bottles." And Paul told the Corinthians, "I have fed you with milk and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." Not in all companies. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet and turn again and rend you." Fourthly, this boldness ought not to overlook the happiest form of exhibiting truth. The royal "preacher sought to find out acceptable words." And this holy apostle always showed a studious care to win his hearers by the manner of his address. Witness his speech to the Jews from the castle of Antonia, and his conversation with the Jews after he arrived at Rome, and especially his most eloquent speech before

Agrippa. Thus much in relation to the attributes of wisdom, discretion, and prudence. But after all,

5. This boldness must be faithful. Notwithstanding the conciliating conversation which Paul held with the Jews at Rome, yet when they refused to listen to the Gospel, he discharged upon them the thundering denunciation of one of their prophets, and then proceeded to say, "Be it known therefore unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear it." Both in public and private, both by ministers and lay brethren, the truth ought to be brought out as fast, not as a selfish, temporizing fear, but as a warm and prudent zeal shall dictate. And after a suitable preparation, every truth which God has revealed is to be displayed in its most naked form. There must be no concealment. It was in reference to this very point that our Saviour said to his disciples by way of solemn injunction, "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid, that shall not be known." In our general conversation and conduct, in the measures we adopt for the advancement of religion, in the stand we take for the truth, we must never be held back by selfish fear, or by any fear but the fear of God. We must hold ourselves in constant readiness to sacrifice ease and property, reputation and life, as far as the cause of Christ requires it; and never stop short of any point of real duty to save our lives, much less to promote our popularity or secular interest. Wherever the will of God would carry us,—wherever an apostle would go, there we should go, whatever hazards we encounter. Our own interests in this thing ought to be entirely subjected to the will of God; and what will help or mar our character or estate, ought not even to be made a question when the will of God is known. We should be nerved with courage, in the course of duty, to meet a world in arms, and to face death in all its most terrific forms.

6. This boldness, to be truly evangelical, must be grounded, not merely on self-denial and submission to the will of God, but on humble confidence in him. In this lies the nerve of all genuine courage. By this we derive all our strength even to subject our interest to

his will. To be set to work to perform this act of self-denial without being permitted to draw our strength from him by the confidence of faith, would be indeed to be required to make brick without straw. Besides, there is a regard for self-interest which the sanctified soul still retains; and it must tremble for what it is still allowed to hold dear, unless it can place itself under the protection of the divine throne and repose under the shadow of the Almighty. This it was which supported the courage of David. "In God I have put my trust, I will not fear what flesh can do unto me." "The Lord is on my side, I will not fear: what can man do unto me?" The grand support of Christian courage lies in a faith disciplined to take hold of the strength of God, and exercised to sing, "O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou has wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men. Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man; thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues."

11. I am to show the extent to which boldness is encouraged and required in the Scriptures, especially in the New Testament, and to hold up some of its most illustrious exemplifications.

Let us first look at the precepts and promises, and then at the examples. For the precepts and promises turn first to the Old Testament. "Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law: fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings; for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them as wool.—Who art thou that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?" "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense; he will come and save you." Fear thou not, for I am

with thee ; be not dismayed, for I am thy God : and I will strengthen thee, yea I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Behold all they that were incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded, and they shall be as nothing, and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee. They that war against thee shall be as nothing and as a thing of naught. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will help thee. Fear not, thou worm Jacob and ye men of Israel ; I will help thee, saith the Lord and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel." " Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name ; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. —Fear not, for I am with thee."

Turn now to the New Testament. "Fear not, little flock ; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven ; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." "He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee : so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me." "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world the world would love his own ; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master, and the servant as his Lord. If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household. Fear them not therefore ; [and now to the point in hand ;] for there is nothing covered that shall not be reveal-

ed, and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light ; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-top. And fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul ; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing ? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven ; but whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth ; I come not to send peace but a sword : for I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me ; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me : and he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." "There is no man that hath left house or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive a hundred fold now in this time ; houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands, *with persecutions* ; and in the world to come, eternal life." "But the *fearful* and unbelieving—shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death "

SERMON XLVI.

CHRISTIAN BOLDNESS.

PSAL. i. 12—14. But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

I now proceed, under the second division, to some of the exemplifications of this high and holy temper. Let us sweep the ages. I will carry you back to the days before the flood. Noah had the boldness to stand forth the single preacher of righteousness against a united world, and to bear their rancour and reproaches for a hundred and twenty years. Moses had the boldness to encounter all the power and displeasure of Egypt, "not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible." Daniel had the boldness to resist the whole authority of the Persian empire and to commit himself to the lions' den. The three children had the boldness to say to the enraged emperor of the east, in full view of the seven-times heated furnace, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he *will* deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we *will not* serve thy gods nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up." "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephtha, of David also and Samuel and the prophets, who [by the intrepidity and power of faith,] subdued kingdoms,—stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.—And others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourg-

ings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy :) they wandered in deserts and in mountains and in dens and caves of the earth."

Come now to the New Testament. "Lo we have left all and have followed thee," was the motto of the first disciples. Peter and John, arraigned before the Sanhedrim and forbidden to speak any more in the name of Jesus, returned this heroic answer: "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." "And being let go, they went to their own company and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And—they lifted up their voice to God with one accord and said, Lord, thou art God which made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things?—And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants that *with all boldness they may speak thy word*.—And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were all assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and *they spoke the word of God with boldness*." When brought again before the council and called to account for disobeying the former injunction, "Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our

fathers raised up Jesus whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.—And we are his witnesses,—and so is also the Holy Ghost whom God hath given to them that obey him.” The council then beat them and commanded them to speak no more in that name, and let them go. “And they departed,—rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple and in every house they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ.” When Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, was arraigned before the same council, he solemnly charged them, “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers.” Paul too, abandoning all his earthly prospects, had the courage to encounter the wrath and scorn of his noble patrons and friends, and to break through reproaches and hardships and sufferings which no other mere man ever endured; saying as he went, “Yea doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ.” In his address to the elders of Ephesus he said, “And now behold I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.” And when, at Cæsarea, they besought him not to continue his journey to Jerusalem, he answered, “What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

It may be a matter of wonder that Christ should have laid so much affliction on those whom he so tenderly

loved; but a second thought will relieve the surprise. The Christian religion was sent to raise men from under the wide and strong dominion of selfishness; and this voluntary exercise in the school of suffering was well calculated to train the apostles to an habitual subjection of their own interest to the will of God, and at the same time to teach the world the precise end which Christianity came to accomplish.

III. Let us consider the great want of this virtue at the present day.

Open your eyes on the world; look at the conduct of ministers and Christians, and compare them with this example of prophets and apostles: and how do they agree? or rather how widely do they disagree? Such an alliance has been formed between the Church and the world by the bond of a secularized Christianity, that the two kingdoms live together in perfect peace. And when one, glancing at the struggles of the apostolic age, begins to make inquiries, he is immediately told that the state of things is entirely changed, that the world has now become Christian, and that it must be a man's own fault if he awakens opposition in any but the dregs of society. How comes it then to pass that these same worldly Christians, (all who have not been born again,) as soon as they die and go into the immediate presence of God, find in themselves the spirit of fiends? Had they not these hearts before? and if the character of God and the nature of religion had been laid bare to their view, would not the same hearts have risen against them then? I know that the civilized world are Christian in general; but if they are not raised above the dominion of selfishness, they are no more reconciled in heart to the true religion of God than pagans. While men continue unsanctified and are determined to remain at ease, they will throw religion into such forms as will accord with their selfish taste. Then they can love it indeed. You may please them in the general exhibitions of truth while you do not change that form. But the moment you bring out religion in its own naked nature, as waging an eternal war with selfishness;—the moment you disturb their security and awaken fears for their own dear selves;—the

moment you uncover a God that lays their Dagon on its face;—you perceive that these smooth Christians have the heart of a Jew still; and unless restrained by social affections or some apparent interest, they will rise with the spirit of the scribe and pharisee. This being the case, it is certain that where carnal minds can remain quiet under the ministry of the word, and be delighted with that ministry, there must be some defect in respect of plainness, at least in respect of point. But how many instances do you see in which a whole congregation of carnal men will hang upon the lips of a preacher from year to year with great delight and without one uneasy feeling. Put Paul into that pulpit, and what confusion he would make in an hour. It would be the first age revived; and he would find it as hard to deal with baptised pagans as with those he formerly encountered. You may not disturb the dominion of selfishness with impunity. You may not attack that ancient monarch on his native throne and escape unhurt. This danger is felt; and men who are more for peace than for purity, contrive to mould religion into convenient forms, or get up various pretences to avoid the cross and satisfy their conscience. Some indeed throw themselves into the tide and float down the stream. These are mere men-pleasers; a commodity as common as it is cheap. Enough of them may be found in every market. There are others who bring out truth in the main, but keep back a part. Others bring out the whole, but bring it out in generals; and when they come to particulars, they dwell only on the least offensive parts. Such men pass for orthodox and good; and so they are, and may please Christians in a state of coldness, and may so far nourish them as to keep the breath of life in them; but they are not likely to rouse the wicked either to seriousness or to resentment. Nor are they likely, by a discriminating exhibition of truth, to undeceive those who are hugging a delusive hope. They live in peace with their flock, and die and go to heaven, but carry few of their hearers with them. Indeed when I turn my eye again on the picture drawn from primitive times, I am constrained to believe that the *great mass* are deficient in point of boldness. Some are rash. In-

stances you will find of all those kinds of false courage which have been described. And these bring discredit on that humble, discreet, evangelical boldness which is so much needed. But where men are not carried forward by these false currents, they are very likely to stop short of their duty. They know how disturbing the truth is to the wicked,—that it is like heated iron to their flesh,—that if stung with it they will roar and defame. They are therefore under a constant temptation to keep back a part. If they have any selfishness remaining, without the strictest guard it will hold their arm. This same evil contaminates the whole mass of the Church. Private Christians are afraid to have the whole council of God declared in the most pointed form, lest it should drive people from the sanctuary. They are afraid to talk themselves to their fellow men in the manner most calculated to impress their hearts. They are afraid to reprove sins in their brethren, and to exercise the faithful discipline of the Church. They are afraid to take any thorough measures to promote religion, lest some should scoff and others complain. They are afraid to go to the select friends over whom they have influence, and press them with tears. They are afraid to talk to their own parents and brothers and sisters, as dying men to dying men. Thus this wretched timidity, this dastardly, time-serving policy, prevents any thing from being done, and leaves the world,—leaves our dearest friends to perish by our side. This is the murderer of our parents and the destroyer of our children. Its name is called fear, modesty, bashfulness; but with the face of a lamb it has the jaws of a lion and devours much flesh. Is it not time to arise in all the energy and anguish of compassion and banish this enemy of the souls of men? Is it not time to come up with one heart and hand to this business, and with one consent set all our powers against this destroyer of a world? Come to my aid while I attempt,

IV. To present some motives to rouse you to this holy and elevated frame, and to a corresponding course of conduct.

1. This Christian heroism is absolutely necessary to clear up the eviden-

ces of your own piety. You have read the sentence, that they who would save their life shall lose it, and that they who would lose their life for Christ's sake shall find it. You have heard that the fearful and unbelieving shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. While then you are fearful and unbelieving, you cannot have satisfying evidence that you are Christians; you bear about upon your front the broad mark of perdition. After what has been said you cannot doubt that it is the will of God that you should come up thus boldly to his work. You cannot demur from any doubts about your duty. If then you tremble and hold back still, you know it is from a mere selfish regard to your own reputation and interest. And if you can be actually kept back by selfishness against the known will of God, you are in this thing *governed* by selfishness, not merely in a weaker moment, but habitually. And if in any one allowed thing you are habitually governed by selfishness in opposition to the known will of God, it is just the same evidence against you as any other habitual sin. One habit of indulged sin furnishes alarming symptoms that you do not love God better than yourselves, and that you are therefore cut off by that law, "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother,—and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." While regard to yourselves can habitually keep you back from a duty which you know God has enjoined, and for the neglect of which you have no excuse, it is impossible, to say the least, that you should have *evidence* of your adoption. If this sin is indulged, no wonder that you are oppressed with doubts. And while it continues, your doubts will remain. You may pray and try a thousand ways, but that sin will place a cloud between you and God which all creation cannot remove till the cause itself is taken away. And if you *can confidently* hope still, unquestionably your hope is that of the hypocrite which will perish when God takes away the soul.

2. Without rising up to this heroic and active zeal, you cannot be faithful to God and your generation. Nothing short of doing with your might what your hands find to do, is fidelity. But

while you are trembling and afraid to move, you know you leave much important work undone which you might have performed. How much ignorance might you have removed, how many sins might you have prevented, how many souls might you have brought to the knowledge of the truth, if this base timidity had been banished twenty years ago. And is this acting a faithful part towards God and your generation? In a few days you will stand before the judgment seat of Christ: and will you go on to meet that day persisting in the same unfaithfulness still? You will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to read on a leaf there to be opened, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

3. Estimate the importance of this duty by considering what would be the effect if *all* professing Christians were thus intrepid and faithful. The great truths of religion would, as it were, walk the streets uncovered. They would meet the carnal heart at every turn like drawn swords. These sharp arrows of the Almighty would fly thick among the crowd, and could not fail to penetrate the hearts of many. In the display of awful, overwhelming truth, this world would become, in a great measure, what the judgment day will be; and sinners *could not* be at ease as they now are. Men would be Christians, or settled upon a false hope, or be infidels, or be trembling like Belshazzar. They could not be infidels; it would be difficult to be deluded hypocrites; they must in general be Christians or trembling sinners. And of those trembling sinners, multitudes would be brought to the foot of the cross. And now if this would be the amazing good resulting from *general* intrepidity and faithfulness, and if professors collectively are chargeable with the loss of all this, you must bear your part.

4. In many instances your fear is altogether groundless, and is the mere suggestion of indolence. It is the fear of the sluggard who says, "There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets." The person whom you marked down as

a swine before which it was unsafe to cast your pearls, had you gone to him at a proper time and in a prudent and affectionate manner, though with all the plainness and solemnity of Christian faithfulness, would, nine times in ten, have received you kindly and loved you the better for your fidelity and compassion, and you might have gained him for Christ and for heaven. But,

5. For want of that faithful admonition and entreaty, he may have perished. Many may have perished whom one word from you might have been the means of saving. Therefore,

6. If you persist in this timid neglect, many will curse you in hell to all eternity, who, had you been faithful, might have for ever blessed you in heaven.

My dear brethren, are not these motives sufficient? Rouse then to fidelity and dismiss your fears. In every way in which your conscience tells you that you might be useful had you the boldness of an angel, in that way be ye useful. Never let fear or shame hold you back again from any attempt to promote the salvation of men. Have you a friend over whom you possess an influence, who is now in the broad road to death, go to him as early as propriety will admit, and with all the prudence and tenderness of Christian friendship, entreat him to enter upon the heavenly course. Go again and again. Have

you a parent, a brother, a sister, a husband, a wife, a child, sleeping on the brink of the precipice? Approach them gently lest you should alarm their pride; but awaken them if tears and entreaties can do it. Be not discouraged at the failure of the first attempt. Repeat it till life fails. When you assemble in your conferences, let not a guilty bashfulness seal your lips. Open your mouth wide in faithful testimony for the truth, and pour your prudent and solemn entreaties upon every ear. Set your face against every one who would impede a bold exhibition of the truth. Give no place to him, no not for an hour. Let no temporizing, timid policy prevent you from pursuing him till he is ashamed. If you see any around you still trembling who ought to be valiant for the truth, pass them not by. Go to them and say, *Amidst all your fears, have you no fear of God?* Brethren, the time is short: whatever you do you must do quickly. Come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Arise and bestir yourselves, and let not one more soul perish through your neglect. Set before your eyes the boldness and zeal of the holy apostle. Remember the labours and sufferings of the Lord Jesus. Reflect on the judgment day. And if there is any fear of God,—if any bowels and mercies,—think on these things. Amen.

SERMON XLVII.

THE WALL BUILT IN TROUBLOUS TIMES.

DANIEL ix. 25.—The street shall be built again and the wall, even in troublous times.

DANIEL flourished during the time of the Babylonish captivity, and lived to see Babylon taken by Cyrus and a part of the Jews return to their own land. The year after Babylon was taken he had the revelation contained in our context, of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, of

the very time of the advent of Messiah, and of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Our text refers to the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

The year that succeeded this revelation was the first year of Cyrus; that is, the first year after he became sole mo-

narch of the empire by the death of his father-in-law Darius the Mede. In that year Zerubbabel and many thousands of Jews, in pursuance of the decree of Cyrus, returned to Jerusalem. In the second year after their return, that is, about three years after this prophecy was uttered, they laid the foundation of the temple. But the Samaritans by their intrigues perplexed them and caused the work to cease during the rest of the reign of Cyrus, and during the two following reigns, of Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes, until the second year of the second Darius; that is, until about fifteen years after the foundation was laid. In the second year of the second Darius the prophets Haggai and Zechariah began their prophecies, and encouraged the people to renew the work; and under the patronage of Darius it was completed in about four years; that is, about nineteen or twenty years after the foundation was laid. Thus trials attended the first attempt to rebuild Jerusalem, and the temple was reared "in troublous times."

About fifty years after this, Artaxerxes Longomanus, the grandson of the second Darius, and the Ahasuerus of the book of Esther, having conceived an affection for the Jews from the influence of his queen and Mordecai, determined, in the seventh year of his reign, to send Ezra, who was of pontifical descent, to carry to Jerusalem a sum sufficient to furnish vessels for the temple and to support the daily sacrifices. Thirteen years after this, that is, about eighty-four years after the decree of Cyrus and the return of the first company of Jews, this same Artaxerxes commissioned Nehemiah to go up from Persia to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. And these walls were rebuilt "in troublous times." For the neighbouring nations, the Samaritans, Ammonites, Arabians, and Philistines, used every influence to distress and terrify the Jews and to compel them to abandon the work. And though they did not succeed, they caused them great trouble and anxiety. To this our text had primary reference: "The street shall be built again and the wall, even in troublous times." But whether it had not ultimate reference to the erection of the Christian Church, accompanied with the

death of Christ and the miserable destruction of the Jewish nation, I will not determine.

Haman had made that a day of trouble by procuring an irrevocable law that condemned the whole Jewish nation to death. And out of that trouble, through the returning favour of Ahasuerus, grew all the benefits to the Church resulting from the missions of Ezra and Nehemiah. As soon as it was known that Nehemiah had crossed Euphrates and entered Judea, Sanballat, Tobiah, and others, were exceedingly grieved "that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel." And as soon as the Jews set about the work, these enemies "laughed" them "to scorn and despised" them, "and said, What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the king?" And when they heard that the building proceeded with despatch, they were "wroth and took great indignation and mocked the Jews," saying, "Even that which they build, if a fox go up he shall even break down their stone wall." Still the work went on and was almost completed. And when the enemy heard this they were "very wroth, and conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem and to hinder it;" saying, "They shall not know neither see till we come in the midst among them and slay them and cause the work to cease." But this conspiracy was disclosed to Nehemiah by the Jews who dwelt near them and observed their secret machinations. Wherefore Nehemiah and the people with him called upon God, and then put themselves in readiness to meet the assault. From that time Nehemiah kept an armed guard of one half of the people, while the other half wrought with one hand and with the other hand held a weapon, and had moreover each a sword girded upon his thigh. Nehemiah also kept near his person a trumpeter, to sound the alarm in case of surprise; and charged the people, scattered upon the walls, to resort instantly to him at the first sound of the trumpet. In this cautious manner they wrought by day; and at night they all lodged within the walls, under the protection of a strong guard, and never put off their clothes except for washing. By this bold and deter-

mined stand the purpose of open attack was defeated. The enemy, foiled in this attempt, resorted next to stratagem, and by insidious arts sought to decoy Nehemiah into their hands. They sent messengers to invite him to a private interview. But his reply was, "I am doing a great work so that I cannot come." Four times they repeated the deceitful overture, and four times they were repulsed. Flattery proving unsuccessful, they next resorted to threats. Sanballet sent a letter to Nehemiah in which he charged him with a design to rebel against the king and to set up for independence, alleging that he had proof of all this, and would accuse him to the king if he did not consent to the proposed interview. Tobiah also "sent letters to put" him "in fear." But all made no impression. At last they hired one of the nobles of Judah insidiously to tell him that they had formed a scheme to come in the night to slay him, and to advise him to take refuge in the temple during the night. This they did to persuade him to desert the people and to betray signs of cowardly fear, "that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach" him. This treacherous device only drew forth this indignant and heroic answer: "Should such a man as I flee? And who is there that being as I am would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in."

The enemy thus repulsed in every attempt, were obliged to stand the harmless and mortified spectators of a much envied work. So rapidly did the walls go up, that in the short space of fifty-two days from their commencement, they were finished. And when the enemy saw the issue "they were much cast down in their own eyes, for they perceived that this work was wrought of God." Thus the prophecy which had been uttered by Daniel more than fourscore years before, was accomplished, and "the street" "and the wall" of Jerusalem were "built again—in troublous times."

Jerusalem was a type of the Church of God; and as the former was built "in troublous times," so is the latter. Not only the wall of that city generally, but every particular part, was built in such times. In like manner it is in

"troublous times" that, not only the Church in general, but every individual Christian is built up.

I. This is true of individuals. It is a general maxim "That we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God." This world is the house of discipline in which Christians are broken to the divine service by severe management. It is a place, not of rest, but of toil; not a paradise, but a vale of tears. "It is appointed unto" Christians in this life to follow their divine Leader to the cross, and it remains for them in another world to follow him to the crown. But there are seasons which in a peculiar sense are "troublous times." And it is in such seasons more than any other that they grow in grace, and thus prepare to carry up the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem or to enlarge the Church triumphant. Their choicest experiences are obtained, and their selectest graces are acquired, in times of trouble. They sometimes make greater advances in one short season of affliction, than in years of prosperity. Then it is that they grow most rapidly in divine comforts and see the clearest dawns of heaven, and in every sense are more fully baptised with the Holy Ghost. Afflictions are the rod which chastises them to duty,—the furnace in which the gold is purified from the dross. David said, "Behold in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the Lord." It was not in prosperity, but in his distressing wars, that he made such preparations for the building of the temple. The temple seems to have been a type of the Church as it will be stationary in heaven, and the moving tabernacle, of the Church in its unsettled state on earth. And as David in his trouble prepared for the building of the temple, so it is in their trouble chiefly that Christians prepare for the building up of the Church in glory. And when they shall bring forth their graces in the great day, they may then profess, Lo these are the things which I have prepared in my trouble. The mercy and faithfulness of God appear in nothing more affectingly than in appointing the necessary afflictions for his people; afflictions which they could not do without. In this he takes the part of the Spirit against their flesh; a kindness for

which they have often prayed with great importunity, willing to undergo any thing that would purify them from sin. While feeling their need of the chastening rod and the benefits of the afflictions which their heavenly Father sends, so far from complaining, they are melted into gratitude that he has taken these necessary measures to destroy their pride and worldly attachments, to bring them to repentance, to imbitter sin to them, to wean them from their idols, and to complete their salvation. David acknowledged that it was "in faithfulness" that God had "afflicted" him. And how faithful does it seem, that God will not suffer our corruptions to devour us, but when they are too strong for us and about to swallow us up, will hasten to beat them off with heavy blows. What could the poor wounded child do if the father would not procure a surgeon to amputate the corrupted limb? And what could Christians do if God would not thus interpose to separate their corruptions from them, though the operation causes them pain? Who would lose the furnace, so necessary for his purification, for a world? It is more precious than gold or silver. It is a fit subject for everlasting gratitude and praise. An eminent Christian was found one day cast down. His friend inquired what was the matter. Ah, said he, I fear my heavenly Father has forsaken me. I thought, said his friend, that you never had a doubt: what makes you think so? Ah, said he, it is a whole month since my heavenly Father afflicted me.

II. The walls of Jerusalem *generally* are built up in troublous times.

It has been in such times that the greatest advances have been made to the interests of the Church. The foundation of the Church was laid by the promise of the woman's Seed, in the very hour in which Adam and his race were condemned and the whole earth was smitten with the curse. It was when the race were swept away by the flood, that the Church was delivered from the oppressions and contaminating examples of a licentious generation and was at once made mistress of the world. Without this necessary severity, in a few years the Church would have been buried under the ruins of all morality

and social order. At a time when she was again about to be swallowed up by the overgrown vices of the world, and in that sense was in deep affliction, God separated Abraham from his father's house and made with him and his seed the everlasting covenant, and announced the future Saviour, and placed the Church on a new and far more visible and prosperous footing: It was at a time when the afflictions of God's people had arisen to their height,—when vast distresses were filling Egypt with groans and tears, that the Church was delivered from bondage and raised to the condition of a free and independent nation. The sun had never before seen so numerous a people separated to the service of God and formally dedicated to him by covenant,—an entire nation set apart as the Church of God. It was during the forty years of trouble in the wilderness, that that pious generation were formed which entered the promised land under Joshua; a generation like which none before had ever appeared on earth,—like which not another appeared while that nation continued the Church of God. All the advances made in the visible piety of the Church during the time of the Judges, were effected when she was sorely oppressed by the heathen. Particularly the great reformation in the days of Samuel, was at a time when the nation was reduced to the lowest wretchedness under Philistine oppression. It was through great and diversified troubles that David came to the kingdom, and that his house was established on the throne of Israel; an event which raised the people of God to the highest pinnacle of their glory. At the end of the Babylonish captivity, as we have seen, the nation returned, and the temple and holy city were built again "in troublous times." Jesus came to our world in the darkest time that the Church had seen after her deliverance from Egypt,—when she was sunk in ignorance and error, and covered with pride and self-righteousness, and when a good man was scarcely to be found. At this dreadful moment a scene was ushered in by the birth of the infant Saviour, altogether the most glorious that the Church had ever witnessed. It was in the darkest hour that heaven or earth ever saw, that the Son of God burst

the bands of death and rose triumphant ; rose for the justification of believers ; rose to receive the Holy Ghost, which he sent out on the day of Pentecost ; rose to govern the Church and the universe and to complete the salvation of his people. The Christian Church was set up and her walls built "in troublous times." Amidst seas of blood the Church was extended throughout the known world by the apostles and their successors. The Roman empire was converted "in troublous times." It was in times of great trouble that the glorious Reformation was accomplished by Luther, Calvin, and their companions. During all the persecutions which the Church has suffered from pagan and papal Rome, her interests have been advanced "in troublous times." The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Church. And all prophecy is full of warning that the millennium is to be ushered in with distress to the Mahometan and Papal world greater than was ever before witnessed. And after the millennium, the final completion of Zion's glory by the destruction of Gog and Magog, and afterwards by the process of the last judgment and the banishment of the wicked to "everlasting fire," will be effected in a time of distress which will infinitely outweigh all the troubles of seven thousand years. Thus from the foundation to the top stone, the walls of Zion are built "in troublous times ;" and in all the dispensations of providence towards her in different ages, there is a striking analogy.

Come now to our own times and the age immediately preceding. During the glorious revival of religion in Great Britain and America in the days of Whitefield and Edwards, Voltaire and his associates were unfurling the standard of infidelity in France, and sapping the foundation of social order, and preparing the way for that tremendous burst of the political volcano which soon after agitated all Europe, and threatened to break up all the platforms of social order, and to demolish, not only the thrones of princes, but all human governments. In the year seventeen hundred and ninety-two the first missionary society of modern times was established at Kettering in England ; which led the way to all those charitable institutions,

of various sorts, which have since covered the whole face of the Protestant world, and sent so many missionaries to the heathen, and scattered so many Bibles and tracts among the nations, and awakened so many efforts, of numerous kinds, to enlighten and bless the world. In that same year, or the year before, began that series of American revivals which has continued without interruption to the present day, and will continue, we trust, until "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." About the same time that extensive concert of prayer was established in Great Britain and America, which has ever since been growing more general and more intense, and which promises to fulfil that prophecy respecting the latter day glory, "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them. All these glorious series of events have been progressing towards their consummation "in troublous times." That very year, seventeen hundred and ninety-two, the blood began to flow in Europe, which continued to deluge that continent for more than twenty years, and which now is only bound up to break forth again in more copious streams, until tyranny and popery and profligacy have bled to death.

To the civilized world at large the present are troublous times. The great scene of distress which prophets foretold, seems to have commenced ; the throes and pangs which are to bring forth the glory of the thousand years. Hell seems to have broken loose ; and the dragon rages the more because his time is short. A numerous and marshalled army of infidels have taken the field, who are as full of devices and zeal and rage, and have as often varied their mode of attack, as Sanballet and Tobiah. Enraged at seeing the walls of Jerusalem rapidly ascending, they at first use no other weapon than derision. Voltaire began the laugh, and all the host, in all nations, have taken it from him, until the world is filled with the uproar. When they see that this avails nothing, but that millions are still going after the despised Nazarine, and revivals of religion are extended, they gnaw their tongues for rage, and yet, as though perfectly unconcerned, say, with their

prototypes of old, "If a fox go up he shall even break down their stone wall." Their religion is nothing and will not last." They next resort to secret intrigues to induce Christians to lay themselves open to them and to get them within their power. They soothe and flatter with intent to destroy. When disappointed here, they change their flatteries into threats and slanderous accusations, as false and as black as their own hearts; and perhaps some of the men of Judah, as in Nehemiah's time, are indirectly abetting their wicked designs. When this does not avail, they seek to mislead them, by false alarms, to do something that shall forfeit the confidence of their supporters. And when, in spite of all, the walls of Zion continue to rise, they are much cast down, and are forced in their conscience to acknowledge that the "work" is "wrought—God."

The conduct for us to pursue is according to the example set us by Nehemiah and his companions. When allured to dangerous society by flattery, his answer was, "I am doing a great work so that I cannot come." When assailed by scoffs and threats, he stood unmoved as a rock. Surrounded by enemies, he and his companions never relaxed their vigilance. They were on their ground night and day. They wrought with one hand and held a weapon with the other. But after all, the enemies which we have chiefly to apprehend are not of earth, but of hell and of our own hearts. And all who in the midst of such enemies labour at Zion's walls, ought to maintain the same posture of watchfulness and defence as did those ancient saints. A readiness to meet an attack may, as we have seen, prevent it. "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." But above all, like those holy men of old, let us employ the weapon of prayer. This will be more successful than any other. A strict imitation of their example in every respect, is especially necessary in such a day as this, when

the enemies of both worlds are wide awake, and great is their rage. It is "a day of trouble and of rebuke and of blasphemy."

Yet while the enemy are vapouring and raging; while, leagued against all morality and religion, they are bearing away the ancient landmarks of society; while the apostles of infidelity are fast proselyting the world, and a third part of men are gone after Baal; even in such troublous times the walls of Jerusalem are rising. And things are likely thus to continue during our day. The enemy will rage and trouble the waters, if I may so say, while poor cripples are healed. Let not troublous times stagger the faith of Christians. During the trying scenes of coming years, the kingdom of God, I trust, will steadily advance: for out of such troubles the very millennium is to grow. "Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased" in tumultuous days. We may expect that missionaries will go forth, and the heathen will be converted, and revivals of religion will be carried on at home, while the enemy is raging,—raging the more for these resolute attacks upon his kingdom. Such troublous days ought not therefore to alarm those who are "waiting for the consolation of Israel." And under *personal* trials, what a comfort to reflect that by means of these the kingdom of God is to be advanced in us and around us. In the darkest scenes let us have confidence in God. When tumults and troubles arise, let us not be terrified "as though some strange thing happened unto" us. We have company enough in these matters. From the days of Adam all the saints have had to encounter similar trials. Let us "commit the keeping of" our "souls to" God, "in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator," and wait for his salvation. And we shall find that "our light affliction which is but for a moment," will work for "us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Amen.

SERMON XLVIII.

ORDINATION SERMON.

1 TIM. iv. 16.—Take heed unto thyself and unto thy doctrine.

GREAT is the responsibility of a minister of the everlasting Gospel, intrusted with the charge of a church for which the Saviour died. It is not an office to be lightly assumed or executed with indifference. It is fenced around with awful terrors, and is weighty enough "to make the shoulders of an angel tremble." Men here act for their lives. While we sink under the pressure and cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" it is a relief to reflect on the reason assigned for committing the Gospel to "earthen vessels;" namely, "that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us;" and we triumph in the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." "Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

There are trials and joys connected with the ministry with which "a stranger doth not intermeddle." None but a pastor knows the trepidation felt under the weight of such a charge; the distress of having to lead the public worship at times when he feels unfit to take the awful name of God upon his lips; the dread of ruining the souls of men by unfaithfulness or want of judgment; the anguish felt in view of his own imperfections while set for an example to others; and the discouragement of seeming to labour "in vain" and to spend his "strength for nought." On the other hand, the privileges and comforts of a pastor are peculiarly his own. He is a fellow worker with God in the grandest and most benevolent of all designs. He is charged with an embassy from the court of heaven to a world, the weightiest that ever employed the servant of a king. While his brethren are toiling in worldly occupations, and think it a privilege to worship

God one day in seven, he may enjoy a continual sabbath, and earn his bread in the delightful services of the sanctuary. And if allowed to see the fruit of his labours and to hear the songs of the new born, then all the trials of the ministry are overbalanced in an hour. This is the blessed work which the Lord of glory chose for his employment on earth,—the labour which the holy apostle was so thankful for being counted worthy to sustain. Whatever be its trials, I would rather be a minister of Christ than to fill the throne of the Cæsars. And when the immeasurable consequences and rewards of the Christian ministry are displayed in eternity, all the holy creation will say the same.

Of course it behooves those who enter upon the sacred office to take heed to themselves and their duties.

I. They ought to take heed to their personal religion. In the outset they should have satisfactory evidence of their sincerity, and that their chief object is neither to gain a living nor to make a character, but to promote the honour of Christ in the salvation of men. The officer who leads the sacred host, should not be in alliance with the enemy. The man who would guide others to heaven, must know the way himself. He who is unfit to come to sacraments, shall he administer them? Shall he adopt it for his profession to take the name of God in vain? Thou that preachest that a man should be a Christian, dost thou live in unbelief? Thou that professedly abhorrest idols, art thou a slave to the world? What impression can one hope to make on others, who himself feels not a word of what he utters? What can he hope to avail, who never offers an acceptable prayer for success? Unsanctified ministers have no security against bringing a blot

on the Christian name by their lapses, nor against apostatizing from the truth and carrying away multitudes into fatal error. In every age they have proved the greatest curse that ever smote a degenerate church.

Men ought to take the more earnest heed in entering on the sacred office, because if they are deceived at first, many circumstances will strongly tend to perpetuate the delusion. Occupied with the forms of devotion, conversant with sacraments, regarded as holy, and leaned upon as guides to heaven, they will find abundant matter to feed their confidence and smother their self-distrusts. Professional ardour, added to many animal, many selfish feelings, which their relation to the Church and their public exertions cannot fail to call forth, will then readily pass for genuine. But O their end. How dreadful, after spending life in preaching to others, to be themselves cast away ;—to descend from pulpits to a prison, from sacraments to the pollutions of the damned, from the reverence of the churches to everlasting contempt. “*Many* will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works ? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.”

It is not enough for ministers to be satisfied of their piety at first ; they should make it the business of their lives to watch over and improve it. They are in great danger of neglecting their own hearts while occupied with the care of others, and have often reason to lament, “*My mother’s children—made me the keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard have I not kept.*” No men have so much need to labour in the duties of the closet. So feeble in themselves, so liable to mistakes, and with so much depending on their fidelity and wisdom, they have great need to draw from God a double portion of his spirit. If they would preach with a holy unction, they must get anointed in the secret of his presence. If their public prayers and sermons are to be expressions of deep and realizing views of divine things, those views must be obtained on their knees. If their private instructions are to flow warm from the

heart, their hearts must be warmed in the closet. It will not prove their piety to display lively affections on public occasions, if their private devotions languish. This would rather resemble the strange fire of Nadab and Abihu, than that which is kindled at the altar of God.

Nor is it less necessary for them to take heed to their private conduct. Contradictory practice will destroy the effect of their preaching, and make them ashamed to reprove others. Strictly watched by multitudes to whom every mote in their eye will appear a beam, and so stationed that whatever they say or do will have extensive influence, they have need to resemble angels more than men. It is not enough for them to be correct, they must avoid the very “appearance of evil.”

II. They must take heed to their study. “Give attendance to reading,—to doctrine :—meditate upon these things ; give thyself wholly to them ; that thy profiting may appear to all.” If under pretence that they know enough to preach the Gospel, and that study will cool their heart, they waste their time in idle visits, in needless journeys, in worldly occupations, their barrenness, while it leaves the Church unfed, will provoke the contempt of their enemies.

Doubtless the most important science for Christian ministers is a deep acquaintance with the holy Scriptures,—a thorough knowledge of the whole system of revealed truth. Without a system of divinity, they are much like men without a settled principle of action. But this is not the limit of what they ought to know. General science, with a competent acquaintance with mankind, if not allowed to chill their devotion, will give greater vigour and effect, greater delicacy and prudence, to all their efforts. Set for the defence of the Gospel, they have need of all the knowledge that can aid in sustaining its divine claims, or in illustrating its sacred contents. None doubt the importance of a learned ministry but those who themselves are unlearned. If the case of the eleven apostles is urged against us, it is enough to say that the apostles were not suffered to proceed in their work till endowed with miraculous knowledge from on high ; and their inferiority after

all to the great apostle of the Gentiles, evinces that, though weak things were chosen to exalt the power of God, and to show that the Gospel was not a cunningly devised fable of learned men, yet learning and talents were not in vain.

If these remarks are correct, they show the importance of spending a longer time than formerly was done, in preparations for the ministry : for after men have entered on the sacred office, they will find little leisure for studies not immediately connected with their work. Their proper business then is action, and that employment of their sedentary hours which is immediately subservient to action. If many of those hours are consumed in studies foreign to their work, other things of infinitely greater importance must be neglected. No man can know every thing. Life is short ; and he that grasps at all knowledge will do nothing. On this point I must speak with the most solemn decision. Wo to that minister who, ambitious of literary fame, imprisons himself in his study and leaves his flock to perish ; who, immured among books when he ought to be engaged in his work, wastes life in storing up materials for usefulness only to rot in the grave,—in preparing to act, and dies at last with nothing done. He goes down to lie on a level with the wretch who spent his life in laying up wealth only to rust in his coffers. I know that ministers cannot be among their people enough to answer all their demands. Those demands are generally excessive. But how far short do most ministers fall of the active zeal and abundant labours of the primitive preachers.

III. They must take heed to their preaching. They must “speak—the things which become sound doctrine ;” not “the wisdom of men,” not pagan ethicks, not divine truths resting on the demonstrations of reason to the exclusion of faith, but the plain doctrines of the Gospel resting on the testimony of God. There is no other “sword of the Spirit.”

They must “declare—all the counsel of God,” and neither confine themselves to the less offensive topics, nor ring perpetual changes on a few party shibboleths. To allege that some of the truths of the Gospel are not to be preached, is

to charge error on Him who revealed them. Some of the doctrines will doubtless give offence. Thus when our Saviour displayed the absolute dependence of man, and declared, “No man can come to me except the Father draw him,” “many—of his disciples—said, This is a hard saying,” and “from that time—went back and walked no more with him.” The same returns for faithful preaching he taught his disciples to expect, but still urged it upon them as a duty on which their salvation depended. “If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household ? Fear them not therefore ; for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light ; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house tops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul ; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” What less can be made of this, than that if ministers were more faithful, they would generally give greater offence ? Is it not so ? Has the offence of the cross ceased ? Has this wicked world become the friend of God ? Whoever uncovers the whole character of God, exhibits an object that must for ever pain and displease the carnal heart. And that some preachers so far escape reproach, is, I fear, too often owing to a treacherous and cruel prudence, which betrays their trust and ruins the souls of men.

There is such a thing as ministerial prudence, but it is infinitely unlike that cold and wretched system of selfishness which profanely assumes the name. A suitable mixture of this ingredient with fidelity and zeal is a rare combination. These virtues are differently proportioned in different constitutions, and perhaps not perfectly balanced in any. But the highest prudence, let it never be forgotten, is to secure the favour and protection of God by obeying him at all hazards. The word is generally used for that wakeful wisdom, which, taking into account every consideration of time, place, and circumstance, so regulates our obedience as to attain the end in view with the least hazard to ourselves. Ministers may use every precaution

against danger but an abandonment of duty. Before Jeremiah delivered the divine message to the king of Judah, he extorted a promise of impunity. Before Moses slew the Egyptian, "he looked this way and that way and—saw that there was no man." The better to secure the end in view, preachers should take care not to deliver deep and difficult truths too fast. "I have yet many things to say unto you," said our Saviour, "but ye cannot bear them now." But though their wisdom may select the time, it cannot dispense with the duty.

Ministers should aim at variety in their preaching; neither confining themselves to first principles, nor for ever labouring after something new, but bringing out of their treasure "things new and old;" neither exclusively dwelling on doctrines nor on duties,—neither on the terrors of the law nor on the promises of the Gospel.

Doctrinal preaching, though less interesting than direct addresses to the conscience and passions, must not be omitted. Doctrine makes the difference between the theory of a Christian and a Turk. Doctrine is the foundation of all religious feeling and practice. It must be interwoven with all the passionate addresses, or it is not a Christian minister that speaks. Passion in itself is indifferent. It may be moved by the lips of a Brahmin or by an ambassadour of Christ; and if it is natural passion only, no matter which. But let it never be supposed that a mere exposition of truth is the principal part of a preacher's duty. He is not talking to intellectual statues; he must address the whole man by powerful appeals to the conscience and heart. Without passion the soul cannot act. Passion *will* move. It was made to be the handmaid of religion; and if not engaged as a friend, will certainly act as a foe. Incomparably the best mode of teaching even the doctrines of religion, is to make their relation to the heart felt, and to push their point into the conscience. When the doctrines of revelation are handled rather as a system of science than as a system of religious motives, what is this but turning the Church into a school of Plato?

A preacher's manner should be plain and pungent. He may not indeed as-

sume the authoritative tone of Christ, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers;" nor that of the inspired apostle, "Thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness;" but he must not handle "the word of God deceitfully." If by his plainness he gives offence even to some good men, as Hanani did to Asa, what then? "Son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand."

But a style of preaching savouring of a wish to lord it "over God's heritage," is to be markedly condemned. The preacher must be meek and affectionate even when he points the thunders of Sinai. The man who makes the pulpit his fort from which to assail his enemies, is unworthy of the place. It behooves the man of God to enlist all the neutral prejudices in his favour. He will find enemies enough in the natural heart after making all the friends there he can. "And now, brethren, [said Peter kindly to the murderous Jews,] I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers." The winning address of Paul before the court of Areopagus, and his conciliating language to the divided Corinthians, are worthy of all imitation.

The style of the pulpit should be perspicuous and simple; free from vulgar idioms; "sound speech that cannot be condemned, that he that is of a contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say." As passion always rouses the imagination, its language is naturally figurative. To prohibit this language, would be to make men cold by law, or to transform them into other beings, with other modes of expressing their feelings. But this style should come without being sought; and should be employed, not to awaken the gaze of admiration, but forcibly to impress the heart. The language which breaks spontaneously from a mind full of divine affections, is the best. So did Paul's. He studied not his style. He came to the churches "not with excel-

lency of speech." His Epistles were only his heart dropped upon paper, and still beating with a strong and heavenly pulse. Infinitely removed from this is that florid declamation which, while it pleases the vulgar ear, is neither the progeny nor parent of religious affections. And what does it avail? It may draw together a greater audience, who might as well have staid at home. It may preserve the friendship of worldly men, but for no other reason than because it presents no religion to disturb their conscience. It may gain a character; but if this is one's object, he had better seek it in some other pursuit, where he may do it with less mischief. The man who has been accustomed to soar in Ciceronian oratory, or in his elegant essays to tread upon classic ground, may think it degrading to come down to teach and exhort like his plainer brethren, and to descend to the vulgar level of an apostle. But that man is not to be envied.

IV. Ministers must take heed to their parochial duties. To rest satisfied with performing their public, weekly task, with no further concern for the success of their ministry,—to enjoy life and take their pleasures while their charge are growing up for destruction,—to be more anxious for the preservation of order and a decent attendance on ordinances, than to see their people born of God,—and never to know what the apostle meant by travelling in birth for souls,—are fearful symptoms of an unregenerate state.

Ministers should be wholly devoted to their work. There is more to be done than they can ever do if they are constantly stretched upon exertion. To devote all their time to the salvation of men, is certainly to spend their lives to the best advantage. After so much pains and expense to fit them for this important service, to waste their life in business which any common labourer could better perform, and neglect duties which no other man can discharge, is a serious loss to the world. Would the churches consult their own interest, they would prevent the necessity of this loss by competently providing for the ministry. And wo to the pastor, who, having sufficient support, leaves his work to trifle with secular concerns. "No

man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."

You, my dear sir, are now entering on a work the greatest that ever engaged the faculties of a finite mind,—the grand employment of God himself. Your own salvation and probably that of thousands will depend on the consequences of this day. One more hour and the die is cast for a brighter crown or a deeper prison,—for the splendour of a star or the fate of one who appears with blood in his skirts. For the same reason that the Gospel takes effect where it is preached, rather than in pagan lands, it takes most effect where it is preached clearly and closely and prayerfully and from house to house. The ministry of the Gospel in the hands of faithful men, is the grand engine of grace, and will do incalculably more to promote the kingdom of Christ and the happiness of the world than any other institution on earth. If you would find your work a delight and not an insupportable burden, pursue it with fidelity and zeal. The present is a day for action. The God of the armies of Israel is gone forth to the combat: and surely when our great Captain takes the field, we ought not to lie sleeping in our tents. The day of reward is near. Gird on your armour and play the man for God.

Men and Brethren,

The events of this day will be followed with incalculable effects to you all, and perhaps to many yet unborn, throughout the ages of eternity. A million of years hence, many, I trust, will review these transactions with unspeakable delight,—some, I fear, with unutterable distress,—certainly none with indifference. Every minister of the Gospel, like his divine Master, "is set for the fall and rising—of many in Israel." Interesting beyond expression is the relation which you are about to form with your pastor elect. If you who are Christians are to be edified and comforted,—if you who are sinners are to be saved,—if your dear children are ever to see the kingdom of heaven,—if any of you are to sink lower in perdition for the rejection of the Gospel,—it will probably be more through his instrumental-

ity than by all other means. Every sermon he preaches will be recorded in heaven, to be exhibited on your trial at the last day. Surely it will be your highest interest to listen for your lives to the Gospel he proclaims.

On you his comfort and success will greatly depend. He will need your counsel and your candour. He comes not to you under the character of an angel, but only as an earthen vessel: yet he comes as an ambassadour of Christ. "Esteem" him "very highly in love for" his "work's sake." If you wish him to prove a blessing to your children, let them see that you respect him. We trust he is one who will feel a tender regard for your best interest; and that often, while your children are sleeping around you, his anxious soul will be poured forth for you and them in the midnight hour. Love like this should not be treated with harshness or neglect. If for you he assumes this dread responsibility,—if for you he encounters all the hazard of standing so near the Shekinah with a sinful nature,—if for you he puts himself in the front of the field, more exposed than any other to the attacks of those who seek your life; surely you ought to support him with your tenderest sympathy. This is a kindness which he will greatly need. You little know the griefs and conflicts of a pastor,—often crushed under the weight of

his charge, discouraged with want of success, and feeling at times anguish of a more personal nature which comes nearer the seat of life. He will need your sympathy; and I conjure you, let him know that he has it. Your affection will do him little good if you bury it in your bosom and find no way to make it known. Should you sometimes observe him less resolute and active, beware how you approach him with complaint and censure. It may be because he is crushed under trials and discouragements which you little know, and which, instead of frowns, needs your gentlest compassion. Beware how you break a heart that needs to be bound up with the balm of friendship.

Let me entreat you to hold up the hands of your pastor by the earnest intercession of your prayers. In no other way can you expect a spiritual and successful ministry. When people find their pastor growing cold and uninteresting, if, instead of complaining, they would carry him to the throne of grace, it would be the likeliest way to cure the evil. I indulge the hope that, supported by your prayers, yours will prove a laborious and successful minister; and I pray that he may at last appear before the throne with many of his dear flock, and say with unutterable joy, "Behold, I and the children which God hath given me." Amen.

SERMON XLIX.

AVOID FALSE BOOKS AND TEACHERS.

Prov. xix. 27.—Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.

THE modern enemies of religion, in order to induce people to listen to their arguments, exert themselves to render the opinion fashionable, that every man in search after truth ought to put himself in a way to hear both sides. To

awaken a prejudice in favour of this opinion, they find it convenient to expatiate on the odious extreme of the Romish church in locking up the sources of knowledge from the common people, under pretence that they were incapable

of thinking for themselves. And as the world, (ever swinging from one extreme to another,) are naturally zealous to get as far as possible from former superstitions, they are easily seduced into this opinion. But it is strange that a sentiment so pregnant with absurdity, and so clearly at variance with the word of God, should become popular among rational beings professing to believe the Scriptures. Unless its progress can be checked, society in general will be unsettled from the foundation of truth and carried away by a flood into the gulph of infidelity. But if men will give heed to the remonstrances of Scripture and reason, its progress may yet be arrested. Our text, in the most plain and decided manner, opposes this dangerous sentiment. "Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge."

Ministers, who are set for the defence of the Gospel, are obliged to make themselves acquainted with the errors which wicked men attempt to introduce, that they may be prepared to repel them. For the same reason it may be expedient for some of the most distinguished members of the Church to understand the opinions and arguments of the enemy. But with these exceptions, I lay it down as a general rule, and as a point supported by our text, *that men ought not to read those books or hear those preachers that inculcate gross errors.* I am far from objecting to their hearing men of other denominations, who differ from them only in things of minor importance. My objection is against hearing those who teach *essential* errors.

The popular pretence that men must hear both sides before they can form a candid judgment, is an insidious attack upon the Bible,—a thrust of the assassin in the dark,—a covered insinuation that the Bible is insufficient to enlighten; implying either that its authority is not sufficient to support a doctrine, or, (which is a reflection on its Author,) that it is couched in language too indefinite to be understood. If, as Christians believe, God has given a revelation competent to guide the weakest of the flock to heaven, and in which all essential truths are so clearly taught that he who runs may read, what need of suspending

our judgment respecting any essential truth to hear what opposition can be made to it by a deist, a Socinian, or a universalist? Can we not give credence to the plain truths of God until we have examined all the various fancies of men? Can we not, like humble children, receive "the sincere milk of the word," without entangling ourselves with the various controversies which have agitated the world? If with an humble heart and a single eye and earnest prayer, we laboriously search the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit which attends on them will give us a quick discernment of all necessary truths without the aid of erroneous guides. And if we have occasion to apply to human aid, to whom should we apply? A child, perplexed with uncertainty, will apply, not to a supposed seducer, but to one in whom it has the most confidence. The same is wisdom in the present case. A great evil is, that men, averse to the labour of searching the Scriptures for themselves, and displeased with the truths which first meet them on opening the sacred page, are ready to hurry away to any man who gives out that he has discovered matter in the Bible more congenial with their natural feelings. Leaving the sacred volume to mould on its shelf, they are willing to receive any man for their Bible whom they can read with less labour, and by whom their hopes will be more flattered.

Every one should early settle his belief in the leading doctrines of the Gospel; and if sincere and faithful, he will be orthodox in all essential points. Having thus set out, what necessity can he be under to expose himself to the infection of error by hearing false teachers or reading seductive books? A heretic may indeed have his errors corrected by hearing men or reading books on the other side. But what does this prove? Why that if a man will not candidly examine the Scriptures and set out with a correct creed, but through prejudice and hatred of the truth embraces cardinal errors, he cannot pursue a straight path to heaven, (for he is not in the right way,) but must crook and change his course. If he will wickedly involve himself in these difficulties, he must err whether he hears or forbears to hear those who essentially differ from him.

To hear those he thinks erroneous is wrong; to hear those he thinks correct leads to death. He has not entered on a course which in any way conduces to safety. But the man who has embraced the truth, needs not thus to change his course and swerve from his principles, nor has he any need to go to the advocates of error to confirm him in his own opinions. It will be sufficient if he applies with an honest heart to the word of God and to the Father of lights. Every man ought to have candour enough to embrace the truth and to be settled in it; and there is no excuse for wavering in regard to essential doctrines; as this wavering, (except in cases of mental incompetency,) arises from criminal neglect of the Scriptures or a reluctance to embrace the truth. But whether a man's system is right or wrong, yet if he is fixed in it and feels himself bound to maintain it, I see not how he can justify himself to his own conscience in taking pains to hear or read what will expose him to adopt an opposite system. I know this sentiment may be employed by errorists to fasten themselves in error. I know it may be seized by some who never examine the Scriptures, as an excuse for not hearing the truth. But let *them* see to that. It is our duty to lay sound instruction before the friends of truth, though its enemies may convert it to their destruction.

Men are naturally so averse to the truth that it is infinitely dangerous for those not fully confirmed in it to expose themselves to the contagion of error. They ought not to presume so much on their own stability. Even strong men have been brought down by this enemy. "Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burnt?" So men cannot parley with error and be safe. And when we consider how infinitely important it is to find the right way to heaven, and that essential errors lead to the chambers of death, we ought to flee from all exposure to heresy as from death itself. Many of the common people are incompetent to look through the false glosses with which error is clothed by its retailers, and to answer all the objections which they throw out against the truth. And people ought not to expose themselves unarmed to such an unequal con-

test. If they do this and escape with their lives, they will probably subject themselves to perplexity and conflict. Many have thus involved themselves in useless and distressing doubts for years, and many others have thus destroyed their souls.

But should it so happen that a man should not find his own faith shaken, yet he ought to consider the injury he may do to others by encouraging the promulgation of dangerous errors. If men would not hear heretical preachers nor read their books, the latter would be discouraged and cease their work of destruction. And if men of virtue and influence would unite thus to discourage them, others would be less likely to put themselves in the way of their errors. But if a man introduces corrupt books into a place for the sake of reading them himself, or if by his attendance he encourages false teachers to unlade their pernicious doctrines,—although he may escape unhurt himself, many others, and perhaps the children of his own body, may live eternally to lament it. It is not a trifling thing to be thus accessory to the eternal destruction of others. It was to provide against this fatal instrumentality, that John exhorted the primitive Christians: "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

Such encouragement of erroneous teachers and books is conspiring against God. Errors reproach and defame God by misrepresenting some part of his character or government, and tend to draw men away from his service. How inconsistent then for professing Christians to give countenance to such errors, directly or indirectly. How would it appear for a soldier under arms for the defence of his king, and professing zeal in his service, to take pains to read or hear, and encourage others to read or hear, inflammatory pieces tending to excite the soldiery to mutiny against the monarch?

Against all this there is a popular objection abroad in the world which requires consideration. The objection is this: that it is not the true system which will not triumph over opposition: the

truth will bear examination: it will recommend itself to every man's conscience, and none can be injured by seeing it compared with error: let error come abroad; it will only prepare a more splendid triumph for the truth. In answer to this objection I remark,

1. It is founded on a principle which men would not admit in any other case. Parents who wish their children trained up in attachment to a republican government, would not put them under the influence of a man whose sole object was to prejudice them in favour of a monarchy. They would not, from a reliance on the triumph of truth, send them into profane company to learn to estimate correct language, nor into vulgar society to acquire a taste for refinement, nor to a brothel to form correct notions of purity of manners. Nor would they wish them to resort to habits of indolence in order to learn by experience the benefits of industry.

2. The objection would be less deceptive if in matters of religion men were more inclined to truth than to error. But the contrary is the lamentable fact. Even in the common affairs of life, the judgment is often warped by passion and prejudice. Hence two men of equal ability and information adopt diametrically opposite opinions on political subjects and on many others. Reason therefore is not so clear-sighted and dispassionate as always to discern truth even in worldly matters, after laborious research. But reason is much more controlling in worldly than in religious concerns. "The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light," and *much* wiser than *they themselves* are on divine subjects. In religion men are more inclined to error than to truth. Divine truth has indeed the most power on holy minds, but error has the most on men of the world. Let them go out together unattended by any divine influence, and error will make a thousand proselytes where truth makes one. And though God may interpose at last to give truth the victory and make error contribute to its more glorious triumph, yet before that time millions may be involved in eternal ruin. Shall we encourage this destroyer of our brethren to go abroad, because God will overrule it for

good? Upon the same principle we might encourage the most horrid forms which sin has ever assumed.

3. The retailers of false doctrines do not state things candidly. Truth by them is distorted and assumes an unlovely form, so altered that its former friends scarcely know it. Would it then be wonderful if *strangers* should mistake it for something hateful and reject it? Multitudes are incompetent to discover its virgin beauty through the harlot attire with which it is arrayed. Its charming drapery is taken away to adorn the form of error. And thus the senses of men are deceived by a juggle. As formerly, so now, "There are many unruly and vain talkers and *deceivers*." And the apostolical exhortation is still pertinent and seasonable: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them; for they—*by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple*."

4. It should be considered that the antidote to error does not go along with the error itself. Though all men were even able and willing to see its fallacy when fairly exposed, yet thousands may never have the advantage of this exposure. An erroneous book or teacher may do infinite mischief in a place before any remedy can be applied, and before the deluded people have an opportunity to see truth and error fairly compared together.

5. *Facts* speak decisively against the encouragement of false books and teachers under the pretence mentioned in the objection, and evince that the pretence is one of the most subtle devices of Satan to put his doctrines off. All the contentions and schisms in the Church, all the destructive heresies which afflict the world, may be traced to such books and teachers. Are all these schisms no evil? Is the most lamentable prevalence of error in the world, almost to the extinction of truth, no evil? When this is proved, it may also be allowed that it is no evil for such books and teachers to go abroad. Pass through the world; inspect every town, village, and family, and you will scarcely find an error which cannot be traced to such a source. Do you find the churches of Galatia drawn away from the truth and

rent by schisms? it is because false teachers have been among them. Said the apostle: "There be some that trouble you and would pervert the Gospel of Christ. But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you,—let him be accursed." And to give emphasis to this anathema he repeats it: "As we said before, so say I now again: If any man preach any other gospel unto you,—let him be accursed." The same effects that were experienced in Galatia will generally follow from the same cause. You can scarcely introduce a false teacher into any place, however mean his abilities or wild his opinions, but some will be found weak enough to espouse his errors. And you can scarcely introduce an heretical book, however weakly written, but it will spread contagion around. Let this be considered by those who directly or indirectly encourage such disturbers of society, perhaps honestly supposing that no evil will follow.

6. If the promulgation of error ought to be encouraged, as having a useful tendency to promote the triumph of truth, I see not why good men, though they do not write errors, ought not to publish them. It is as right for a man to publish them himself as to encourage the publication by another. But Paul left Timothy at Ephesus on purpose to "charge some that they teach no other doctrine" than he had taught. Indeed he plainly intimates that false teachers and their doctrines are good for nothing at all. "Avoid foolish questions—and contentions,—for they are *unprofitable and vain*." He called the false teachers of the Galatians, *those which troubled them*; and he complained of "Alexander the coppersmith" who had opposed his doctrines, as having done him, not good, but "*muck evil*." If then false teachers do no good but hurt by publishing their errors, people can get no good but hurt in reading their books or hearing their declamations. Accordingly the Scriptures strictly enjoin it on Christians to give no heed to them or their doctrines, and not even to stay to hear them. "If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words,—*from such withdraw thyself*." "Shun profane and vain babblings, for they *will increase unto more ungodliness*; and

their word will eat as doth a canker." "Neither give heed to fables,—which minister questions rather than godly edifying." Christ says of his true sheep, "A stranger will they not follow, *but will flee from him*;"—alluding to the instinctive wisdom of the flock, which, when a stranger comes into the pasture, will not gather around him and parley with him awhile and expose themselves to be caught, but will at first sight hastily flee from him. Those men who, as is divinely expressed, "will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts—heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and—turn away their ears from the truth, and" are "turned unto fables;" are strongly marked as the objects of God's displeasure.

Suffer me to apply this subject,

1. To those who profess to be the friends of God and established in the truth. My brethren, you are set for a light to others as the firm supporters of the order of the Gospel. It is presumed that you can never practically deny the sentiments now advanced. I remember once to have heard a man, fond of going after such preachers as proclaimed universal salvation, declare, that he would hear any man who should offer himself though he should be a preacher of universal damnation. This sounded consistently enough in the mouth of one wholly devoid of principle; but it would illly besit you. Were it possible for any sentiment akin to this to be expressed by your lips or practice, men would say either that you had no established belief, and therefore had no right in the Church, or that you were willing to encourage the promulgation of known errors to the injury of yourselves and the ruin of others; neither of which charges, I hope, will ever lie against you. My brethren, if you wish for more light, go not to inquire of Baal, but go to the God of Israel.

2. Allow me to advise such of you as are not established in religious opinions, to become established without delay. In such a day as this, those who are floating in uncertainty are exposed to be swallowed up in the vortex of error and infidelity. I offer this advice with peculiar anxiety to the youth. Perhaps no generation ever came upon the stage under circumstances of greater

peril. Errour in every form is couching to make you its prey. It behooves you to be cautious where you tread, for every step will be planted in the midst of danger. Make yourselves early and deeply acquainted with the Scriptures. Study them with prayer and perseverance. Search for such other books as your pious friends may recommend; and in the outset of life set up this inviolable maxim, never, while thus inexperienced and unsettled in religion, to read a book or hear a preacher that would persuade you to abandon the way

of your pious fathers,—particularly that would influence you to renounce the Scriptures or a belief in future punishment. By an indiscreet desire to read every new book and to hear every new preacher that professes to have discovered some easier way to heaven than that which the fathers trod, many of your contemporaries will in all probability be destroyed. Embalm in your hearts the counsel of eternal wisdom: “Cease, my son, to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.” Amen.

SERMON L.

HUMAN LIFE A VAPOUR.

NEW-YEAR'S SERMON FOR 1807.

JAMES iv. 14.—Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow: for what is your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away.

THIS moral reflection was introduced by the apostle to reprove those calculations and forms of speech which make no account of a providence. “Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain: whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow: for what is your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, *If the Lord will* we shall live and do this or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.” All such presumptuous calculations,—such vain boasting of what we will accomplish independently of God’s blessing,—are nothing short of practical atheism. Thus did the man who said in his heart, “I will pull down my barns and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” But what was the answer of

God? “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.” “Boast not thyself” therefore “of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” Surely then in vain do ye spin your cob-web fancies, and reckon with confidence on a train of events reaching through the year, when ye cannot control the issues of a single day. In vain do you grasp your future gains, as though your times were in your own hands, when your life itself is only “a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, *If the Lord will* we shall live and do this or that.” This recognition of a providence and of our dependence, ought to be the constant act of our hearts, and ought to be expressed in our ordinary conversation, so far at least as to distinguish us from atheists. This form of speech did Paul use with the Ephesians: “I will return again unto you *if God will*,” and with the Romans: “If by any means—I might have a prosperous journey *by the will of God* to come unto you.” David lived under

an habitual impression that "except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city the watchman waketh but in vain." All ought to consider that though "a man's heart deviseth his way," yet "the Lord directeth his steps;" and that "the lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." "In all thy ways acknowledge him and he shall direct thy paths." But to promise ourselves worldly comforts without asking leave of God, is the height of presumption. "For what is your life?" This question implies something bordering on contempt, as did more fully the question of Nabal, "Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse?" and as did the question of David himself, "Lord, what is man that thou takest knowledge of him? or the son of man that thou makest account of him?" The question prepares the mind to anticipate the answer: "It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." A vapour is a frail, unsubstantial thing, of short continuance; which either darts across the sky and disappears, or glitters before the eye for a few moments and is gone. Such is the life of man. Though it be protracted to three-score years and ten, it is only a frail, uncertain thing. It glitters at a distance as something bright and glorious; it dances delusively before the bewildered sight, and suddenly disappears. It is represented by various figures borrowed from objects the most unsubstantial and fleeting. It is compared to a passing shadow, to the vanishing of a cloud, to the disappearing of smoke, to sleep, to wind, to a tale that is told, to the grass and flowers of the field, to the quick transition of a weaver's shuttle, to the drying up of waters, and the like. "Man is like to vanity; his days are as a shadow that passeth away." "They are as asleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up, in the evening it is cut down and withereth.—We spend our years as a tale that is told." "As for man his days are as grass: as a flower of the field so he flourisheth: for the wind passeth over it and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more." "As

the flower of the grass he shall pass away." "There is hope of a tree if it be cut down that it will sprout again;—but man dieth and wasteth away; yea man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down and riseth not till the heavens be no more. They shall not awake nor be raised out of their sleep.—Thou destroyest the hope of man;—thou changest his countenance and sendest him away. His sons come to honour and he knoweth it not; they are brought low but he perceiveth it not of them." "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle.—O remember that my life is wind.—The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more.—As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more: he shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more."

These poetic and melancholy effusions,—these tender lamentations over a decaying world,—are peculiarly soothing to a mind softened by reflections on this tearful subject; and methinks they are pitched on the same tone with many a mind this day;—this day on which we are assembled to bestow some still and mournful thoughts on a year which we lately knew,—which travelled pleasantly with us along life's varying journey for twelve successive months,—but is now for ever gone to rest. Eighteen hundred and six we shall see no more. It is now with the years beyond the flood. Another year has taken its place, in the womb of which how many and what events are inclosed, time only can reveal. It is doubtless the appointed time for many thousands to die,—for many thousands to be born and begin their immortal career. How many widows and orphans will be made this year, and how many mercies will be scattered from our Father's hand. How many revolutions will take place in families, in towns, in states. Great changes may occur in our families. How many of our children and parents we shall follow to the grave, and whether our seats will not be left empty before another new-year's day, is left for the revolution of a few months to determine. Whether this year shall dash all

our hopes or bring increased prosperity, depends wholly on God. We are vulnerable at a thousand points. All that we can hope or fear depends on him: and so many evils may befall us if he does not prevent. O let us venture no further into the year without engaging his blessing to bring it to a prosperous close. If like those who calculated to "go into such a city and continue there a year and buy and sell and get gain," you are making calculations for the year without a sense of dependence on God,—pause,—in God's name, pause, and settle it in your mind on whom your prosperity depends.

A number who were with us when the last year commenced, are no longer here. Their seats are vacant in this temple. Their houses are deserted. If you would seek their abode, you must search for it under the cold clods of the valley. But their spirits, where are they? Transported into a country from which there is no return, and fixed there in unchangeable weal or woe. In all probability some of us are destined to follow them in the course of the present year; and instead of partaking of a new-year's feast at the return of the season, will then be furnishing a feast for worms. Who, O who shall be of that number? It may be I,—my friend, it may be you.

The commencement of a new year is a proper season for many solemn reflections. It is an epoch which has always been noticed in the Christian Church; and it is reasonable that it should awaken us from slumber, to mark how rapidly time is rolling us into age and into eternity,—to take our view of the preservations and mercies of the past year, and of all the years that have gone over our heads,—to consider the mercies which we shall need for the year to come,—to reflect how we have improved our talents, what we have done for God and his Church, and what progress we have made in our heavenly course,—to inquire what new desires and purposes, and what new degrees of diligence, are needful for the current year,—and finally, to look forward to the termination of all our years, when time in respect to us will be no longer.

Let us spend a few minutes in these reflections. And O that the divine Spirit may carry them home to our hearts.

1. We are called upon by this occasion to mark the steady and silent lapse of time, which in an uninterrupted course is rolling us into age and into eternity;—to observe how year after year is stealing on with a still and even pace, and without our notice is bearing us into hoary life and towards the darkness of the tomb. How imperceptibly we advance in years. How silently "gray hairs are" gathering "here and there upon" us, while we know it not." "Man cometh forth like a flower." In the morning the flowers appear on the plain. They dance before the breeze. They smile in all the bloom and gayety of youth, and charm the eye of every passing swain. To an inexperienced eye it would seem long before the freshness and beauty of their youth could pass away; but at the close of the first week old age has withered their bloom and shaken their constitution, and at the close of the second week they expire. Short is the youth of the flowers of the field, and short is the youth of man. Yesterday we were children, just embarking on the ocean of life, spreading all our sails to catch the prosperous breeze, and looking forward with elated hopes to rich and balmy isles at which we should touch, and to the peaceful haven where we should cast anchor for a great many happy years. We proceeded,—but the sky was overcast, cross winds drove us devious; we saw those pleasant isles at a distance but could not reach them. We often took our observations to find the peaceful haven where all our cares were to end. Oft times we thought we saw the rising spires, and hope glistened in our eye. At last we find that we have passed the long looked-for spot, and cannot return, and that an irresistible current is carrying us directly into eternity. Yesterday we were children, setting out in life with sanguine hopes of finding, what had not been found before, a paradise on earth replete with soul-satisfying comfort. We advanced, but did not find it; yet the image of it glittered in our eye. We still dreamed that we were young and had time enough to overtake it. We pressed forward; but the image kept before us. Sometimes we felt the sting of disappointment; but we comforted ourselves

with the thought that the principal part, the most splendid and delightful part of life was yet before us, and that we should presently overtake the time when we could dismiss our cares and commence a long period of peace. We still dreamed that we were young; until we awoke and found that we had got into years, and that the paradise we had been seeking, such as it was, was far behind us, and that we had then little to look forward to but death and eternity. Then it was that we first discovered that our life was indeed "a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." We were not at all prepared to be old so soon. It was an unexpected shock. We had just been indulging the anticipation of long continued youth. We still fondly clung to the thought, unwilling to let it go. We said in our hearts, It was but yesterday that I was a child. It is not yet time to be old. I have not yet found what I have been looking forward to all my days. When I was tasting the insipid comforts of former years, I did not dream that they were the best that this life could afford.—Often did we attempt to recover our hold of youth; but every revolving year carried us still further from it and pushed us down the hill. We recoiled from the descent. Nature made an involuntary effort to brace itself against the downward progress and to hold back the wheels of time. But all in vain. One year passes after another and carries us still further into the vale of age. We are now advanced one more year nearer to the eternal world. And still another year has begun to waft us onwards. Unwilling as we are, we must advance. O break that bond which binds your hearts to life and stretch them forward to eternity. Forget "the things which are behind," and reach "forth unto those things which are before," and "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

O that we might improve this expiration of another year, (the emblem of the moment when all time shall end,) to impress our minds with the great lesson which we were sent into the world to learn. Here we stand in the middle of life, removed one year further from the sprightliness and hopes of child-

hood, and with increasing haste posting onward to the tomb.

2. This is a proper season to take a view of the preservations and mercies of the past year, and of all the years that have gone over our heads, and to consider the mercies we shall need for the year to come. While thousands and millions have been swept from life in the course of the last year, we are still spared to see a new year begun. While sore breaches have been made upon a thousand families, most of our families continue in peace.

How many new years have we been spared to see. Let us awake and cast our eyes back through the long ranges of time in which God has preserved us. Goodness and mercy have followed us all our days. Let us consider how God took care of us in our mothers' arms; how he guarded us from sudden death in childhood when we were unprepared to die; how near we sometimes came to death and to the gates of hell, and yet were spared; what care he took of our education; how often he called us by the secret whispers of his Spirit, when we knew him not, nor knew what drove us to the secret corner to pray. You may remember the places to which, as often as the sober hour of twilight came, your guilt and anxiety carried you to unbosom your little aching hearts before God. For my own part I can truly say that such gracious notices bestowed upon a poor, ignorant, unholy child, are among the most affecting incidents of my life, and a sight of the places to this day awakens recollections on which I love to dwell.

And furthermore, how many gracious and remarkable interpositions of providence have combined to shape the destinies of our manhood, to form our several relations, and to produce and continue every item of our prosperity. Not a year nor a month nor a day which has not been full of his mercies and strongly marked with his tender care. "What shall" we "render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards" us? Is it too much to devote to him the worthless lives which he has thus preserved and blessed?

The present is a suitable time to turn in our minds also how many mercies we shall need for the year to come, whence

they can be derived, and how much it behooves us to secure the favour of God by believing on his dear Son.

3. The present is a proper season to consider how we have improved our talents, what we have done for God and his Church, and what progress we have made in our heavenly course; and also to reflect what new desires and purposes, and what new degrees of diligence, are needful for the current year.

If we have had real piety for a course of years, we have hoped that we should yet do something for God in our day and generation. But so many years have come and gone; and what, after all, have we ever done for him or his Church? I confess for my own part that I am terrified to find so little done in so many years,—so little of my yearly rent paid,—so little returns for talents and privileges bestowed, and myself advanced so near to eternity;—life so near run out and so little done. So many years have we all been in God's vineyard; and now many of us are about to return to our Master to give an account of what we have done; and what will our account be? O that we could seize the fleeting years as they pass, and press them into the service of God and our souls, and do something yet for him before we go hence to be here no more. O that we could escape from these worldly chains, that we could break these fetters of pride, that we could awake from this unbelief and stupidity, and feel like beings who must spend a whole eternity in another world. It is high time that we began to live to some good purpose,—that we began to live for God and eternity. If we would ever awake to renewed diligence, we must awake speedily. Our time is short; whatever we do we must do quickly.

The present is a proper season to inquire also what improvements and advances we have made in the divine life. If we have been truly pious for a course of years, we have hoped that we should not always be children in grace; we have hoped that ere this time we should become bright and happy Christians. But what advances have we made in the heavenly course? What progress did we make the last year? How much more humble, holy, and heavenly,—how much more dead to the world,—

are we than we were the beginning of the last year. For one I know that it is high time that I was a great way further advanced in my progress. How wretched to be obliged to confess, I am old and yet a babe; an infant of days and yet advanced in years.

What then do we purpose to do for the time to come, that we may make greater advances in grace? This is the proper time to lay our plans of duty and improvement for the year,—to form our purposes and offer our prayers for quickening grace during this period. O that we may obtain grace with a new year to begin new lives; that we may double our diligence the more for the time we have lost; and that the close of the present year may find us advanced a great way in our journey towards the heavenly rest.

4. The present is a proper season to look forward to the termination of all our years, when time in respect to us shall be no longer. A few more revolutions and we shall all be gathered to the assembly of the dead. The places which now know us will know us no more. These seats will be filled by new incumbents, and not one of their fathers will be found in this house. A new voice will be heard from this pulpit; while you and I, my dear hearers, shall have gone together to our common Judge, to answer for our conduct in the relation we sustained to each other. Where then, O where shall we severally be fixed? If I am so happy as to reach the kingdom of heaven, I hope to meet many of my dear hearers there, and to have a common joy in reviewing the relation which subsisted between us in the Church on earth. But O shall I see any of you whom I now regard with hope, for ever driven from the assembly of the righteous? Shall I be compelled to testify against you? Shall I see you plunged into deeper misery by the very Gospel I have preached? God knows I meant no such thing. I would not be the means of woe to one of you. But O my hearers, consider the awful account which some of you may have to render for wasted time, for misimproved privileges, and for a rejected Gospel which long pleaded in your ears. When years no more shall come and go,—when all the changes of this

world shall cease,—your poor souls, without any change except from bad to worse,—without any revolutions of time,—may have to measure, in one unceasing duration, the horrid age of eternal damnation; from which may God deliver us through infinite grace in Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

SERMON LI.

THE PRAYER OF FAITH.

LUKE xi. 5—13. Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me and I have nothing to set before him: and he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

CHRIST was praying in a certain place, and when he had ceased one of his disciples entreated him to teach them to pray; upon which he gave them the form commonly called the Lord's Prayer, and then subjoined the words of our text. The promise not only is direct and explicit, but is repeated no less than eight times, and is illustrated and confirmed in a variety of ways. There is first the successful importunity of the borrower: then there are twice three direct assertions: "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Then follows the affecting appeal to the parental heart: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?" The passage is thus subjected to the infallible annotation which is found in the parent's breast. I appeal to every father before me. If your little son who is dutiful to you, and who has had nothing to eat for three days, should come and kneel down before you, and put up his little hands, and say, Will papa please to give me a piece of bread? would you give him a stone? Where is the Cain or Judas that would give him a stone? The meaning being thus settled beyond the possibility of doubt, it is added with a surprising emphasis, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." There is no explaining it away. The promise is unqualified and direct. It cannot be misunderstood; it cannot deceive. It will be fulfilled as sure as there is a God in heaven. It never will fail in a single instance to the end of the world. It is however consistent with some delay. Indeed the case of the borrower plainly implies that the blessing is to be drawn forth by importunity. Thus it was in the case of Jacob; thus it was in the case of the Canaanitish woman.

What promises of temporal blessings may be made to prayer, I shall not at

present inquire. I confine my view to the gift of the Holy Spirit, the only thing expressly named in the text. This gift may, in answer to our prayers, be bestowed on ourselves or others. But because the answer is more obvious when it works a great revolution in the character of others, I shall confine myself to this case. There is nothing in the promise to limit it to either; and other texts sufficiently sustain the connexion between the prayer of faith and the conversion of sinners. "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." "This kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting." "When the Lord shall build up Zion,—he will regard the prayer of the destitute and not despise their prayer." "Give him no rest till he establish, till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." "As soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children." But without looking further, we see the truth of the promise as relates to an influence upon others, in every revival of religion. We see, at the commencement, a part of the church brought to those peculiar feelings in prayer which indicate the approaching conversion of sinners,—which awaken confident expectations of such an event,—which never were and never will be disappointed. *There* is the fact before your eyes. There is indeed sometimes an excitement which proves transient and unavailing; but those who have had both sets of feelings, will tell you that this wants the most essential characteristics of the prayer of faith.

To the humble mind it appears almost incredible that God should be influenced by the prayers of such wretched worms, until it discovers that it is, so to speak, the Holy Ghost which prays. Believers are called the temple of the Holy Ghost, and he, by a slight figure, is represented as seated in that temple and praying for them: and God, as he comes down to examine the heart, is represented as hearing and understanding this intercession. "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the

saints according to the will of God." No wonder that God hears prayer when, if I may so speak, it is the Holy Ghost that prays. What an awful place is the Christian's closet. The whole Trinity are about it every time he kneels. There is the Spirit interceding with the Father to send down blessings through the Son.

There are many prayers offered up for the effusions of the Spirit, even by Christians, which never appear to be answered. There are many prayers in which God probably sees some good, which cannot claim the abounding promise of the text. It becomes then a question of infinite importance, What are the attributes of that prayer to which this highest promise is made? I confess with shame that I know very little about it; but as far as I am taught, they are the eight following.

1. Earnest desire. Not the ordinary desire of Christians even when they long for a revival of religion; but a desire which almost breaks the heart;—a desire which swallows up every other;—which is more intense than any one can conceive who has not felt it. The man goes bowed down all the day long under sorrows too great for him to bear, because men are bound to that land of darkness from which there is no return. He sees it utterly impossible for him ever to enjoy life any more unless the Spirit be poured out from on high. Give him the world, he is not satisfied; offer him a throne of glory, and it does not fill the aching void. Nothing in the universe does he desire so much. Nothing else in the universe will satisfy him. The mighty care hangs immovably upon his heart. It goes with him from morning till noon,—from noon till night,—and cannot be shaken off for any other matter. It is the last to press upon him when he sinks to sleep; it is the first to meet him when he opens his eyes.

2. Submission. Every man has an individuation of existence and of consciousness peculiar to himself, and of course possesses a personal interest which is his own and cannot be another's. Every parent has a social interest which is his own and cannot be another's. These the anxious individual and parent feel it an infinite privilege to

bring to God. And they *may* bring them to God with throes unlimited but by submission. Let submission bound the reachings of their desires, and in all other respects they may give them full scope.

But with all the anguish of his desire, the man of faith does not set up the interest of the dearest object against the interest of God, nor his own will against the will of God. While his very soul goes forth in pantings after the good in view, his supreme wish is that the Infinite Mind may reign over every event. It is farthest from his thoughts to dictate to God or to counsel God. He has no idea that God is loath and needs to be urged. He does not dream that he himself is more benevolent or compassionate towards a perishing world, than he who sent his only Son to die,—than he who has borne with them and called after them for so many years. Though his heart is ready to burst with desire, he would not for worlds take the decision out of the hands of infinite wisdom and love.

3. Dependence. Not a mere, though full, assent of the understanding that the power is all of God; not such a feeling of this truth as Christians ordinarily have; but such a sense as accompanies a soul-consuming desire when that truth is written with a sun-beam before the eye, and settles down into the heart as a great reality, and is rested upon as the last resort of an anguished mind and as its firm support; such a sense as we may suppose, (if it is lawful to suppose,) a Christian would feel if shut up in hell and looking up to God to remove the bolts and bars. It is a deep felt reality that no other agent in the universe can lift a pall or a napkin from the dead; that all the preachers on earth are no more than the rod stretched out over the Red Sea, or the trumpets sounded before the walls of Jericho. The man goes forth with an eye lifted to heaven and fixed as marble, saying as he goes, "My soul, wait thou only,—only,—only,—upon God, for my expectation is from him." When he prays, (and he wants to pray all the time,) he casts himself helpless at the feet of God, resting every issue on his will, and summing up all his hopes in this language of the leper, "Lord, if

thou wilt thou canst." As he goes from house to house where the heavenly influence begins to fall, he feels that he is only carrying a torch to hold to the tinder which God has prepared. I knew a preacher who under such a sense, scarcely looked at his audience during a whole service, and cared not whether they were asleep or awake, feeling that the question of a revival did not lie between him and them, but was to be settled in heaven: and glorious effects followed the exercises of that day. O it is sweet, at such a moment, to lay the salvation of friends, of a world, over upon God, and commit it to him without one dissenting feeling through all the soul.

4. An earnest and diligent use of means. With all this sense of dependance and nothingness, the man cannot sit still. It is no part of his impression or his creed, that to lie at the bottom of a hill and wish one's self on the top will carry him thither. He is as much engaged to get at the consciences of men as though he could do every thing himself. Is he a pastor? he cannot rest till he has carried the message of God to every door and to every individual conscience. He goes again and again where his concentrated anxieties lead him, to see what has followed from his exhortations and prayers, and to watch every symptom of the moving bones. He will go through heat and cold, through rain and sleet, by day and night, full or fasting, and will preach, pray, and exhort, and visit from house to house, till his strength fail. If the dearest friend would interpose to stop him by a ceremonious visit, that friend is unwelcome. Every thing is in the way that would hinder him in his work. He does it all because he believes that his great Master orders him to the work and assigns him every part. It is the sweetest luxury to feel that he is at work for Christ.

5. Deep humility. He feels utterly unworthy of the least favour,—utterly unworthy to be used as an instrument of grace to others,—infinitely unworthy to stand where God is passing by. He abhors himself and repents in dust and ashes. He trembles lest his mountains of guilt should obstruct the way of the Most High. O the sense which he has

of his backslidings ! such a sense as perhaps never weighed him down before ; a sense which he does not however wish to put off, but desires greatly to increase. His past ingratitude breaks his heart, and he longs to get down into the deepest dust,—lower and lower still,—and feels that he never can get low enough. He *loves* to repent. He feels it a luxury to grieve. He covets the lowest place in the dust more than he does the throne of an archangel. Is he a parent ? O how does he feel when, taking an attitude to put forth all his strength in agony for his children, he is forced to say with tears, “Although my house be not so with God.” In short, he is just prepared, if God hears his prayers, to give him all the glory, with wonder, love, and gratitude.

6. Faith. But what is faith ? Faith is the belief of a divine testimony. It is the belief of nothing which is not found on the sacred page. It is not a belief therefore that George, who is sick, will live, or that William will be saved. It is not a belief that a revival of religion will come at Boston in 1830 ; for neither Boston nor 1830 is found on the inspired page. It is not a belief that my prayer in particular will be answered : but it is an open view of that glorious truth, set forth on a field of light, “How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.” It is a great thing to wake up in the presence of God and find him in the midst of his family with all the father’s heart, and more ready to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him than earthly parents are to give bread to their children. This is no ordinary experience even in the Church of God. It introduces the Christian himself into a new world, or into one which he has seldom seen. O what mercy and compassion are seen melting in the heart of God ; what sincerity and truth are stamped on the promise ; what certainty and reality that God has said it. The man believes it as firmly as he believes his own existence. He would risk a million of souls on its truth. He sees it as clearly as the sun at noon-day. He is confident that if he does not succeed, it is because he does not offer the prayer of faith. And after he has heaved the strong desire and grasped the

throne with both his hands for weeks, and has arrived at the conclusion, “If this is not prayer, and in some measure the prayer of Penuel, I never prayed ;” he comes to the settled belief, “If *all* the objects of my solicitude go down, I go down with them without regeneration.” So strong is the impression lodged at his heart that the promise is true and that the prayer of faith will not be turned away.

Faith in the promise is not a belief that my prayer in particular will be answered ; for my prayer is not named in the promise. The stipulation is, to give the blessing to me *if* I offer the prayer of faith. I must first be conscious that I do pray in faith before I can have any evidence that I shall receive the blessing. The expectation of receiving is a logical inference from the fact that I have prayed in faith ; an inference which is often instantaneous, and to a passing view seems incorporated with the faith itself. Yet it is not faith but hope. Hope indeed involves faith, as it rests on the divine word ; but as that word is conditional, it rests too on the persuasion that I have fulfilled the condition. This is hope ; and it ought to be clearly distinguished from faith. For want of this distinction people adopt a language which makes faith something different from a belief in a divine testimony. They say, I have faith to believe this thing and that thing, neither of which is named in the divine word ; a notion about faith which may lead to the wildest enthusiasm.

In accordance with this notion is a theory of faith widely different from mine. It is, that we are to drop right down upon the confidence at first, that we shall have the things we are about to ask for. Then, either the promise is absolute, (*viz.* that we shall have the things whether we ask in faith or not,) or faith rests on nothing and is presumptuous.

But though nothing but a divine declaration is the object of faith, events not named in that may be confidently expected, from a reliance on the promise made to the prayer of faith, and as an inference from the fact that such prayer has been offered. In this way one may arrive at a strong hope that God is about to revive his work in a

particular place, and perhaps that an individual is to be saved. His hopes of a revival may be greatly strengthened by witnessing a similar struggle in others. In these ways he may arrive at "the full assurance of hope." Why should he not, as well as to the assured hope of eternal life, provided the Holy Ghost, no less than heaven, is promised to the prayer of faith? especially as the applicability of the promise rests equally in both cases on the operations of his own mind.

It ought to be considered that it is possible for us to put forth all the essential acts of believing prayer before we get to our knees or even form a proposition in our own minds: we may look to God and reach after him and confide in his truth. And a persuasion that we shall obtain the blessing may grow up out of these reachings of faith, before we begin formally to pray. And this inferred hope, (for the mind is conscious of these reachings, and makes the inference, when its movements are too rapid to be easily remembered and analyzed,) may have led to the belief that the first actings of faith itself consisted in a confident expectation of the event.

7. Perseverance. By this I do not mean a mere continuance in prayer, or a resolution to continue; but a holding of God to his word, and a fixed determination to continue at his feet till the blessing comes. This ground could not be taken without faith; for it is a venturing of every thing on the impossibility of recalling his word; it is a laying hold of unchangeable truth and refusing to let it go. When the anxious Christian discovers that the promise is as infallible as the truth of the eternal God, he sees that he may indeed take hold of it and draw the blessing down;—that he may lawfully keep hold of it until the blessing comes. He at once grasps it with both his hands, and says, "Here I plant myself down, and on this spot I will receive the blessing or die. Call me a dog; tread me down with thy feet; but here I will lie till death or the blessing comes. I risk every thing on this foundation, and if this will not sustain me let all sink together. Thou hast committed thyself to me by a promise which I know is eternal truth and cannot be recalled; and I fix upon it a

grasp which I will never relax. I hold thee to thy word and will not let thee go."

So felt Jacob at Penue!; so felt the Syrophenician woman.

Sometimes when the Christian is forming these bold purposes, a solemn doubt comes over him: "Is not this holding of God to his word a taking from him the right of sovereignty?" He starts at the suggestion, as though, while in the pursuit of all that he holds dear, a wall from heaven had dropped across his path. He leaves every other subject to examine this. He throws both his eyes far into the regions of truth, and soon the solution meets his gaze: "Had not *God given* me a spirit to hold him fast, I should have been a clod. His sovereignty was exhausted in the decision respecting that gift." When a dam has been suddenly thrown across a rapid stream, and the waters have risen and beat against it, take the dam away and how impetuously will the torrent sweep. When this obstruction is removed, and the anxious Christian sees the whole field open between him and God, and not a fence nor a bar in the way, O how does his impetuous spirit rush.

8. An absorbing regard for the glory of God. A man has a right to bring a personal or social interest to God with no other limit than submission. When I read the accounts of the publican and the father of the lunatic, I see nothing on the face of either but the bringing of a personal or social interest to God or his Son, with faith and love, and no doubt submission. I see no evidence that their minds were taken up in considering how God would be seen and honoured in their relief. And they certainly were accepted. I dare not therefore say that no prayer is answered which is not marked with this characteristic. Yet I think that the signal success which stamps the broad mark of approbation on believing and persevering prayer, is not to be expected till we have got beyond personal and social interests, to an all-absorbing desire for the glory of God. Here is an anxious parent whose prayers have long been marked with the first seven attributes, but not with the eighth. He has constantly brought the interest of his children to God with no other modification

or limit than submission; but he has brought it with an anguish of spirit which has well nigh laid him on a bed of sickness. In one of his long midnight agonies, while he is urging the entreaty that the heart of stone may that night be turned to flesh, something says, "No; let them first be more deeply convinced of their sin and ruin, that they may know what they owe to our redeeming God and his dying Son;—that they may see the distinctive glories of the God and Saviour of lost sinners." Their personal interests, which have pressed like a mountain so long upon his heart, are swallowed up and lost, and the all-absorbing desire is, "That eyes so dear may see the glory of our redeeming God and his dying Son, and that souls so dear may show in their salvation the same glory to the universe." He now sees, as he never saw before, what it is for God to be glorified, and knows that he desires this object more than all others. The next morning his prayers are answered in a manner which he will never forget.

I confess I know very little about this matter. I am ashamed that I know no more. But as far as I am instructed, these are the essential attributes of that "effectual fervent prayer" which "avail-eth much."

My brethren, have you ever found upon yourselves all these marks of believing prayer? If you have, and have seen nothing follow, I give up the doctrine. But you must prove beyond the possibility of a doubt, that your feelings, both in kind and degree, came up to this standard. But if you never felt thus, do not deny the doctrine till you have made the experiment.

My dear brethren, how much you might prevail to bless your houses and to bless the world if you would live in this believing frame all the time. You might see a revival of religion around you continually. This faith must become general in the Church before the world will be subdued to the empire of

Christ. A miserable race are going down to death by nations for want of this spirit among the friends of God. There is great guilt in this thing. There is cruel ingratitude to the Sufferer of Calvary, and to that kind Spirit who has done so much for us and offered so much to us. Is not the God of truth to be believed, when he confirms his promise by an oath, an oath sworn by himself, "that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation"? Rise up, my dear brethren, to a higher confidence in God. "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Enlarge your desires. God takes it ill that you ask so little. He says, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." He takes it ill that you expect so little from him. "The Lord taketh pleasure—in those that hope in his mercy." O if you could expect enough and believe enough and ask enough, I know not what you might not obtain; I know not what deliverances you might accomplish in the earth. The age is fast opening when the triumphs of prayer are to be every where displayed as they never were before, to draw the creation up to God and to perpetuate the union by the bond of eternal confidence. "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children." And when a nation shall be born in a day in answer to prayer, then that strong language of a condescending God may be written on our banners; "Concerning the work of my hands command ye me." Children of God, lift up your heads in hope. Heirs of all the promises, take strong hold of your Father's covenant. And on you also shall be stamped the name of Israel: for as a prince shall you have power with God and shall prevail. Amen.

SERMON LII.

THE HEAVENLY MIND.

Rom. viii. 6.—To be spiritually minded is life and peace.

THE apostle is contrasting a carnal with a spiritual mind. By a carnal or fleshly mind he means that which is natural to man, according to those words of our Saviour, "That which is born of the flesh is *flesh*." By a spiritual mind he means that new and holy temper which is produced by the Spirit of God; according to the words of Christ subjoined to the former, "That which is born of the Spirit is *spirit*." "To be carnally minded," says the apostle, "is death: [to follow the bent of nature is spiritual death, and leads to eternal death:] but to be spiritually minded is life and peace:" [to have those dispositions and views and aims which the Spirit of God produces, is spiritual life, and leads to eternal life, and brings with it present peace.] The flesh and the spirit are repeatedly contrasted by this apostle. "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other. Now the works of the flesh—are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.—But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." "The fruit of the spirit," he says in another place, "is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." These catalogues show you at once what is meant by a spiritual mind; and the contrast between the spirit and the flesh shows you how contrary to nature it is to exercise such a mind. I say, contrary to nature; for *flesh* does not mean *sin*, (as its works just enumerated might seem to imply,) but *unsanctified nature*; ac-

ording to the language of the same apostle in another place, "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." The whole movement of that which is called a spiritual mind is contrary to fallen nature. It is an up-hill motion, and requires great effort. Every step of its course is self-denial. A man who would live easy and go where nature leads him, will never attain to a spiritual mind. He must enter in earnest on a conflict with nature, and wage a war, if not of extermination, at least of absolute conquest. There is no life, no peace, further than he does this.

But that part of the spiritual mind to which I wish to draw your attention, is what is called a heavenly mind. It consists of the following ingredients: (1.) A deadness to the world; (2.) An eye habitually fixed on heaven, like Abraham, who "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God;"—like the rest of that holy family, who, unmindful of the country "from whence they came out," desired "a better country, that is, a heavenly," and "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (These two ingredients are coupled together in those emphatic words to the Colossians: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.") (3.) Such a walk with God as Enoch maintained; consisting in an intimate communion with him, (involving a clear view of him and a consciousness of living in his presence,) and consisting also in a will moving in the same line with his will, and leading to all that holy and beneficent action, (under the form of

obedience,) which God himself pursues.

The heavenly mind, thus constituted, is supported by that faith which is "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is accompanied of course with an open view of God and Christ, and all those things which exist in the kingdom of God. It is conscious of God's universal agency, and depends on him for all things. It is familiar with his mercy and truth, and trusts him unwaveringly. It sees the reality and sincerity of the appointment of Christ to his mediatorial work, and is accustomed to contemplate his fitness and sufficiency for that work,—his fulness and glory,—and approves and receives and relies on him as a complete and universal Saviour. Of course it is accompanied with a sense of acceptance, and in its higher actings, with "the full assurance of hope," which brings with it that "peace of God which passeth all understanding."

This is the heavenly mind. To attain this is the greatest happiness on this side of heaven. The man who possesses it lives in a world independent of the world without. Riches and friends and even health may depart, but in this new world he finds a supply of all things. Amidst all the changes of life he has here a stable inheritance. To possess this is far more than wealth or honour, even as present happiness is concerned. It is the highest wisdom to bend all our attention to the acquisition of this. How then shall it be obtained? This is a question of the greatest personal importance to us. How can the heavenly mind be obtained?

My first remark is, that it must be received from God, and of course must be sought with a deep sense of dependence on him. God must be acknowledged as the sole Author of holiness, and we must never think to go forth in a course of independent exertions to obtain it. We must carry about our hearts the constant impression that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights;" and must go forth with our eyes fixed on the heavens, saying as we go, "My soul, wait thou only upon God." The most holy men are they who have the most of this dependence; and in pro-

portion as it is entire will be their supplies from above. Nor must we look for the gift from God but through a Mediator. The intervention of a Mediator was not indeed intended to hide the original source; and we must constantly feel that that source is in God. But we must also realize that the blessing cannot come from God but as the reward of Christ's righteousness, nor be dispensed by any other hand than that of the Mediatorial King; that though it comes originally from God, it must come, in this twofold sense, through a Mediator. Hence Christ is set forth as the more visible and immediate source of supply: ("I am the vine, ye are the branches:") and a dependence on him for supplies is made the very bond of union by which we grow into him and find a channel of communication from him to us. "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me." Nor must we overlook the personality and agency of the Holy Spirit. We must be sensible that this is the divine Person who immediately does the whole work, and that the influence comes from Christ only as the Spirit, in the economy of redemption, is placed under him as his reward. In this way must we depend for sanctification on the sacred Three: on the Spirit as the immediate Agent; on Christ as the One who by his merits obtained the Spirit for men, and by covenant right, as Mediatorial King, directs all his movements; and on the Father as the original Author of the gift.

And because the whole furniture of a heavenly mind comes from God, my second direction is, that we must ask him for it in a course of habitual and earnest prayer. The man who would rise up above the standing of ordinary Christians and attain to the elevation and serenity of a heavenly mind, must be much in prayer. It cannot be gained by any other means. Not an instance can be found since the conversion of Abel, of one raised to this enviable height who was not pre-eminently a man of prayer. The inseparable connexion between prayer, (in this more full and intense degree,) and a heavenly mind, depends on the two following

principles. First, as every degree of progressive sanctification is wrought in answer to prayer, this higher degree must be accomplished in answer to fuller and more intense supplications. God could indeed give without prayer; and the indolent are ready to imagine that, being unchangeable, he will bestow according to his eternal decree whether men pray or not. But the truth is, that God acts according to the known laws of holy mind, and bestows his richer favours only where there is an object to draw forth his special regard. Such an object is a praying saint; and the prayers as really affect his heart as they could the heart of any earthly parent: his unchangeableness not standing in the way; for as he exists in one eternal now, the prayers have been before him as early as his existence, and eternally and unchangeably affected his heart. By thus allowing himself to act according to the known laws of holy mind, he is enabled to display his real character in a manner intelligible to creatures: and by the reciprocation of asking and bestowing, he makes it manifest that he is the source of all supplies: and by thus rewarding supplicants, he encourages creatures to approach him and commune with him and grow up into eternal union with him. On these accounts he will not grant his special favours but in answer to prayer. And when this principle is established, it is plain that the more constant and intense the prayers are, the more ample will be the supplies. The reason then is obvious why the man who would receive so much as to lift him up to a heavenly mind, must be pre-eminently a man of prayer. But there is another reason for the close connexion between the two. A praying spirit is in its very nature the heavenly mind; and in proportion to its fulness and intensity is the heavenly mind perfected. Or to reverse the proposition, the heavenly mind is in its very nature a spirit of prayer. A mind of heavenly tendency will naturally breathe after God, and reach towards him, and love to communicate with him. To think then of having the heavenly mind without being much in prayer, is to think of having the thing without the thing itself. On both of these accounts the man who would possess

the heavenly mind, must be pre-eminently a man of prayer.

Thirdly, he must be much employed in heavenly meditation. The very idea of a heavenly mind is that it is familiar with heavenly things and deeply affected by them, and by that means abstracted from the world. The first link in the chain is familiarity with heavenly things. And this cannot be acquired without being frequently conversant with them. You cannot be familiar with a friend without frequent intercourse with him. You cannot be familiar with books without much reading. You cannot be familiar with any art or employment without repeated practice. So you cannot be familiar with heaven without frequently visiting it in your thoughts and pondering over its glorious objects. There must be seasons for fixed meditation, when every other object is excluded;—seasons distinct from those set apart for prayer. In these seasons the mind must ponder deeply, undividedly, and for a considerable time together, on the different objects and employments of the heavenly world, on its glorious Author, on the Saviour and his work, on the day of judgment, on the shortness of time, and the like. Without these set seasons the art of meditating will never become easy. There is as much an art of meditating as an art of singing, and no more one than the other can be acquired without practice. When the mind has become accustomed by these set seasons to drop every other object and to bend its whole attention upwards, and when the thoughts have thus become trained to their flights, it will be easy and sweet to meditate. And the art of commanding the thoughts being thus acquired, it will be easy to redeem from waste and employ in heavenly meditation the hours spent alone in riding or walking or in labour. By this means the soul can live in heaven the greater part of the time, from morning till night and from day to day; and the effect on its holiness and happiness will be immense. Indeed there is no acquiring a heavenly mind in any other way. See you that eminent saint who stands distinguished in all the country around for his sanctity and benevolence, and as one who walks with God? He never reached this ele-

vation by any other means. If you could go back into the history of his closet and his private hours for the last twenty years, you would find that those waste moments which others devote to frivolous thinking or lose in a vacuum of thought, he has employed in heavenly meditation, and that he acquired this habit in seasons specially set apart for this exercise. You look upon those superior Christians who live on the verge of heaven, and wonder how they arose so high. You need not wonder more. One of the secrets is now out. For many years they have been largely employed in heavenly meditation.

Fourthly, the man who would attain to a heavenly mind must be conscientious and punctual in his attendance on all the means of grace. It must not be a little thing that shall keep him from the house of God or from the prayer meeting. He must be a faithful and conscientious attendant on sacraments. He must be systematic and inflexible in his private devotions, and in reading some portion of Scripture or other devotional book every day.

Fifthly, he must watch. This is a point of the utmost importance, and is frequently in Scripture joined with prayer. Our hearts are a tinder-box, ready to take fire from every spark; and the whole atmosphere around us is filled with scintillations as from a furnace. Without the most constant watchfulness some flame will secretly kindle that will burn up the whole frame of a heavenly mind. There is very much in the memorable command, "Keep thy heart with all diligence." *Keep thy heart*: guard every imagination and thought and feeling. Keep it *with all diligence*: let it be thy daily and hourly work. Turn not thine eye away: let it be constantly fixed on that moving thing within thee. Have the arm of thy resolution near thee to seize it the moment it attempts to fly. If you were set to keep a bird, unfastened, upon the palm of your hand, you would know what is meant by keeping the heart with all diligence. Watch also the approaches of the enemy and all the occasions of temptation. Watch your words and actions. Watch the approaches of Christ and the motions of the Spirit. Watch the providence of God as your instruc-

tor and guide. Watch for opportunities of doing good. The man who intends to live above the world and keep the face of heaven unclouded, must have his eyes about him. He must not suffer imaginations and thoughts and feelings to come and go as they please without examination or care. A heavenly mind is a well regulated mind; and to regulate a thing so complicated and volatile, is as difficult as to govern a kingdom. In this as much as in any thing lies the difference between those eminent Christians who walk with God, and those gay and easy professors who fall in with the manners of the world. One class are keeping their hearts with all diligence, and are cautiously feeling their way, and examining every object around them, and comparing it with the standard of the word; and make this the daily toil and business of life: the other class flit along without examination or care; and if no actions or words escape them which the decent part of the world would condemn, they inquire no further. They are never likely to attain to a heavenly mind, and I am afraid they will never reach heaven itself.

Sixthly, the man who would attain to the exalted dignity and serenity of a heavenly mind, must pursue a course of habitual and universal obedience. I do not say a course of sinless perfection, (for then a heavenly mind in our world would be a dream;) but a course of obedience extending to every branch of duty, and constant enough to constitute a habit. Every deliberate sin tends to grieve away the Spirit. The frequent recurrence of known sin will therefore cut the sinews of faith and devotion and prostrate the soul in the dust. A man can never mount up and abide at the high elevation of a heavenly mind without pleasing God by an habitual course of filial obedience.

I may add here, that the man who would reach a heavenly mind must be, like God, much employed in doing good. There are two extremes to which practical religion has been carried. In one extreme it has produced the man of beneficence, who had little to do with devotion, and had perhaps a very superficial knowledge of the truth; in the other extreme it has produced the man of retired devotion, with his many ex-

periences, but who never did any good. Neither is likely to ascend to a heavenly mind. The man of beneficence with little devotion, has many exquisite gratifications; but his business is chiefly with his fellow men: the man of devotion without beneficence, may have some intercourse with his Maker, and in the ages of ignorance, when his neglect was winked at, might have had some elevated views of truth; but in these times of light, when the call for beneficent action is loudly heard from heaven and earth, he can never be admitted to an intimate walk with God. God will not walk with any man who is so unlike him as the retired monk, who, with all his prayers, will not give a cent or put forth his hand to save a world from death.

Seventhly, it is necessary to the attainment of a heavenly mind that a man possess a single eye; that he be not divided between the world and God and keep a double object in his view. He must have reached that point where he feels himself habitually not his own but the servant of another; where he goes forth daily to his work, not principally to please himself, but to serve his heavenly Master; where his desire of gain is chiefly prompted by a wish to obtain the means of extending the Redeemer's kingdom. To have two masters, or a double object, is to have an evil eye; to have a single object, as the one which controls the heart and life, is to have a single eye. None but those who answer the latter description can live in the unclouded light of heaven. What saith the Scripture? "If thine eye be single thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, [double,] thy whole body shall be full of darkness." Those professors of religion whose principal object from month to month is to get gain, will certainly never obtain a heavenly mind; and if there is any truth in the Bible, they will never reach heaven itself.

As it is necessary to have a single eye, or a single controlling object, in order to enjoy the light which brings the heavenly mind, it must be manifest that too much involvement in worldly cares is unfavourable to this attainment. There are indeed instances in which men of large business and wealth in an

eminent degree walk with God; but it is only where they have written HOLINESS TO THE LORD on all their possessions, and of course retain the single eye. We cannot therefore make a law that Christians shall not embark in extensive business; for some, we see, do this with great advantage to the kingdom of Christ. But so many are the temptations connected with such a state, that for one I bless God that I am excused.

Finally, a man cannot expect to ascend to this holy and happy elevation without setting his mind upon it as the personal good to which all others must submit, and decreeing in his heart, (with a proper dependence on God,) that he will attain to this though every thing else be lost. He must determine to have this whatever else is given up,—to have it at all hazards and sacrifices,—to make every thing else bend and give way to this. He must say, and continue to say, "God helping me, I must and will have this. Let every thing else go: this is my point; this is my all." The man who thus resolves and perseveres, in the manner already described, will obtain this most desirable good. It is an old maxim, that if a man says, I will be rich, he will be rich. The meaning is, that if he resolves to be rich at all hazards, and makes every thing else bend to his purpose, and has no other object day or night, and sticks at no hardships or self-denials; the probability is that he will succeed. The same may be said of a resolute pursuit of learning, and indeed of almost every other object. But there is a certainty in the present case which does not attend any other; for God has promised success. "Seek and ye shall find:" "The soul of the diligent shall be made fat:" "Delight thyself in the Lord and he shall give thee the desires of thy heart:" "How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him."

Here then is a good within the reach of every man who will feel right and do his duty. And it is worth more in the present life than thrones and kingdoms. And now the question is, will you drop every other concern and rise up to this pursuit? Not one of you is excluded from spending your life high under the

arch of heaven, far above the world, in full view of the heavenly city, knowing that to be your eternal home, and sheltered there from all the cares and troubles of life. The means by which you can make the ascent have been pointed out. And now the question is, will you come up to this high and holy life, or will you grovel still in the dust, sighing, suffering, dying? There is but one mind that can decide for you, and that mind is your own. What say you now, my brethren? Will you start from your slumbers and take hold of the strength of God and mount? or will you lose it all and linger still in the dust? If the latter, complain not hereafter of the want of comfort. If the troubles of life find you sleeping in their own domains, accuse not God. Be it remembered *then* that you had an opportunity to escape from them all and live above their reach. If dismal doubts find you and break your peace, remember that you had none to blame but yourselves; for you had the offer of an abode in the confines of the New Je-

rusalem, surrounded with light that would have chased every fear away. My brethren, you are all eager for happiness. Now the way is pointed out in which you may obtain it: a short way; the only way. You have met with disappointments in the world. Some of you have been unfortunate in business: others of you have lost near and dear friends. You find below only what breaks your heart. Now then let us escape from all these and live above their reach. Let us go up and be happy. Blessed be God for these tidings to soothe the anguished mind. Blessed be God for this offer of rest before we die. Our habitation here is desolate; thanks to God that he has offered us an abode so near his seat. O my brethren, let us gratefully accept, and nerve ourselves with strength to climb the heavenly road. Let us tread every idol beneath our feet. Let the wide world be dead to us. And let us say to our Father looking out of heaven, Lo, I come, I come. Amen.

SERMON LIII.

WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?

Acts ix. 6.—And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

THIS was the exclamation of the trembling Paul, when he was arrested on his way to Damascus. And this will be the anxious inquiry of every sinner when God opens himself to his view. There must be a moment in the life of every man who is saved, when he is brought to feel that he cannot put off religion any longer, that he must enter upon it immediately and in earnest, and from this self-same moment must make it his great object till he has made sure of eternal life. Unless a man is brought to this stand, he will continue to postpone and postpone till he dies. I am

willing to hope that there are some of my hearers who are convinced that they cannot find happiness in the world, that it is high time to seek a better happiness in God, that they have lived too long in sin, that they are hastening to the judgment seat of Christ, to a never-ending eternity, and ought no longer to sleep over the concerns of their souls; and who are ready to ask the question in the text with great sincerity, and with a determination to obey the answer whatever it may be. If there are any such in the house, this sermon is intended for them. It is a pity that people

who are brought to this state of inquiry, should be left one moment in doubt respecting the course they are to pursue. Unable to come at them all in a personal interview, I have determined to meet them in a mass, and hold this public conversation with them together. If they will lend me their whole attention, I will endeavour to tell them, with all the plainness and simplicity in my power, what God would have them to do.

1. You must enter at once on the most earnest attention to *the means of grace*. You must frequently and solemnly read the Scriptures, with a fervent desire to feel their illuminating and sanctifying influence. You must often repair to your closets, and cast yourselves down before God, and pour out your souls in prayer; not in that cold, wandering manner that you have too often done, but with the most agonizing wrestlings, feeling that you cannot let Him go, that you can never again rise from your face till you have obtained His pardoning love. You must keep your minds on these things through the day, and be often lifting up your hearts in ejaculatory prayer in the intervals of business. Nothing but the most pressing necessity must be suffered to keep you from the house of God; and when there, you must banish every sluggish, sleepy feeling, call in every wandering thought, and attend as for your lives to every part of the service. You must seek those other meetings which are held in the week, and suffer nothing to keep you from them that would not keep you from the bed of a dying child. You should go to some judicious, pious friend, and unbosom your heart to him, and tell him all your difficulties and temptations, and take the benefit of his instruction and advice. Though an obtrusive loquacity is to be avoided, you ought early to let your case be known to some prudent friend who is able to give you instruction. Your natural adviser on such subjects is your minister, and he will be happy to receive you at all times, and afford you every aid in his power. You should get some capable person to select for you a few books, which are adapted to your present case; such as Doddridge's *Rise and Progress*, Edwards' *Sermons*, Backus on *Regeneration*, and the like; and should make

a point of reading some in them every day. You must strictly avoid, especially in the present crisis of your fate, all company that is calculated to dissipate your thoughts. You must guard, as though the judgment were to-morrow, against every sinful thought, word, or action, against every transgression or neglect that would tend to grieve the divine Spirit from you. You must employ yourselves much in deep, fixed meditations on God, his character, and government, on your obligations and guilt, on your ruin and helplessness, on heaven and hell, on Christ and his Gospel. To this duty you must bring all the powers of your nature, and make a great effort to *see*. You must turn the eye of your mind full upon these subjects, and pry with the most eager intenseness, and come to the task again and again. Sit down often to consider the end of your creation, why you were sent into this world, and what you have done since you have been here. Spread out your past life before your eyes, and your future prospects. Place yourselves frequently before the judgment seat of Christ, and go over the whole of that tremendous process. Dart forward an eye to those ages which will succeed, till you are lost in the ocean of years. Meditate upon the grandeur, the holiness, the goodness of God, what obligations a creature is under to serve him, how great an evil it must be to sin against him, how just your condemnation, how reasonable to repent, and forsake sin, and cast yourselves upon a Saviour. And then fall down and plead with him again to open your eyes and bless you with his sanctifying and pardoning grace.

If any thing is to be done you must come up to the business with the most earnest exertions of soul. You must set upon it as the grand care. Until this great question is decided you must have no heart or mind for any thing else. You have long enough tried this half-way effort, now rise and take "the kingdom of heaven" by "*violence*," now "*agonize* to enter in at the strait gate." If God intends to work "in you—to will and to do," he will bring you thus to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;" and so you will "labour, striving according to

his working which worketh in" you "mightily." (a) If these earnest exertions are not excited, you never will be saved. But,

II. You must not go forth in *your own strength*. You must not feel that *by the power of these exertions* you are going to obtain a conquest over yourselves. You must be sensible of your entire dependence on God for holiness. As your *obligation* is perfectly consistent with your *actual* dependence, so the *performance* of duty is perfectly consistent with your *sensible* dependence. While your agency is raised into the highest action, your hope for sanctification must rest on God alone,—your eye must be open to the great truth which is spread on every page of the Bible, that faith "is the gift of God," that the renewal of the heart is achieved by power no less than that which caused the light at first "to shine out of darkness,"—than that which "raised" Christ "from the dead." (b) Nor,

III. Must you go forth in *your own righteousness*. You may start at this suggestion, and say, "I have long since given up all idea of a righteousness of my own." *Perhaps not*. You know indeed that you are *sinners*, and notwithstanding the resistance which selfishness makes, your conscience acknowledges that you deserve *some* evil; but you may still hope to recommend yourselves to God, in some measure, by the earnestness and frequency of your prayers, the strictness of your walk, and the laboriousness of your duties. Some idea may lurk about your heart, that it would be hard in God to cast you off *after you have done so much*,—some hope, *not resting on Christ*, that God may respect you for your great seriousness and devotion. *This is self-righteousness*. All such ideas must be utterly abandoned, and every hope of acceptance must be founded on the grace of God through the merits of Jesus Christ. But it is necessary to come nearer to this subject. I observe therefore,

IV. That you must seek salvation *through Jesus Christ*, with a *cordial approbation* of the way of life through him, and with *dependence* on him alone.

But this proposition includes several particulars which ought to be separately considered.

1. You must feel your *need* of a Saviour. This sense cannot be obtained till your eyes are opened to see *what God is*. You must see the claims which God has upon his creatures, as a Being of infinite perfection, as their Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer. You must see the reasonableness and excellence of his holy law. You must see the amazing wickedness of rising up against such a God and such a government. You must see the justice of your condemnation to eternal death. You must justify God in all this severity,—must take all the shame and blame to yourselves, and clear your Maker. You must abhor yourselves and repent in dust and ashes. You must see that you never, by any thing which you can do, can render it *less just* that you should be for ever punished, and therefore can never have a particle of *claim* on the justice of God for any thing but wrath; in other words, that you can never make the least *atonement* for your sins, or possess the least *righteousness* of your own,—of course that there is no way for you to be pardoned and accepted of a holy God but through the righteousness of another,—that you stand in perishing need of a Saviour who will consent to be the ground of your pardon, and whom God will accept as such. You must feel that you need a Saviour who has procured the mission of the Holy Spirit to enlighten the darkness and sanctify the hearts of sinners, that your benighted, stubborn nature will never yield to any other influence. Your proud heart must be humbled into a willingness to be conquered by the power and instructed by the wisdom of another,—to receive, as a beggar, a morsel of bread, as a criminal, pardon, of free grace, on account of the righteousness of another,—to part with all the glory of your salvation and yield it to another.

2. You must see the Lord Jesus Christ to be the *very Saviour* you need, every way adapted to your necessities; all-sufficient as an atoning and interceding Priest, on account of the infinite interest he has secured in the Father's heart by his holiness and obedience on

(a) Phil. ii. 12, 13. Col. i. 29.

(b) 2 Cor. iv. 6. Eph. i. 18—20, and ii. 8.

earth; all-sufficient as a conquering King, through the Spirit which was given him without measure, and the universal power with which he was invested.

3. You must see Christ to be *lovely* in all his offices, and must heartily approve the way of salvation by him. You must see that way to be glorious, and full of amazing exhibitions of God,—a way in which his purity, justice, and mercy shed their most resplendent lustre,—a way perfectly safe for man,—wonderfully adapted to promote the dignity, order, and prosperity of the universe, to bring out to view the mode of the divine existence, to form a connecting link between finite and infinite natures, to present a visible Shekinah to shed abroad the invisible glories of the Divinity, and be the medium of intercourse between God and his creatures, to preserve inviolate the principle of treating no transgressor with favour for his own sake, of letting no sin go unpunished, and to bring out to the view of creation, not only “the manifold wisdom,” but the astonishing love of God. Under such general views, more or less distinct, you must heartily approve of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, not only as conducive to the happiness of man, but as subservient to the dignity and glory of the divine government. This approbation, it ought not to be concealed, implies a cordial reconciliation to the government and character of God. While you are in arms against the divine administration, you will never approve of a plan of redemption intended to vindicate that government against the charges of men, to discover and secure its everlasting stability, and to cause it to be for ever respected. This approbation therefore implies an elevation above the dominion of selfishness, an expansion of heart from its native contractedness to God and his creation, a dilation of the wave of love from its little centre to the utmost shore.

4. You must firmly believe in the *sincerity* of Him who *invites*, in the *truth* of Him who *promises*, in his *willingness* to receive all who “come unto Him,” in His perfect readiness to receive *you*, after all your rebellions and ingratitude. When the invitations of heaven follow you and find you pressed under your

guilt, you must not say, “It is too good news to be true.” You must not measure God by your own contractedness, and say, “He cannot pardon *so much*.” You must not say, “The invitation is for another, and does not mean *me*.” You must not say, “I am excluded by an eternal decree.” You must believe, as firmly as you believe your own existence, that God is as willing to receive you as any child of Adam, if you will only return in the appointed way,—that Christ is willing, that the Holy Ghost is willing, that all heaven are willing, that all the unwillingness lies with yourselves.

5. Under these views and feelings you must, by a deliberate act, make choice of the Lord Jesus Christ for your Saviour, and appropriate him thus to yourselves, and actually venture your souls upon him, resting all your hopes on him, and committing to him every part of your salvation. This done, you must cleave to him, and rest on him day by day for pardon, for sanctification and direction, for every needed blessing for time and eternity, confiding in him as a faithful Shepherd and Leader, and drawing from him, by faith and prayer, all your supplies of life and strength. This intercourse with him must be kept up by a life of devotion, and a diligent attendance on all the means of his appointment: for without a constant resort to him, and a continual derivation of life from him, you will wither like a severed branch. The strength which you thus derive must be devoted to his service, in all holy obedience, in all piety towards God, in all benevolence and usefulness to men, in the exercise of all the Christian graces, in the practice of all the Christian virtues, in all gentleness, meekness, patience, in all humility and self-denial, in suppressing every unhallowed passion, in bringing the body into subjection, in conquering the world as Alexander never did, and in a constant struggle to rise above the last remains of selfishness, and expand into pure and everlasting love.

This is what the Lord Jesus Christ would have you to do. Short of this, whatever else you perform, you do nothing. There is no easier way to heaven marked out by the pencil of mercy itself. No easier way dare I at-

tempt to sketch. If I should it would not be the way to *heaven*; it might prove, both to you and me, the road to perdition. And indeed what easier way *ought* there to be? Is not the road already pointed out plainly the *Gospel* path? and is it not the path which it is most reasonable for a rational being and a sinner to walk in? Ought not a creature of God who has revolted from him, and been redeemed, to return to him with such affections as these? If *such* affections may not be required of men, what may? what *can* be required of them but to feel as they *now* do, and as they *hereafter* may? If you ask more, the same objection may be raised as is raised against this demand, viz. "*How can a man create his own feelings?*" If this objection is admitted, there is an end to all moral government, to all distinction between right and wrong, and all punishment is oppression, and all our notions of blame are the mere prejudices of children. Start from this, and there is no stopping place short of that to which I have conducted you, viz. that men, however indisposed, are bound to feel, in all respects, just as they would feel if they had holy hearts, and just as God requires them to feel.

All excuse arising from indisposition being thus removed, I proceed to say, that the manner pointed out is the *proper* way, and the *only successful* way to seek salvation. Others do not seek, in any manner recognized in the word of God. They have a general notion of reliance on Christ, as a friend to whom they can go more easily than to God. But they cannot apply to *Christ* in any other way than that which has been pointed out. Without faith and a broken heart they cannot go to Christ, they cannot speak to Christ, they cannot look to Christ. While they are enemies to the government of God which Christ came to support, what have they to do with Christ? While they are under the supreme dominion of selfishness, what union can they have with Christ? While they are "*enmity against God*," how can they have that faith in Christ which "*worketh by love*"? And without faith, how can they derive any spiritual benefit from Christ?

My dear hearers, the only way to

seek salvation is now before you. If you now neglect to enter in, you must never say again, "*I would if I knew how, but I cannot learn what there is for me to do.*" The way is now as clearly set before you, I suppose, as it can be in language. If you do not enter in, it must be owing to some other cause than a want of *knowledge*. What can that cause be? You have all the *natural faculties* which a Christian has: what can be wanting but a *good heart*? What can prevent but a *bad heart*? And how can a *bad heart* prevent you from *loving God*, but by *hating God*? How can a *bad heart* prevent you from *repenting*, but by its strong *attachment to sin*? How can a *bad heart* prevent you from *accepting the Saviour*, but by its opposition to that Saviour and his Gospel? Here then the true difficulty comes out. It consists in a *heart at enmity with God, in love with sin, and opposed to Christ*. And your heart is *you yourself*. The difficulty then is plainly this: *you yourself are God's enemy, and Christ's enemy, and a willing slave to sin*. And this is your excuse! How will such an excuse appear at the judgment of the great day? If this is not the *very guilt* for which the wicked will then be *punished*, what is that guilt? If the treason of being God's enemy, and Christ's enemy, and a willing slave to sin, escapes punishment in that day, what I pray, will be punished? Take away these grounds of punishment, and what is there left? In short the difficulty which prevents you from cordially accepting the Gospel, and which you turn into an excuse, comprehends the *whole amount* of that wickedness which will call forth the tremendous sentence, "*Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*"

But as deeply stained with guilt as this difficulty is, it is a difficulty which it will be very hard to remove. "*The heart of the sons of men is*" so "*fully set in them to do evil*," that neither reason, nor revelation, nor the convictions of the Spirit, nor all the motives which three worlds can furnish, can restrain its headlong "*madness*"; and on to destruction it will go, in spite of all the entreaties of ministers, the tears of parents, the loud expostulations of Calva-

ry, the animated warnings of a God, unless omnipotent mercy conquers the rebel, and binds it in chains to his throne. This casts you at last into the hands of God, and leaves you there. Unless that God whom you have made your enemy by wicked works, has pity on you and subdues you, moved by nothing in you, and only by what exists in himself, you are for ever undone. There you lie in the hands of God, and all creation cannot take you out. *Your own obstinacy* has placed you there, and keeps you there. *You die by your own hand.* Your inveterate enmity against God and his Son, has plunged you into ruin, and still holds you in ruin. And none but that God against whom you are so implacably set, can bring you relief. Whether he ever *will*, he has told no man. You richly *deserve* to die. You have no possible *claim* on him. It would not be cruel or oppressive if he should cast you down to hell to-day. It is a wonder of wonders that his patience has borne with you so long. He may turn his hand and let you fall this very hour. Nothing appears in heaven or earth but that he will. There, while you lie suspended between two eternities, on the naked hand of God, with none in heaven or earth to take you off, and none to tell how long before you will fall to rise no more, I am permitted to approach you, and utter one more word in your ear before your fate is decided. And what shall I say? That heart which has so often resisted, shall I address it again? It is an awful crisis,—I can but try. By all the solemnities of this universe around me, O stubborn heart, once more I conjure you, submit to God. As you hang over this world of dreadful secrets, fall down upon the palm which supports you, and yield your weapons at last. I remember the valley of vision and am encouraged to speak. O stubborn heart, hear thou the word of the Lord. *Earless, eyeless* as thou art, O obdurate soul, in the name of God I summon you to *see* and *hear*. Rock of adamant, my God commands you to dissolve.—“Let there be light,” said he, “and there was light!” Let that potent voice speak again! While the four angels hold the winds, and there is silence in heaven for half an hour, let that new-creating voice speak again! O may He “who commanded the light to shine out of darkness,” shine in your “hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ”! *Amen.*

S E R M O N L I V .

LIVING TO GOD.

Rom. xiv. 7, 8.—For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

THIS is a comprehensive description of the Christian character. It is of real Christians that the apostle is speaking. He supposes them capable of differing on smaller matters;—one is weak and another strong; “one believeth that he may eat all things, another eateth herbs;” the baptized Jew regarded as sacred the days which had been set apart for the feasts of the Old Testament, the believing Gentile considered that distinction done away. In all these secondary matters the apostle exhorted Christians to bear with each other, and not to assume the office of their Master by judging their brethren. And this exhortation he enforced by the consideration that with all their minor differ-

ences they were essentially alike in their devotedness to the Lord Jesus Christ. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live we live unto the Lord, and whether we die we die unto the Lord. Whether we live therefore or die we are the Lord's." There is as real selfishness in the contentions and distance of different sects of Christians, not divided by essential points, as in the collisions of the men of the world. I hail with all my heart the dawn of a brighter day. These low contracted jealousies and rivalries are at length yielding to the more expanded and generous emotion of Christian love. The different names into which Christ was split are at last uniting on the common ground of Christianity, and combining their influence to extend the light of life to a benighted world. (a) This is a union which gives delight to every heart in heaven, and spreads dismay and terror through the regions of hell. It is a glorious triumph of Christian magnanimity and kindness over the littleness and meanness of a selfish heart,—a selfish heart entrenched behind the Christian name. Let us cherish this noble and heavenly temper with the utmost exertion of our talents and influence, and never return back to the sordid and carnal spirit of sectarian bigotry.

Among all the sects who have not essentially subverted the Gospel, there are probably real Christians. And wherever Christians are found, they agree in the grand feature drawn in the text. "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." By whatever denomination or errors good men may be distinguished, by whatever imperfections they may be marred, not a Christian on earth lives to himself or dies to himself; but whether he lives he lives unto the Lord, and whether he dies he dies unto the Lord. In his opinions he may be erroneous, in his character he may be imperfect, but in this essential distinction he cannot fail. It becomes then a matter of infinite importance to understand precisely what

is implied in the character here drawn, and to rouse ourselves to the cultivation of a temper so magnanimous and divine. I will therefore,

I. Endeavour to explain what is meant by living to ourselves and dying to ourselves, and what by living to God and dying to God.

II. Show that there is no religion without the character here drawn, and that there is just as much religion as there is of this, because this and nothing else is religion.

III. Exhibit some motives which ought to awaken us to such a spirit and character.

I. What is meant by living to ourselves and dying to ourselves, and what by living to God and dying to God?

To live to ourselves is to make the support of our lives, and the gratification of our personal and social tastes, the governing aim of our conduct. It is to consult our own ease, or honour, or pleasure, or advantage, as the leading object of our wishes. It is to make ourselves and our families the centre of our chief cares and affections. There are two classes of men who do this; first, the man of the world, and secondly, the false professor, who, however correct his creed, however regular his life, however addicted to devotion, makes himself and his family the centre of almost all his cares from morning to night, from day to day, from year to year,—who has scarcely any other calculation than to spend each day in his own affairs, and to bestow all he can earn upon himself and his friends,—and if he has any care about the other world, it is that he and his may be happy, with little concern for the salvation of others, for the redemption of a world going down to death, and none for the glory of God. It is the easiest thing in the world for a man to have certain religious commotions, to profess his faith, and taking his shape from the habits and opinions of cultivated society, to lead a regular life, without any more self-denial than an infidel. With his views of his own interest for both worlds, it would really be a self-denial for him to be less devout or less moral. He is still living to himself.

To die to one's self, according to the meaning of the text, is to make one's

(a) But one month before this sermon was preached, the cheering spectacle had been exhibited in the city of New-York, of almost all denominations uniting with harmony and zeal in forming the American Bible Society.

self the end in all one's exposures to death, and in all one's calculations about dying. The duellist does this, when, as a mere offering to pride, he sends his soul to the bar of God under the double guilt of *suicide* and *murder*. The soldier does this, when he sacrifices his life to vain glory, and dies that he may be celebrated in the records of fame, or lauded in the private circle. The whole system of war, I fear, has little other support. The grand inspiring motive is personal glory, than which nothing more selfish is to be found in your houses of infamy or your state prisons. Armies after armies *die to themselves*. Remove that motive, with the unhallowed principle of retaliation, and wars would cease. Is it not a wonder that a murderous system, which has no other support than the worst passions of the human heart, should so long have passed current even with the Church of God? that it should have been reserved to the nineteenth century of that religion which was sent to proclaim peace on earth and good will to men, to discover that this cruel practice is opposed to the Spirit and precepts of the Gospel? But blessed be God *that* light also has begun to dawn. (b) As we approach the happy period when the nations are to beat their swords into plow-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks, an enlightened spirit of holy and benevolent opposition to this system of butchery is going forth; and in a few years, I doubt not, the Christian world will look back on war, as they now do on the slave-trade, with one gaze of astonishment that it should have been tolerated so long. Associations are forming to extend these enlightened views; and is there nothing, my brethren, for us to do in this matter? Have we not a hand and a voice to aid the general effort to chase this monster from the world? I would that a *Peace Society* were established in eve-

ry town and village of the civilized world. (c)

To live to God is to regard his will as the rule and ground of our conduct, and his glory as our supreme object; not merely one day in a week, or two seasons in a day, but in our general course, to act from a reference to his authority; to choose our calling, to pursue our business, to frame our habits, to regulate our actions from hour to hour, from a regard to his will and honour; to feel and act as those who are not at liberty to live to themselves, but have their work daily assigned them by a heavenly Master; to move about under a sense that we are not our own,—not our own masters, not our own proprietors, not at our own disposal,—that our time, talents, influence, property, and all that we are and have are God's; to hold every thing in readiness to use for him or resign to him as he shall direct; to be submissive under afflictions, and willing to be at his disposal in all our trials; to be ready to deny ourselves for him in every way which his word or providence may point out; to desire life chiefly that

(b) The author is not unmindful of the attachment of the primitive Christians, and in later times, of the Waldenses, Moravians, Friends, and many others, to the doctrine of non-resistance. His meaning is, that it was reserved to the nineteenth century to give currency to this sentiment, (or to one nearly like it,) among other denominations, and to revive among Christians indiscriminately a habit of thinking on this subject which promises to become universal.

(c) The author has no intention to agitate the question whether resistance is admissible in the most extreme case that can be supposed, much less to deny the applicability of force to human beings in every instance, as to children, maniacs, criminals, and the like. The great principles of practical morality are not to be settled by extreme cases. There is scarcely one in the whole circle of casuistry whose applicability in certain conceivable circumstances may not admit of a doubt. It is enough if it can be shown that the opinions of the Christian world about *defensive* war, (for none but Nimrods justify any other,) are altogether too loose, and that a general diffusion of correct sentiments on this point would avail, so far as the Gospel has influence, to banish wars from the world. Until the disarming power of a just and pacific disposition, and the safety of an unlimited trust in divine providence, have been fully tried, let not the alarming consequences of our principles be too confidently trumpeted. If the wars of the Old Testament are brought against us, it ought to be shown that they are not to be placed on a level with divorce, polygamy, concubinage and slavery, all of which were tolerated in that *infant age* of the Church, and for a reason assigned by our Saviour himself. Matt. xix. 7, 8. Because of the hardness of their hearts Moses even *commanded* what from the beginning was not so, and what is not so under the Gospel. You permit, and even direct, your little children to do what would ill become them at mature age.

we may serve him; to make him the centre in which all the lines of our life shall meet; to make it the business of our lives to please him and not ourselves, labouring "that whether present or absent we may be accepted of him," "and whatsoever" we "do in word or deed," to "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

The service of God, let it be distinctly remarked, does not consist in *fastening our cares on ourselves, and referring to his will only so far as to prevent our selfishness from openly trespassing on the rights of others.* This is probably the sad mistake of thousands, who, *finding that they have some respect to the divine will,* flatter themselves that they are Christians. No, the service of God consists in the exercise and fruits of that charity which "seeketh not her own,"—of that benevolence which extends its most earnest cares to a perishing world; not that good will which spends itself in frames and feelings which cost us nothing,—in saying, "Be ye warmed and filled,"—but that which can put forth a hand to relieve, which can deny ourselves, and part with our substance, our ease, our comfort, for the benefit and salvation of others; not that parsimonious charity which reluctantly, and hangs back, and gives just enough to obtain, as is thought, a passport to heaven; but that warm, tender, sincere benevolence which loves our neighbour in some good measure as ourselves, and is ready to give, or labour, or suffer, according to the wants of others and our own ability. This is the service of God,—of that God who himself is infinite and active benevolence, and who has set such an example of self-denial for the happiness of others in the sacrifice of his own Son.

To die to God is to expose ourselves to sufferings, hazards, and death for his sake, as the primitive Christians were delivered to death and died daily through their exposures and sufferings for the Gospel. It is also to feel ourselves the property and servants of God for both worlds, to consent to be at his disposal in death as well as in life, to be willing that he should appoint the time and manner of our decease, to wish for death not so much that we may be

"unclothed," not so much that we may be delivered from the trials of life, as to honour and enjoy God, and finally to be ready to die as martyrs to his cause. Thus Paul felt: "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God." "What mean ye to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." "If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." Thus Epaphroditus felt, when "for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life." It was the "earnest expectation and hope" of Paul, that Christ might "be magnified" in his body, "whether by life or by death;" and martyrdom was the death by which Peter was to "glorify God."

II. There is no religion without the character which has been described, and there is just as much religion as there is of this, because this and nothing else is religion.

The depravity of man consists in the dominion of his selfish passions. It is murder in one case, and devotion in another, but it is depravity still. One man is impelled by interest to out-breaking crimes, another to tremble under the divine threatenings, and in a certain view of his character and state to profess religion, and to lead an orderly life; but one equally with the other lives to himself and makes himself the centre. His own advantage for one or both worlds is his supreme care, and his temper of course, into whatever frames it may be cast, with whatever hopes, and joys, and gratitude it may be attended, is prepared to defend his own interest against all other beings, and when he sees that finally prostrated, to gnash upon God with his teeth. Such a temper can be rendered placid and even grateful by gifts and hopes, but it still encloses a principle of hostility to the universe, and wants nothing but provocation to rise upon God with the spirit of a devil. Nothing can change its nature but the introduction of another ruling passion, another supreme

object. But in the universe there is not another object which can rival self but God and his kingdom. Nothing therefore can cure a depraved heart but that heavenly charity, which, while it acts supremely towards God, goes forth under the impulse of his authority to all other beings. This is that love which is "the fulfilling of the law," and than which of course the law can require no more. This is that love to God and our neighbour on which "hang all the law and the prophets,"—which in its active nature and fruits comprehends all obedience, and constitutes the vital principle by which faith operates. This is that charity without which "the tongues of men and of angels" are "as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal,"—without which "all knowledge," and "all faith," and the gift of all our goods "to feed the poor," and of our "body to be burned" for Christ, are "nothing."

There are many forms which selfishness assumes, some of them very sacred and capable of deceiving, if it were possible, the very elect; but there is no true religion that does not break the dominion of this principle by introducing another ruling passion. Whatever be our frames, hopes, and transports, there is no sanctification further than the heart is raised above the domination of self-interest. An escape from this tyranny by transferring the heart to God and his kingdom, is the very sanctification itself. An ingenious writer remarks, that there is just as much religion as there is self-denial. And certain it is that there is just as much religion as there is a subjection of self-interest to the glory of God and the good of his kingdom. Our religion is exactly in proportion as we are borne away by the love of God and his creatures from self, and stand ready, from that heavenly principle, to sacrifice personal ease, comfort, and property, to advance the kingdom of righteousness and truth,—exactly in proportion as we cease to live to ourselves, and live to God alone. The only evidence of attachment to him on which we can rely, is that we make it our main design and care to promote his glory and the accomplishment of his benevolent purposes, not now and then, but in the general tenour of our lives. Nothing less than this will establish the *general*

character of his servants; and by general character we are to be approved or condemned. In all its promises and threatenings the Bible speaks only of general character. As the particular end determines the quality of an action, so the general scope decides the nature of our state. The goal at which we steadily aim designates the way in which we run. Self-seekers, no more than murderers, have any part in the kingdom of Christ. The very core of all religion is not to live to ourselves but to God; not to consider ourselves our own, but the property and servants of the Lord Jesus Christ; not to feel as though we are set up in the world to work for ourselves, to spend the most of our time in promoting what is termed our *innocent* gratifications, but to hold our time, powers, influence, and property as talents intrusted to us to be used for Christ, keeping our eye on his lips to learn his will, and aiming habitually to please and honour him. This and nothing but this is true Christianity. Whatever be our creed and frames, if we possess this spirit we are Christians. Whatever be our creed and frames, if this be not our character all our religion is vain.

The world has long enough been cumbered with professors, who, with the Gospel of Christ on their lips, have never extended their cares beyond their own circle; who, claiming to be the children of the God of universal love, have looked on composedly and seen a miserable world sink by thousands a day into hell, without putting forth their hand to arrest the mighty ruin. The world has long enough been lumbered with griping professors, who spend their lives in scraping together all they can, and never have a cent to give to Christ; who dream that they can go to heaven without paying tribute to their divine King, though the page is often spread before them on which they read, "Sell that ye have and give alms;" "for this ye know, that no covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." I have read of Christians who had many slips and some falls, but in all the word of God I never read of a *covetous* Christian.

III. Let us contemplate some of the

motives which should awaken us to the spirit and character which have been described.

1. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's;" "forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation,—but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." "We thus judge, that if One died for all then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again;" "who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." The Lord Jesus Christ, who created you and redeemed you from death, is your Proprietor, Master, and King. He was raised from the dead and invested with dominion on purpose that he might rule over you. Whom else then should you serve? To whom else should you devote your lives? Whose interest should you rather seek? That interest he received as a reward for redeeming you; and does it not become you to aid in bringing to him that reward, since you have nothing of your own to give? All that you are and have are his. You owe him your whole selves. Will you linger in your own affairs and leave his inheritance to take care of itself? Thus he did not leave you when you were in need.

2. The only way to improve your heart is to carry it from home. While it is lingering there, and brooding over your own interest even of a spiritual nature, it is settling into all the habits which it derived from its low and polluted birth. Send it abroad to travel if you would refine it. The best means of sanctification is to accustom yourselves to care and do for others, not from mere humanity, but from the love of Christ. While your hearts are moved for the miseries of your brethren, they burst their own chains, and before you are aware they are free. While striving to dispel the darkness from other minds or other lands, your own darkness scatters. While you water you

are watered also yourselves. The missionaries who have left all for Christ, and those benevolent men at home who yearly cast one tenth of their income into the treasury of the Lord, of all men are likely to find the way to heaven the least obstructed, and to enjoy the greatest light and peace.

3. The heart-breaking necessities of a world ought to rouse us from our selfish stupor. To say nothing of the multitudes who are swarming the way to death in the most favoured regions; to say nothing of whole nations in the Romish and Greek churches, who, though they bear the Christian name, are apparently living without God in the world; to say nothing of hundreds of thousands of nominal Christians scattered through Asia and Africa, who scarcely retain any thing of Christianity but the name; to say nothing of three millions of Jews; it is a distressing truth that more than *two thirds* of the population of the globe are still buried under pagan or Mahometan darkness, and are as abominably wicked as sin can make them. Of that wretched portion of our race, (omitting the account of infants and small children,) it cannot be computed that less than twenty thousand die daily, and seven millions and a half a year.^(d) To think of twenty thousand moral agents dropping into perdition daily, and a population as great as that of the United States every year, only from pagan and Mahometan coun-

(d) According to the latest calculation there are in the world,

475	millions of Pagans,
73	do Mahometans,
3	do Jews,
214	do Christians.

765 millions in all.

Of the 548 millions of pagans and Mahometans, say that one half die before the years of discretion, and that the average age of the other half is thirty-six and a half years, (and considering the low latitudes and unhealthy countries in which the bulk of them live, this must be enough,) then, without any account of small children, there die of those vicious and deluded creatures two hundred and seventy-four millions in thirty-six and a half years; that is,

Seven millions and a half a year;
Twenty thousand a day;
Eight hundred and fifty, (accurately, 856,) an hour;
Fourteen a minute.

tries, and that because Christians will not send the Bible to them! O this is a thing almost to make heaven weep. To think of eight or nine hundred from those countries dropping into the pit every hour! (e) Thus it has been from generation to generation, while the Christian world have been sleeping away their lives at home. Ought another moment to be lost to stop that current of souls which is constantly discharging itself into the burning lake? If we wait till to-morrow, twenty thousand more will be gone. If we linger an hour, eight or nine hundred are beyond our reach. While I am speaking they are bursting forth to meet their doom. It certainly has become the duty of every person in a Gospel land to rack his invention to devise means, and to strain the last nerve of his strength, to rescue those perishing nations, as he would to deliver his family from a burning house. O if we loved those heathen as we do our children! but we ought to love them as we love ourselves. Heretofore we knew not how it was possible to reach them; but now a way is opened by which we may operate upon them with as much ease as though they lived at our door. If we drop a dollar into the treasury of the American Bible Society, it will turn to a Bible and find its way to India, and will travel while we sleep. If we deposit another, it will become a Bible and make its way to South America without postage or risk. Thus God has opened a door by which we may pour upon the heathen the blessings of the Gospel as fast as we please, and need not be bounded by any other limit than our ability and inclination. One Bible will shed upon a benighted family a light which will radiate through a neighbourhood, and descend from generation to generation. And who is too poor to give a Bible? It has been computed by those who have passed through our

(e) The author does not take upon himself to say that *no adults* are saved from the pagan and Mahometan world, in a way not revealed to us: but this he says, that from the polluted character of those nations, as attested by history, by modern travellers and missionaries, and as drawn in the word of God, we have no reason to conclude that the instances of such a merciful interposition are numerous enough essentially to vary the result.

country to search out its wants, that no less than five hundred thousand Bibles are wanted in the United States, to furnish each family with one, that each man may have a Bible to lie upon his dying pillow. Do we hear this, and shall we sleep? There ought to be two Bible Societies, one of males and the other of females, formed in every town, and village, and hamlet in America. And into one of these every person but actual paupers ought to come. Every hand in Christendom, but those which are stretched out for alms ought to give one Bible a year, till the wants of a world are supplied. It is a tax which the God of heaven has laid upon the whole population of Christian countries. Let the labouring poor work an hour longer each day, and retrench some unnecessary expenses, and they need not be excluded from this glorious work of regenerating a world. (f) But the coffers of the rich—it is only when such a view passes before my mind that I covet wealth, and now I could grasp the treasures of Cræsus. What has sealed the coffers of the rich? That they should roll in luxury and

(f) An ingenious friend has made the following calculation of the possible saving in a single article. The use of sugar, (at the lowest calculation of quantity and price,) costs a cent a day for each person. If people would suspend the use of this article only two days in a week, they might each save one dollar and four cents a year. Reckoning only three consumers in a family, eight families might by this means feed, clothe, and religiously educate one Hindoo child, at an expense of twenty-five dollars a year; forty-eight families might support a school of fifty Hindoo children, at an expense of one hundred and fifty dollars a year; a hundred families might maintain and educate an indigent youth for the Gospel ministry, at an expense of three hundred and twelve dollars a year; two hundred families might support a missionary among the heathen, at an expense of six hundred and twenty-four dollars a year; a town of seven thousand inhabitants, (reckoning only one half to be consumers,) might support five missionaries, at a salary of seven hundred and twenty-eight dollars each; the people of the United States might furnish the same salary to *five thousand* missionaries;—and all without the smallest addition to their expenses. The same might be done by any other means by which one half of the community should save each two cents a week. Let it be solemnly remembered that if one half of the people of the United States would give only two cents a week, they might support five thousand missionaries.

pave the way to their theatres with gold, when six or seven hundred millions of sinners are without a Bible! There is superfluous wealth enough in a few of our cities and larger towns to convey the Gospel in a short time to every family on earth. God Almighty open their hearts that they may pour out their treasures by hundreds and by thousands, till the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

My brethren, let us no longer live to ourselves. Let us arise and put our hands to the great work in which the

nations are now moving. Wondrous things are taking place in the four quarters of the globe. The world is waking up after a long sleep, and is teeming with projects and efforts to extend the empire of truth and happiness. This is the day of which the prophets sung. Let us not sleep while all others are rousing themselves to action. Let every soul come up to the help of the Lord. Let not one be left behind. He that has *absolutely nothing to give*, let him *pray*. Let no one be idle. This is a great day and the Lord requires every hand in the work.

S E R M O N L V .

GOD EXALTED AND CREATURES HUMBLLED BY THE GOSPEL.*

1 Cor. i. 31.—That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

THAT part of the argument in support of divine revelation which is assigned to me, is drawn from "The effect of the Gospel in exalting the Creator and in humbling the creature:" not in *degrading* the creature;—in abasing the pride of man, in bringing sinners to repentance and self-condemnation and a willingness to be saved by free grace, and in laying the whole holy creation in sweet humility at the feet of a discovered God.

I have nothing to do with those unhappy men, if such there are,—those moral monsters,—who deny the being of a God. And if there is a God, we must suppose him connected with the visible universe as its Author and Up-holder, and not, like the supreme god of the Brahmins, in a state of eternal repose and indifference; for in no other way are we led to the belief of his existence but by arguing from effects to their cause. If the things which we see are not the productions of his

power, we have no proof of his existence. If there is a God, we must suppose him wise and just and good; for every denier of revelation who is not an atheist or a semi-atheist, holds that this is evident from his works and from reason. If there is a God thus wise and good, who has given being to a rational offspring, and fitted up a world for their habitation, and makes all nature contribute to their support and comfort, we must suppose him to have an interest in their happiness. If he has an interest in their happiness, and is himself wise and holy, we must suppose that he would seek to found their happiness upon holy order,—the exercise of benevolence and justice; for without this foundation no social happiness can exist. If he is their Creator, and so their Proprietor, with a right of course to control them, and if he wishes to found their happiness upon holy order, we must conclude that he would put them under law. And if they are under law,

* This sermon is one of a course on the Evidences of Divine Revelation, delivered by different preachers appointed for that purpose.

that law must be enforced by penalties; for without a penalty it is no law, but mere advice. And if they are to obey, they must be influenced by motives drawn from the character of the Law-giver and from their relations to him. And if they are to be influenced by such motives, it is of infinite importance that he should be manifested to them in all his relations and in all the glories of his character. If he seeks their highest happiness, he will fill the universe with the knowledge of his perfections; for these constitute the highest objective ground of creature happiness; and a sight of them assures creatures that the universe is safe, that all things will issue well, and leads them to that communion with the Eternal Mind in which their highest blessedness consists. As then God loves righteousness,—as he wishes to enforce a holy and benignant moral government,—as he regards the happiness of his creatures, he must seek to fill the universe with the manifestations of his glory, and thus exalt himself and sink them into reverence and adoration.

That men are sinners I shall assume. Every page of history, every glance of the eye, every report of an enlightened conscience attests it. If then there is any salvation for them, it must be by grace, that is, by favour to the ill-deserving. And such a salvation cannot fail to exalt God and humble the sinner.

None will deny that the world are proud. But lest some should shelter a favourite principle under this name, I will define the thing proscribed. Pride is the selfish erection of our own will, our own wisdom, our own honour, our own power, our own importance, against the rights of God and his creatures. This has done more than any other thing to arm the world against its Maker. "Only by pride cometh contention." It has been the cause of more than half the strife that has agitated the universe. A salvation then from sin must put down pride. A salvation sent to struggle against the pride of a world, must meet its vital throb and break its heart by overwhelming it with shame and everlasting contempt.

In any system of salvation then which should come from heaven, it might be expected that its main tendency would be to confound the pride of man, to

humble sinners, and to glorify God. If you can find a system professing to come from God, which puts honour upon him by bringing out his perfections to view,—by supporting his rights, his claims, his government; which abases pride, and brings sinners to a spirit the most self-condemning, the most ready to justify God, full of adoring views of his free grace and their eternal and infinite indebtedness; you have found a system which accords with the truth of things, which is friendly to the interests of the universe, and must have emanated, not from an impudent imposture, but from the eternal source of truth and love.

The tendency of the Gospel to exalt God and humble the creature, appears,

I. In its outward administration;

II. In its texture;

III. In its application.

I. In its outward administration. This includes,

1. The humble appearance of Christ in our world: born of an obscure parent,—born in a manger,—brought up at the trade of a carpenter,—in his public ministry not having where to lay his head,—supported by the charity of his female followers,—in his highest triumph riding into his royal city on "the foal of an ass,"—sorting with fishermen,—"despised and rejected of men,"—arraigned before Pilate,—beaten and spit upon in the Pretorium,—condemned to the death of a Roman slave,—and crucified between two malefactors.

All this belonged indeed to his atonement, but it answered other ends. It stained the "pride" of human "glory," and taught his disciples to contemn it, and to say, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world." It taught them humility and self-denial, by throwing upon them the influence of an humble and self-denying religion, of which "the cross of Christ" is every where put for the armorial ensign. It attacked the pride of man in its most sensible part, and with the penetrating weapon of a living example of humility. It "made foolish the wisdom of this world."

When we understand the reasons of this humble appearance of Christ, we see in it, the wisdom of God; but had

it been left to us beforehand, we should have assigned him the most magnificent state. Thus *did* the wisdom of man pronounce. The Jews expected their Messiah to appear as a mighty conqueror, to break their Roman yoke and raise them to the dominion of the world. But God confounded the wisdom of men. And why was this deemed a good? Because men vainly conceived that they could discover every thing relating to God and duty and a future state, and were too proud to learn of him, and arrayed their wisdom against the religion of heaven. The Jewish rabbins and Grecian philosophers did this. Such an exhibition of weakness in one who claimed divine honours and came to found a new religion, was to "the Jews a stumbling block" and to "the Greeks foolishness." Modern infidels and Socinians do this. They will march right over any doctrine which their boasted wisdom condemns, whatever the word of God may say. Indeed the pride of man, showing itself in lofty pretensions to the omniscience of wisdom, was seen to be the most intrepid and unyielding enemy which the religion of heaven had to encounter. It therefore was a main point in the outset to overwhelm this enemy with convictions of his own ignorance and folly and of the far superior wisdom of God.

In all these proud pretensions reason aspires to a place for which it was never designed. It is not its province to penetrate the mysteries of the universe by its own ken, but to work up into judgments materials furnished by information. It is the eye, but it cannot see without light. Its business is not to discover intuitively the secrets of the divine Mind, but to examine the furnished proofs of the being and perfections of God, and of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures; and having digested these, to study the contents of the Bible, and to believe unhesitatingly what is there revealed. How can reason discover the unrevealed mind of God? It must be omniscient or inspired to discover the unexpressed mind of a creature. But this it never pretends to do. The only mind in the universe which it dares to subject to its ordeal, is the Infinite Mind. Now between us and God there is infinitely more dis-

tance than between your child and the emperor of China. Put that child then to tell, without any information, what are the character and thoughts and purposes of the emperor of China; and how would he succeed? But you say, God has revealed himself in his works. Allow that he has in part, yet nothing there shows the manner of his existing, the details of his law, with what severity he will punish, whether or on what conditions he will pardon, what are his decrees respecting the formation of the human character, and many other things. If reason can discover these, it not only is the eye, but forms the light itself. Supposing your child had evidence that the emperor of China is wise and good, how could he know, without information, a thousand of his personal matters, the laws of his empire, with what severity he will punish, whether or on what conditions he will pardon, and a million of things respecting the regulation of trade, the internal police, and the complicated interests of a vast empire? But no kingdom does reason presume to scan by its own light, but that which comprehends all worlds. In no other science but that which relates to the incomprehensible God and to the interests and government of the universe, does it attempt to build on its own independent discoveries. The anatomist does not presume to tell you how a man ought to be made, but with all submission proceeds to examine the animal system which God has exposed to his view. In all the natural sciences reason can make discoveries, but how? merely by examining the facts which God has spread out before it, and from them inferring a more general fact or law, and then arguing from that law to explain other phenomena not susceptible of examination. Here are the analysis and synthesis of the Newtonian school, the only organs of discovery known to philosophy.

And why does man act so differently in this case from what he does in all others? Because in other sciences he wishes to obtain accurate knowledge; in this, relief to his conscience and fears and mortified pride. He does not like God, and wishes to modify him after his own taste, and *insists* on doing this, and is self-sufficient enough to think that he

can do it without mistake, and will by no means consent to owe allegiance to a God that is not after his own mind. Thus the heathen, because "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge," changed his glory "into an image made like to corruptible man." The process in both cases is alike, and the motive is exactly the same.

2. Another way in which the outward administration of the Gospel took the pride of the world, was in the weakness of the instruments employed, the simplicity of their preaching, and their triumphant success. Instead of angels or Jewish doctors or Grecian philosophers, Christ chose fishermen and publicans and tent-makers to breast an embattled world,—the bigotry of priests, the pride of philosophers, the interest of shrine-makers, the policy of kings, and the impetuous current of the carnal heart. And as temples fell and churches rose before them, he selected the materials of the church and of the ministry, not from the "wise" and "mighty" and "noble," but from the "foolish," the "weak," the "base," the "despised," "to confound" and "bring to nought" the noble, wise, and mighty; "that no flesh should glory in his presence;" that none might say, I was selected because I was great or wise,—thus exalting worldly distinctions and hiding the free grace of God; that none might say, My own hand hath done it; "that the excellency of the power" might "be of God and not of" man; that the supernatural power of God might appear and attest the truth of the Gospel; and that his sovereignty might be shown in the distributions of his grace. For reasons such as these, Jesus himself "rejoiced in spirit and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

In the opening of the first Epistle to the Church in Corinth, (a proud city in the heart of Greece,) the apostle had occasion to touch on most of these points. He tells them that Christ sent him "to preach the Gospel, not with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect."

To have come to them with the flourish of oratory or the accuracies of philosophical language, (by which some of the heads of the faction opposed to the apostle in that church are thought to have been distinguished;) or to have come with independent reasonings after the manner of philosophy; would have lowered down the authority of the Gospel, and dimmed its evidence by casting some of the praise of its success on the manner. It would have been less adapted to the multitude, and indeed to the humble, whose faith was to rest, not on the wisdom of men, but on the word of God. This "preaching of the cross," in manner as well as in matter, was foolishness to the proud rabbins and philosophers; but it proved the power and wisdom of God in accomplishing that reformation and salvation which neither Judaism nor philosophy ever achieved. Standing on the pinnacle of success, with half the known world at his feet, the apostle sublimely challenged all Jewry and Greece to show what they had done. "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." This was sufficiently humbling to the pride of Pharisees and the opinionated wisdom of Greece, and covered with disgrace those overweening systems which hid from the world the true knowledge of God.

Thus the outward administration of the Gospel rebuked the self-sufficiency of human reason and the arrogant calculations of human power, by showing the world that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men;" and by thundering in the ears of audacious pride, "If any man—seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise."

II. The same tendency appears in the texture of the Gospel. This is noticed in our text and the preceding verse. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption; that, according as it is

written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."

1. Our wisdom. Instead of ignorant and prejudiced reason, on which the wise men of the world proudly rested for the discovery of God, Christ, the great Prophet of the world, was appointed to lay open the secrets of the Eternal Mind and to bring "life and immortality to light;" and instead of arraying their wisdom against the revelation of God, believers love to put themselves to school to Christ as little children, and to "learn" of him who is "meek and lowly in heart." Seneca, one of the best of the philosophers, and the tutor and victim of Nero, lived in Rome while Paul was there; but they belonged to two different worlds.

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." "No man knoweth—who the Father is but the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him." "Christ is called "the Word," because it is by him that God expresses all his mind. It was he that built the universe, "and without him was not any thing made that was made." It was he that governed the world from the beginning, and the providence of God is the providence of the Mediatorial King. He gave the law at Sinai. He sent out his Spirit to indite the Old Testament and the New, and to illumine by his influence the minds of men. By his incarnation, life, ministry, and mediatorial work, he has thrown God upon every eye. He came out to be thus, "the image of the invisible God;" and the only God known to our world is the God that shines "in the face of Jesus Christ." He imparts all the practical wisdom which his people possess.

Thus the Gospel admits none of the powers of discovery so proudly claimed by ancient and modern magi, but brings the whole world, like Mary, to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear his words.

2. Our righteousness. Under the first covenant justification was the judicial act of pronouncing one just; and the ground of it was a perfect personal holiness or righteousness. The terms justification and righteousness are transferred to things under the new covenant very unlike the other, but bearing some

analogy to them. Justification now means the *treating* of a sinner as just, by his pardon and acceptance to eternal life; and that which is the ground of this gracious justification is called his righteousness.

There is nothing to which men more strongly adhere than to the claims of their own merit. They even expect wages from God for services rendered, and say with Bellarmin, "Give unto us, O Lord, for we have given unto thee." This self-righteousness is at war with truth and justice, and must be put down before the sinner will consent to receive, or God can consistently bestow, salvation by grace. The whole texture of the Gospel is fitted to put down this arrogant pretender, to annihilate the last lurking pride of man, to cover sin with eternal disgrace, to vindicate the rights and claims of God, to sustain his empire over a subject universe, and to manifest all his glory in the highest conceivable degree.

To accomplish these ends, God took the ground that he would not pardon a single sinner till Christ had died in his stead; that he would not deal out to one of Adam's race, either a crown of glory or a cup of water, but as the reward of the perfect obedience of his Son; and that he would deliver neither the pardon nor the positive good but to the intercession of the Mediator. How these resolutions supported the law and condemned sin and abased pride, I am now to show.

(1.) The atonement. "Think not," said Christ, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." The prophet had said, "He will magnify the law and make it honourable."

Christ died in our stead to answer, so far as the law is concerned, the very end of our punishment. What is the end of punishment as the law is concerned? To go back a step further, why is a penalty annexed to a law? It is to make it law rather than advice. Without a penalty it would have no commanding authority. The empire of the law against murder rests on the as-

surance which all draw from the penalty, that if they murder they shall die. And why is the penalty executed? For the same reason for which it was annexed; for if not executed it is nothing. Why is that murderer executed? to give empire to the law by convincing all that if they murder they shall die. Supposing one has murdered and his brother offers to die in his stead, and does die by the direction of the king; are not the spectators as much convinced that if they murder they shall die, as though the criminal himself had suffered? To dispense pardon to all reformed murderers from generation to generation, and to offer it beforehand on that condition to all the murderers of a world, without exacting any equivalent for their punishment, would annihilate the law against murder. If we were to be pardoned, it was necessary that some other measure, as expressive as our punishment, should be taken to convince the universe that God was determined to support his law by executing its penalty on future transgressors. The execution of his beloved Son expressly in our stead, by a stroke laid on by the Lawgiver, because by the Lawgiver he was commanded to receive it, made this impression as strongly as it could have been made by the eternal perdition of all Adam's race. And this solemn declaration, that sin should not go unpunished, loudly "condemned sin in the flesh."

(2.) The obedience of Christ. The original principle on which God set out in his government over this world, was not to issue a single positive good, after man was set out in existence, but as the reward of a perfect obedience; for all was forfeited by a single transgression. It would put more abundant honour on the law to preserve this principle under the dispensation of grace. Accordingly arrangements were made for Christ to be placed under law, and perfectly to obey it, and in reward of his obedience to receive all the positive blessings intended for the human race in both worlds, including all that was necessary for a state of probation. So the man who labours in your field, is content to receive his wages in garments for his children, which he could by no means wear himself. To all these blessings, as soon as he had fulfilled his obedience,

he had a covenant right, and took them out of the hands of pure God-head, and held them by a mediatorial claim; and these, together with the Church itself, and I may add, the universe, constitute the inheritance of the "Heir of all things." Every morsel of food which we receive belongs to the mediatorial estate, and comes to us because first given to him; and it ought to be the sweeter to us on that account. Not a shower descends upon the fields,—not a stalk of barley waves in the harvest, but sends forth a voice, "Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways." A title to heaven and all the privileges of sonship come in this way. The "First-born" inherits the whole estate by his own right, and we come in under him as "joint-heirs." Because he lives we live also. He arose and ascended by his own right; but he came out of the grave as the head drawing the members after him, and has gone to prepare a place for us.

This is the great doctrine of justification by grace, which makes so conspicuous a figure in the New Testament, and is so abasing to the pride of man.

(3.) The intercession of Christ. As the high priest entered once a year into the holy place with "the blood of goats and calves," and with the names of the twelve tribes upon his heart, to intercede for them before the Lord; so Christ, "by his own blood," has entered "into heaven itself," there "to appear in the presence of God for us." There "he ever liveth to make intercession" for us: that is, his desires, and the silent influences of his atonement and obedience, (the latter involving his covenant claims,) continually rise up before the throne. This is only carrying out the same respect for the law so conspicuous in the two preceding measures.

But the soul-humbling and God-exalting process is not yet ended. Not only are the atonement, obedience, and intercession of Christ thus provided, in a way to support the rights and claims and government of God, to condemn sin, and cover pride with eternal confusion; but no man is allowed to share in this salvation until, from the bottom of

his heart, he has approved of all these measures and all their expressions; until he has taken back all his proud speeches against God and bent his imperious head to his Maker's feet, and owned that he never had any cause to rise up so loftily against his Creator; until, with his face in the dust, he has justified God in condemning him to eternal infamy, and has heartily approved of the whole character and government of him whom he has always called a tyrant; until he feels that the air is too good for him to breathe, and the dust is too good for him to wrap himself in, and that he deserves nothing but everlasting shame and contempt; until he is willing to come down on his knees as a beggar and ask for a crumb to keep him from starving, and to be saved by free grace and for the righteousness of another; until he feels it sweet to be thus abased, and covets it more than he does the throne of an archangel; until he exalts God above every other object and gives him all the glory of his salvation.

Even pardon itself buries the sinner still lower in the dust. "That thou mayest remember and be confounded and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God."

This is none of that poverty of spirit which involves degradation. It is only viewing things according to truth. Holiness cannot fail to feel thus in a creature that has sinned. If holiness is dignity, this abasement of a soul that has been found in arms against infinite goodness and dying love, outtops the dignity of kings.

The pardon and acceptance connected with this temper, are that justification by faith which holds so high a place in the Christian system, and which confessedly strips all the glory from the sinner and gives it to God.

III. The same tendency of the Gospel appears in its application. Christ is made of God unto us *sanctification*, "that, according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."

As the race were condemned by the law to the curse of eternal abandonment, the Spirit could not come to men without the mediation of Christ. By his atonement he made it consistent

with the honour of the law to set this curse aside, and as the reward of his obedience he obtained this positive good for men. He told his disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you." "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." But when he ascended on high, among his other gifts he received this for men, "that the Lord God might dwell among them." And within ten days he sent out "the Lord" the "Spirit" to abide in the church for ever. As he had given bonds for the payment of the price, he received this purchased good in Eden, and applied it to the sanctification of all the saints of the Old Testament. This is the origin of all the holiness that has ever been found in our world since the fall.

The heathen philosophers depended on the self-determining power of the will for all their personal virtue, and on their self-taught ethics for the reformation of the world. And even many who have been baptised have contended earnestly for this independence of the human will. In opposition to all these proud aspirations, the Gospel casts the world for sanctification on the Spirit of God and the purchase of Christ.

Nor is this all. In their spiritual death it finds nothing in them to aid their resurrection,—nothing but what is opposed to life,—and ascribes to God, not only the whole power, but a conquering power,—"the working of—mighty power," as great as that "which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." This casts them dead and helpless into the hands of a sovereign God, and leaves with him, in the most absolute sense, the decision of their fate. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy," and whom he will he resigns to judicial hardness. He bestows salvation on whom he pleases, and withholds it from whom he pleases,—holding this reason over a subject and trembling world, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?" No antecedent circumstance of disposition or purpose or virtue or wisdom or learning

or station or birth or any other known thing in sinners themselves has the least influence. It is all of grace,—free, sovereign grace. For the discrimination he has a reason ; but to hold them down to their place and to assert his absolute supremacy over them, he will not tell them what it is. “He giveth not account of any of his matters.” Inrenched in infinite wisdom and rectitude, of which heaven and earth are filled with proofs, he will have them know that he will do what he will with his own without explaining himself to them ; and their business is to submit in silent adoration. Thus he takes the highest possible stand of authority, and puts them down as low as sinners can lie under a sceptre of mercy ; and makes them love to lie there and see him enthroned, and love to find their heaven in the dust.

Is it not for the order and happiness of a family that the rights of a wise and benevolent father should be admitted, and if government is any thing to the family, that they should be maintained ? As God created all things for the gratification of his benevolence, the whole is his absolute property, and he has the most perfect right, while he respects the rights of creatures, to do what he will with his own universe. He is entitled to love, gratitude, and praise, and has a right to require these of his creatures, and to bind together and tranquilize the universe by the exercise of his authority. And it is infinitely important to the harmony and happiness of the whole, and particularly to the union of creatures with him, that his rights should be fully admitted and maintained. And if ignorance and prejudice are not to be taken in as counsellors, the government of infinite wisdom and love ought to be absolute. And it serves all these purposes to inure creatures to submit to his providence without a question, and to his law with no other question than to ascertain his will. Upon this principle it was that in the commencement of his government over this world, he selected a tree and forbad all approach to that, with no other reason assigned than that it was his sovereign will : and if it was a small matter to legislate about, so much the better for that : the less the apparent reason for the prohibition, the

more obvious the claim to unquestioning obedience.

Thus every part of the Gospel is calculated to abase the pride of man, to break and subdue and humble the sinner, to support the rights, the claims, the government of God, and to give all the glory to him. Whatever light or holiness or title to salvation we possess, comes from God through the Redeemer. We are ignorant and foolish, he is our wisdom ; we are guilty, he is our righteousness ; we are depraved, he is our sanctification ; we are in bonds, he is our redemption. In every part the character of God appears most glorious, and that of man most deformed. And all this exhibition is made that God may be seen as he is,—that men may know him and know their obligations to him, and grow up into eternal union with him,—and that all holy creatures may see his glory and take their proper place at his feet, and go in to constitute a united, happy, and glorious universe.

Whatever brings out God to view exalts him, abases sinners, and humbles and blesses the creation. Let us then see what and how much of God is revealed in the plan of salvation.

In the first place, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are brought out to view in their own proper and infinitely important characters ; a distinction never whispered to the universe in any of his other works. In the next place, his inflexible resolution, at all hazards, to support his moral empire over the creation, comes out ; disclosing his infinite attachment to all the principles of his law and to the happiness which it subserves, and thus manifesting his holiness, justice, and benevolence. In the next place, his amazing compassion and mercy and patience and condescension and accessibleness and truth are brought to light : his power too, in subduing the carnal heart, in restraining, bounding, and defeating all the machinations of Satan, in conquering all his enemies and carrying their counsels headlong, in forcing them unwittingly to prop his throne and execute his decrees and help fill the universe with his glory.

But the wisdom elicited is that on which I wish chiefly to dwell. This wonderful plan of the incarnation was

the forming of a connecting link between finite and infinite natures, and filling up the whole chasm between God and us. It was bringing down the infinite God within the reach of creatures,—was bringing out the invisible God to the view of creatures,—was concentrating, as it were, the omnipresent God to a point and throwing all his glories from the face of Jesus Christ. It was laying out the divine perfections upon a human scale, and expressing them through human organs and amidst human relations,—the most intelligible way of exhibiting God to men. And the angels themselves, we are taught to believe, more familiarly apprehend God, and more easily hold intercourse with him, for this medium of vision and communion.

By the union of two infinitely dissimilar natures in one Person, the wisdom of God contrived to make an infinite Person mortal; and by that means found out a way to punish sin and let the sinner go unpunished; to support his law without executing its penalty on the transgressor, and even to give it more authority than though it had been literally executed.

He confounded the wisdom of men by the triumphs of that very weakness which provoked their contempt, and by making, in various ways, the most unpromising means lead to the most splendid success.

He so shaped the Gospel, that, in every part, it should be at war with pride, and touch it in every tender spot, and call into the field every arm of that foe, and exhibit it before heaven and earth in the hideous attitude of warring against all the love and authority of the Gospel. A system so calculated to cause that atrocious enemy to writhe under unwelcome authority, under unbearable humiliations, under overwhelming disgrace,—to rage and blaspheme and assault the heavens,—was fitted to make a thorough experiment upon the human character and upon the nature of sin, and to bring out both in a way to set off, before a wondering universe, the double glory of justice and mercy.

He pressed into the service of his cause all the agents in the wicked world;—the policy of kings, the pride of philosophers, the craft of priests,

and the very ferocity of bloody persecution. "The wrath of man shall praise" him, either by stringing a harp in heaven or by lighting the fires of his justice in hell. The sins of the elect shall praise him. The more one of that number has dishonoured God, the more God will be honoured in his salvation.

He defeated all the stratagems of Satan and effectually bruised the serpent's head. The greatest dishonour cast upon God, was made to redound to his greatest glory: the greatest contempt cast upon his law, was made the occasion of the greatest honour done to the law. Satan meant to rob God of the glory of creating the human race; but by the instrumentality of that very foe, God obtained more glory by the human race than angels, men, or devils ever thought of. Satan aimed to ruin a world which God, in all its virgin loveliness, had reared; but God will raise up, from the ashes of the old, the new heavens and new earth, in more than their original glory. Satan envied a race made to fill the place of his legions in heaven; but that very nature which he sought to destroy, is advanced to the throne of the universe. He thought to make men his slaves; they will be his judges and sentence him to endless torment. Elect man is a gainer by his own ruin. His sin is made the occasion of higher advances in holiness; for to whom much is forgiven the same loveth much. His misery is made the occasion of his greater blessedness; for a taste of wretchedness gives a higher relish for happiness, and the great object of enjoyment is more fully revealed, and he will be for ever transported with gratitude to his Redeemer. He has become more sensibly dependent on God for holiness and happiness, because he receives both as the purchase of Christ, and because he has been raised from the depths of sin and misery. By means of his union with the incarnate Son, he is brought into a closer union with God: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.—I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." When Satan had nailed the Saviour to the cross, he thought he had triumphed; but he only pulled the building down upon his own

head. The weapons with which Christ went forth were like the sling and the stone, they were poverty, reproaches, sufferings, and death. He prevailed by becoming weak, and conquered by dying. As the head of Goliath was severed by his own sword, so Christ prevailed against his giant enemy by the cross; "and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them *in it*." In a word, God has made the seduction, sin, and ruin of man the occasion of all the good resulting from the work of redemption.

And finally, the wisdom of God appears in that capital measure to vindicate his own impartiality, the appointment of the Friend and Brother of man to be his Judge. "The Father—hath given him authority to execute judgment also *because he is the Son of man*."

In view only of a small part of this wonderful plan, the apostle exclaims, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." The very angels "desire to look into" these "things." Indeed we are expressly told that God "created *all* things by Jesus Christ, *to the intent* that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known *by the Church* the manifold wisdom of God." This then was the design of creation,—that the divine wisdom, (which is intellect and knowledge directed to practical ends by moral attributes,) might be manifested to the angels, and by a parity of reason to the whole creation, by the work of redemption. This shows that the wisdom here unfolded is greater than the angels possess, and greater than they see displayed in any other world. They are put to school on this planet, in distinction from all other worlds which they visit, to learn "the manifold wisdom of God."

In short, all the perfections of God, (unless we are to except the exhibitions of his justice in hell,) are more displayed in this work than in any other work or in any other world, and perhaps more than in all other ways, and so far as we can see, more than could have been exhibited by any other means. The whole will form a constellation of glory the

most dazzling that ever met a created eye,—a glory that will constitute by far the greater part of the happiness of the creation.

Why should you think that this grandest of all the exhibitions of God will be shut up in the nut-shell of a single world? Why should you thus degrade Christ and his work? Have we no revelation on this subject? We are distinctly enough told that all the worlds of which we have any knowledge were created in one week, and will be destroyed and renovated together. And why should not their inhabitants have at least some knowledge of the general judgment? We are told that all worlds without exception were made by the "First-born" and "Heir of all things," and that "without him was not any thing made that was made;"—that "all things were created by him *and for him*;"—and that in reward of his work on earth "all things are put under him," with the single exception of him that "put all things under him." And is it to be believed that the worlds which the Redeemer made for his own purpose, and received as a part of his empire *for his work on earth*, will be kept in eternal ignorance of him and his work? that a family of worlds which were born and died together, will be eternally so severed by the common Parent, that no report of the miracle of the universe, wrought in this world, will ever reach the rest? that so little economy will be used in instructing the creation, as that a school, opened here at infinite expense, and capable of sending the highest lessons gratuitously to all worlds, and at which the whole universe might graduate, will be put under a bushel? If God "created *all* things by Jesus Christ, *to the intent*" that all heaven should take lessons of wisdom from this university, is it credible that other worlds, created expressly to subserve this institution, and known to be connected with its Head, should be excluded from the tuition? As this earth, (to use another figure) was erected only for a stage on which the Messiah might declare and act out the perfections of the Godhead, subservient worlds seem intended as seats in the great amphitheatre from which the amazed spectators may view the scene. Yes, they shall

hear of Calvary. The wonderful report will travel from world to world until it reaches the utmost bounds of the creation, and will hold in perpetual astonishment and transport the whole family of God. That Gospel which creatures of the dust despise,—which infidel insects trample under foot,—is the grandest means that God has employed, not merely to raise one world from pollution and shame and eternal despair, but to elevate and aggrandize and glorify the universe, and fill it with the highest blessedness that comes from God. And when creatures shall see the universe thus supremely blest, will they not look back to Eden and adore the wisdom that did not restrain the first transgression?

As the amazing story wanders to other planets and systems, this earth will become the centre of the creation. All worlds will gather around this sphere and send their exploring eyes to Calvary, to drink in the lessons of love, wisdom, and power which emanate from that school of the universe. And while all eyes are turned that way, I plant myself on the sacred mount, and in the centre of a boundless amphitheatre, enjoy the transports of worlds,—of all worlds but one. And as I see the whole holy creation wrapt in high and ecstatic contemplations, and filling their respective spheres with the songs of Bethlehem, I feel an irrepressible desire to call out infidels before the creation of God, and demand, What now think you of Christ? But not an infidel is to be found. The few that broke their way to hell through light that Bar-timeous might have seen, are infidels no more. To that world I would send my voice, and say, Ye Porphyries, and Julians, and Voltaires, what now think you of the work of redemption? Ye abandoned men and women, who would have annihilated the Bible and the marriage covenant, and turned the universe into a brothel, what think you of the Christian religion now?

There is another spot in the universe to which I wish to come. It is to the feet of the enthroned Lamb. O how will the redeemed companies collect together on the banks of heaven and recount the wondrous story, with all the history of their deliverances. And then, as they look up and see the nail-prints, with what ineffable gratitude will they cast their crowns at his feet and say, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." The elect angels, who are brought into a special relation to Christ as their Head, will rapturously join the song. Other holy creatures will perhaps be gathered home from new or renovated worlds in different periods of eternity, and their voices will join the concert. John had a vision of this heavenly oratorio. The redeemed began the song; the angels next struck in; and before they had done, the whole creation were employed in bursting praise. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy;—for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood,—and hast made us unto our God kings and priests.—And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne,—saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." O may I be there. Scatter those little things that kings call crowns, among those that will pick them up; but O may I be there and join in the song that celebrates my Redeemer's praise. Be that my heaven,—my eternal recreation and delight. Amen.

SERMON LVI.

DEDICATION SERMON.

Luke ii. 34, 35.—And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea a sword shall pierce through thine own soul also;) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

SUCH was the prediction respecting Him whose Gospel is to be preached in this house. What distinguishes this from common edifices is, that here that Saviour is to be proclaimed whose advent and kingdom were to be attended with the consequences predicted in the text. What Christ and His Gospel are to the world at large, they are to every place where they are known. These words then, though they may carry us out at first to a more general view of the design and effects of Christian ministrations, will bring us back at last to an application which I hope will not be deemed unsuitable to the present occasion.

As a taper is wont to brighten just as it is extinguished, so good old Simeon was favoured with a gleam of prophetic light as he stood on the verge of eternity. Well might that be an illumined moment when the Child of Bethlehem, the Light of the world, was born. It had been revealed to that aged saint, "that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ;" and being now led by the Spirit into the temple, where they were consecrating the divine Infant, he knew Him, and clasping him to his heart, exclaimed, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word, for my eyes have seen thy salvation!" The enraptured patriarch then proceeded to bless the parents and the Child; and at last turning to the virgin mother, who was destined to survive her husband and witness the sufferings and death of her Son, he addressed to her wondering ear the strange prediction, "Behold this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea a sword

shall pierce through thine own soul also;) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." A part of this prediction related to the new-born Infant, and a part to the virgin mother. One part respected the malice which would assail Him, the salvation which He would accomplish for many, the development of human characters, and the ruin of obstinate opposers, which His mission and Gospel would occasion; the other respected the agonies of the mother's heart in view of the persecutions and death of her Son. The latter being nowise connected with the present occasion, my attention will be confined to the former. "Behold this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against,—that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." In these words are manifestly contained the three following propositions:

I. That holy Child was destined to be the mark at which malice would point its shafts.

II. By the treatment to be rendered to Him and His Gospel, the secrets of many hearts were to be revealed.

III. He was set for the rising and fall of many to whom His Gospel should be preached.

I. That sacred Babe, though born without sin, though inoffensive as the gentlest lamb, though sent into the world on the kindest offices of love to men, was to be a mark for malice, the butt of spleen and rancour in all their horrid forms. Who would have thought that this heavenly Infant, whose birth transported angels celebrated in their songs, who drew the wise men from the East to lay their tribute at His feet, would be thus ignominiously treated by

men? Who would have thought that those features on which the charms of celestial grace delighted to play, would be marred with grief and violence? that those eyes which were made only to weep for the miseries of men, would be forced to weep under injuries which men would inflict? Approach and view Him as He is pressed in the arms of the venerable Simeon. What innocence! What more than human beauty! And is that blessed Infant to be the mark of envy? the victim of hatred and revenge? So the prediction of heaven has declared; so the evolutions of succeeding years will show. Yes, I have only to follow Him from the temple, and I see Him sought by the persecuting sword of Herod;—I see Him driven a wandering exile to Egypt. I follow Him a little further, and I behold Him insulted by the contemptuous reproaches of His own brethren, the object of the obloquy and spleen of the Jewish nation, the scribe and the priest, the sanhedrim and the mob. Now He is slandered as a profaner of the Sabbath, the enemy of Moses, the enemy of Caesar, a mere pretender to divine honours; then again He has a devil, and casts out demons by the power of Beelzebub. Every degrading epithet is applied. The vocabulary of malice is exhausted. He is dragged before the Jewish council, and the Roman governor. The vociferating crowd demand His crucifixion. He is scourged, insulted, condemned, suspended between two malefactors. He is driven from the body and persecuted to heaven. Happy would it have been if persecution had here ended its bloody work. No, it pursued His followers. One only of His twelve disciples was suffered to die a natural death. All that dreadful scene was acted over which He Himself had foretold. “Think not,” said He, “that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother:—and a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” “If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.” “If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?” “The brother shall deliver up the brother to

death, and the father the child; and the children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake.” All this came to pass. The Jew and the heathen united to whet the sword and to kindle the faggots. Pagan Rome raised ten successive persecutions. Papal Rome prepared the rack and the heated irons. The subtle jesuit, the follower of Mahomet, the scoffing infidel, the man of pleasure, the ignorant, the gay, and the thoughtless, have all in their turn joined to reproach, to persecute, and to crush the religion of Christ. Not a revival of religion but is stigmatized as the workings of a disordered brain or a vicious heart. Not an instance of fervent experimental godliness, but is charged to the weakness of ignorance, or the devices of hypocrisy. Not a discriminating doctrine but is proscribed and hunted from the world. The whole of the natural heart, in whatever age or country it appears, is vehemently opposed to the precepts, the conditions, and the very promises of the Gospel. The sanctified spirit of the Christian religion, the construction, scope, and end of the Christian plan, find malignant and eternal resistance in the natural tempers of men. After all the light, and refinement, and prepossessions of conscience, (if I may so speak,) which Christianity has spread, it has not ceased to be true, that “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” Not indeed all who *profess*, not all who exhibit in their lives the *outlines* of religion, not all who approach as near to the spirit of the world as can possibly consist with a Christian standing; but all who strictly and fervently live the religion and breathe the spirit of Christ. There are indeed communities of worldly men whose judgment and manners are so far refined by Christianity, that they will not take offence at the practice of Christian morality, nor at the preaching of the more general truths, nor at knowing that men hold in secret the distinguishing doctrines, and even practise the devotions of Christianity, if they will not bring religion into conversation, nor seem to frown at those who neglect it. Some of them will even allow you to preach the peculiar doctrines, provided

you do not bring them home to their conscience, to disturb them in the pursuit of the world, and especially if you will conform to their rules of social intercourse in private. It is admitted also that many real Christians escape their resentment by living retired from public view, or by a general conformity in little things, or by neglecting to reprove them, in words or by the distinct expression of their manners, or by keeping out of sight the most offensive parts of divine truth, or by exhibiting in their conduct and conversation much more of the mildness and beneficence of the divine nature, than of the holiness, justice, and strictness. But let any man continually carry about him a full and distinct image of God, exhibiting all the truths of His Word, all the strictness of His law, all the guilt and danger of sinners,—carrying reproof to every thing selfish, every thing proud, every thing vain, every thing that does not make God the supreme object, every thing bitter towards men, “every idle word,” every small neglect; and let his daily conversation be as full of eternal things as it ought; in a word, let him carry about him wherever he goes, a full, and not a partial image of God; and let him moreover be constituted by his age or office a reprover; and there is not a community of worldly men in Christendom who will not be offended; and if they persecute in no other way, they will at least smite with the tongue; unless indeed they are restrained by personal attachments, or by apparent interest brought to view by a conviction of truth. This *must* be true, or “the carnal mind” is no longer “enmity against God.”

This truth is written in characters of blood in the history of the Waldenses, the Huguenots, and the Puritans. This truth is read by all men in the lives of Paul, Luther, Leighton, Baxter, Whitefield, Edwards, and a host of others, who, beyond their contemporaries, taught and exemplified the real character of God.—Thus that divine Personage was “set—for a sign” to “be spoken against.”

II. This was so appointed “that the thoughts of many hearts [might] be revealed.” He was manifested on earth, His kingdom was set up among men, to

make a thorough experiment upon the human character. The Gospel plan as laid in the ages of eternity, among the vast objects which it embraced had this for one, to make a full development of the secrets of men’s hearts. And it is admirably calculated for such a purpose. It is a great and luminous display of all those objects towards which men as moral beings exercise affections. It contains the fullest and clearest manifestation of God ever made to creatures. It was revealed “to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.” Hence the Church becomes a “spectacle—to angels;” and those blessed spirits “desire to look into” these things, because “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God” is chiefly seen “in the face of Jesus Christ.” This then being the full orb of glory of the eternal God, it is pre-eminently calculated to try the hearts of men towards all the objects in the universe which are fitted to draw forth the distinction between a selfish and holy temper. According to the inclinations of men’s hearts towards these objects, their moral character is infallibly determined. Let the presuming infidel set up other standards of merit; let the Jew boast of the sanctity of his legal rites; let charity in her dotage award a crown or glory to the sincerity which rejects a Saviour; it is all in vain: by the treatment which men render to the Gospel of Christ, and by this alone, their moral character is decided. “He that believeth” is holy; and “he that believeth not” after the Gospel is presented, is unholy. “He that believeth” is “saved,” and “he that believeth not” is “damned.”

Not only the *truths* but “the *afflictions* of the Gospel” are calculated to test the characters of men. Many when the Church is in prosperity are forward to join themselves to its communion, and to sing hosannas, who, like the stony ground hearers, “when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by—are offended.” “The preaching of the Gospel,” said one of the old divines, with a simplicity and plainness peculiar to the age, “is the Lord’s *fan* by which He purgeth His floor; persecution is the

Lord's *sieve* by which He winnoweth churches, and separateth the dirt, and darnel, and tares from the wheat. Gospel times, and times of persecution, are both of them times which make great discovery of men's spirits."

That divine Personage was set not only to make an open distinction between the clean and the unclean, but to disclose the *depths* of human depravity, which could not have been so fully revealed in any other way. The Son of God descended from heaven bearing the impress of His Father's image, and became the point in which all the rays of divine glory centred, and from which they poured their splendours upon the world. He spread before the eyes of men the design and the testimonials of His mission. In one hand He bore the authority of the eternal God, with the other He tendered salvation to a dying world. He came to snatch them from eternal sorrows, and lift them to the throne of God. He came to accomplish this by His tears, His blood, His life. Could another circumstance be added to the preparation for a full experiment upon the human character? Now let us see how men will receive this heavenly Visitor. Will they not respect the dignity of His Person, and the majesty of His authority? Will they not be charmed with the glory of moral perfection which shines around Him? Will they not be melted by the ineffable love which His advent bespeaks? Will they not be crushed under obligation and lie overcome at His feet? Will not distant nations fly to hail their Deliverer? Yes, I see them crowding from the isles of Chittim, from Tarshish and Ophir. The joyful earth spreads a paradise to welcome Him wherever He treads. Ah it is a dream! I awake, and what do I behold? Not a nation in motion to receive the heavenly Stranger. Not even His own favoured people receive Him. His moral beauty offends them. His very love moves their envy. I see Him seized, with all the majesty of a God about Him, and dragged to crucifixion. Those temples which wore the diadem of heaven, are mangled with a crown of thorns. They beat Him, they scourge Him, they spit upon Him. With eyes flashing with fury they pursue Him to

Calvary,—they chase Him out of the world. *There* an eternal monument was erected, to notify to angels as they pass by to what extremes the wickedness of man can go. But the experiment was not ended here. His Church was yet left on earth. His Gospel, forcing its way against the spears of an embattled world, must travel through the nations, and renew the experiment upon men in every country and every age. And what does the experiment prove? That in every country and age the human heart is the same; that it is capable of resisting all the light and love, all the majesty, and holiness, and threatenings, and promises of the Gospel. The feeblest child is capable of all this. No solitary individual since the fall of Adam, has ever been conquered by the application of all these motives. None have yielded but whom almighty grace subdued; and many have resisted with a fury never directed against any other object. The many bloody persecutions which have been raised against this benevolent cause, the rancour and the raillery, the contempt and the spite, which have been vomited against it in every age, tell what the heart of man can do. No other cause was ever so proscribed; none other ever produced such a disruption of all the ties of nature, stimulating the infuriated brother to deliver up the brother to death, and the father the children, and the children the parents. The most jarring elements, that can unite in nothing else, can unite in this warfare. Here Herod and Pilate are made friends. The Jew and the heathen, the Mahometan and the infidel, men of all parties and sects, are firm allies in this crusade. Every inferior enmity is swallowed up in this governing enmity against God. The experiment then is complete. And now it is understood in heaven and earth, to a degree unknown before, what unfathomable depths of wickedness lay concealed in the heart of man.

As the Gospel was sent into the world, so it is sent into *every place* to make an experiment upon the hearts of the people. And it never fails, wherever it is faithfully preached, to draw forth to view the desperate wickedness of the human heart. By the opposition

which it awakens to the God, the government, and the soul-humblings truths revealed, it not only manifests who are on the Lord's side and who are against Him, but lays open before heaven and earth the extreme depravity of a fallen nature. In the dark ages, when only its leading principles were known, and those strangely perverted, this opposition slept. But as the great system comes to be better understood, the enmity appears, and the human character is revealed. This discovery is not yet complete. Before the happy period of the Church arrives, the rage of men against the distinguishing doctrines will probably make disclosures which will astonish even the angels of God. In some parts of our country, where the Gospel has been longest known and best understood, this hostility already appears, in a form sufficiently threatening, one would think, to break the slumbers of the Church, and sufficiently hideous to fill her with humility and tears.

For the same solemn purpose the Gospel has been sent to *you*. And now while weeks revolve, while Sabbath succeeds Sabbath, the great experiment is making, to decide what your characters are, and what they are eternally to be. Unless you are a people peculiarly distinguished, some of you, as the Gospel is faithfully preached within these walls, will betray your hearts to angels and men by taking offence at the most distinguishing and soul-humblings truths; the truths in which the character of God and the great principles of His government are chiefly expressed. And after you have thus evinced to the universe your "*enmity against God*," it will be found that you took offence at hearing that you were *totally depraved*, and at other truths necessarily connected with this! A leading end for which the Gospel was sent to you, was to show before the world which of you would love and submit to truths that exalt God and abase the pride of man, and which of you would hate and oppose them. O did men who vent their enmity against the Christian doctrines, know that this is the very proof against them which the Gospel was sent to bring forth, they would stand appalled in the midst of their opposition, as at the Judgment of the Great Day.

In aid of this great design these walls were reared, and we are now assembled to dedicate this neat and commodious house to the service of God. As often as He whom Simeon pressed is brought in His Gospel into this temple, the great and solemn experiment will be renewed. As often as these doors are opened, God and holy angels will wait around to see what treatment the Gospel will receive from you. O could you be sensible of the fixed attention which is paid in heaven to your conduct from Sabbath to Sabbath, how every thing that escapes you under every sermon is noted down in the records of eternity, to constitute a mass of evidence that shall determine the secrets of your hearts, how tremblingly circumspect would you be at all times in the house of God. This day, this hour, your hearts are in a course of development. This moment God is watching to see the disclosures which His Word will make, and the recording angel is taking down the account. What a solemn interval is this! What endless consequences are suspended on the present hour!

By the truths and ordinances to be administered within these walls, the great experiment will proceed with this people till you and all your children shall have gone to your last account. Fifty years hence the eyes of God will pass through this place, to see what proofs the Gospel has found against probationers for eternity here.

III. That divine Personage was set for the rising and fall of many to whom His Gospel should be preached.

He came to be "a covenant of the people,—to open blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison." He came "to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness;"—to stand between heaven and earth, and offer there a sacrifice which should reconcile heaven and earth together. Through Him thousands and millions have been delivered from sin, and sorrow, and eternal death, and raised to all the blessedness of an endless life.

He was also set for the *fall* of many in Israel. The prophet had foretold, "He shall be—for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the

houses of Israel; for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken." The Saviour himself declared, "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind." And the apostle, severing the race of men into two classes, asserts that the Gospel is to one "the savour of death unto death, and to the other, the savour of life unto life." This glorious personage was revealed to discover a God and a system of truth which would exasperate and aggravate the corruptions of men, and give opportunity for their rancour to appear. He came to take away excuse, and to magnify the sin of rebellion, by the light he diffused. He came to lay the world under immense obligations by his dying love, by the privileges he bestowed, by the salvation he offered; and all to swell beyond calculation the guilt and punishment of unbelief. He was sent to pour a flood of light upon Capernaum and Jerusalem, and then to smite them with judicial blindness for not obeying the truth. He was sent to raise Chorazin and Bethsaida to heaven in point of privileges, and to cast them down to hell for abusing his grace. He came to make a thorough experiment upon the Jewish nation, and after that to bring upon his murderers the Roman armies, to consume their temple and cities, to crush that wretched people with a ruin unparalleled in the history of human woes, and to scatter the miserable remnant through the earth to be the jest and proverb of the world. And the history of Christian countries, is a history of churches and nations which have fallen by crimes committed against him whom Simeon blessed. Where are now the seven churches of Asia? Where are the once flourishing churches of Palestine, Syria, Africa, and Greece, planted and nurtured by the labours of the apostles? Where is the Latin empire of Rome? Where the Greek empire? All, all the prey of barbarians, crushed by oppression, and buried in ignorance and ruin, because they abused the Gospel of the grace of God. See in the Revelation a description of the wrath still in reserve for the church of Rome.

Behold the judgments which are now sweeping the nations which have sinned against the truth. An abused Gospel has occasioned all these desolations and woes. Though the kingdom of Christ is accounted weak and without influence, it is placed on earth to raise up or thrust down a world. It is the mighty engine which lifts nations to glory, or casts them down to destruction. It appears small, but it is animated with omnipotence. Arise and pass through the earth,—contemplate the nations of christendom sunk in stupidity and vice, thrusting out the Redeemer's kingdom, or making it a mere handmaid of the state,—banishing religion from the palace to the cottage, or the wilderness. How little do they consider that the glorious Gospel which they despise, is placed on earth to raise nations to heaven, or to cast them down to hell! It was not for nothing that God laid himself out to make this astonishing display of his perfections. It was not for nothing that he sent his beloved and infinite Son to die for a world, and to collect the tribute of homage from his creatures, and commanded them upon their utmost peril to acknowledge and obey him. He will hold no man guiltless who refuses allegiance to his Son. He will transfix them with eternal plagues who slight the Lord's anointed. Wo, wo to the wretch that can resist all the light and love, all the majesty and blessedness which the Gospel displays. It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment. This shall be his eternal condemnation, that light is come into the world, and he has loved darkness rather than light, because his deeds were evil.

The Gospel is set for the rising and fall of many in *every place* where it comes. Some by its influence are redeemed from bondage, and conducted to a kingdom; while others become more blind for the light rejected, more hardened by the love resisted, and plunged into double perdition by the grace abused. Every revival of religion is set for the rising and fall of some. Every Sabbath is set for the rising and fall of some. Every sermon, every sacrament, is set for the rising and fall of some. For the same solemn purpose

the Gospel has come to reside among you. Beware how you treat it. Bow before the majesty of this divine system, and receive it with trembling and gratitude as God's best gift to man,—a gift which will not be abused. Never let the holy Sabbath return without bringing with it a deep and awful sense of the endless consequences of every Sabbath, of every sermon. Carry this sense with you through the week, and through the year. The sermons and sacraments to be presented within these walls, will lift some of you to heaven, and probably cast some of you down to a deeper hell. This house is reared to be the gate of salvation, and the portal of perdition; to be remembered by some with eternal gratitude and delight, and by others, with everlasting remorse and anguish. This day, this Dedication, is probably to be connected with consequences, blessed and disastrous, that will run parallel with eternity, and compared with which all the joys and sorrows of a hundred generations disappear. While I rejoice with you, my beloved brethren, in the good hand of God upon you, in furnishing you once more with a convenient place for your devotions, I rejoice with trembling. Looking forward to the endless consequences which lie before me, I sink under the solemnity of the hour, and am constrained to cry, "How dreadful is this place!" Here infant angels will learn to sing, and learn to soar; and here—ah if they break their way to hell through privileges like these, they will curse the day that ever this house was reared; they will wish ten thousand times that they had never heard a sermon, nor seen a Bible,—that they had lived and died in the recesses of pagan darkness. They will look back to the solemn assemblies in this house, the seasons of prayer, the calls of mercy, the motions of the Spirit, with recollections that a seraph could not describe. But I forbear.

My heart's desire and prayer to God is, that the Gospel may prove to you, my beloved brethren, and to your children, "a savour of life unto life." In this consecrated place may you see the power and glory of God as you have seen him in the sanctuary; and may "the glory of this latter house—be

greater than of the former." Of thousands may it be said, that this and that man was born here. May a long succession of happy Sabbaths dawn upon this sanctuary, bringing with them the dawn of heaven. May angels as they visit the churches, find here devout and happy assemblies met to praise the Lord. Here may you stand by twenties and by fifties to enter into covenant with God. Here for many generations may joyful parents devote their children to the honour and grace of the adorable Trinity. I anticipate the joy of those future years when a happier generation will sing within these walls, "Lo this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation!" And a full choir will answer, "Our fathers sowed in tears, and laboured in sorrow, and we have entered into their labours."

My brethren, it is too near the dawn of those happier times for your pious enterprise to fail. There is so much consolation in this thought that, considering your many trials and discouragements, I cannot leave you without attempting to comfort your hearts by dwelling awhile on this animating truth. (a)

As the rest of the Church approaches,

(a) The trials of the Rev. Mr. Burr and the church in Sandwich are well known to many. As long as that amiable man leaned to the errors of Socinus, and preached an unknown Saviour, he was permitted to live in peace. But after the revolution in his views and feelings was known, and his labours had been signally blessed, his pulpit was forcibly shut against him, and his church, with the portion of the society which still adhered to him, were obliged to erect another house for public worship. It is stated "that the communion furniture, and all the church property, amounting to a considerable sum, is now held by only twelve male members, (eleven of whom have been regularly excluded from the church,) out of seventy-seven male members at the time the division took place." The retention of this property is understood to be connected with the claim of those twelve persons to be considered the *first church*. On this question the respectable council which convened at Sandwich, February 17th, 1813, recorded the following opinion:—"Notwithstanding any transactions which have taken place in consequence of the unhappy divisions in Sandwich, we are decidedly of opinion that the Rev. Mr. Burr's pastoral relation to the first congregational church in Sandwich is not dissolved."

the Christian world have been roused to an earnest attention to the prophecies, and have at length come to a remarkable agreement respecting the principal dates. It is now generally admitted that the grand period of twelve hundred and sixty "times" or years, assigned by Daniel and John for the continuance of the papal church, and papal kingdoms, and the Mahometan delusion, commenced in 606, (the year that the pastor of Rome was declared universal bishop, and the Arabian impostor retired to the cave of Hera to construct his koran,) and that it will terminate in 1866, or if you reckon by Chaldaic years, in 1847 or 8.(b)

(b) It is undeniable that Daniel, who lived among the Chaldeans, and wrote a part of his book in the Chaldee language, reckoned by Chaldaic years, of three hundred and sixty days, and was followed in this computation by John. The period assigned for the continuance of the papal power, and for the accomplishment of other great events, Daniel measures by three "times" and a half, that is, by as many "times" as there are days in three "times" and a half. (Dan. vii. 25, and xii. 7.) John repeatedly refers to the same period, and plainly tells you how many days were reckoned in three "times" and a half. In one breath he places the Church in the wilderness three "times" and a half, in the next, twelve hundred and sixty days; (Rev. xii. 6, 14)—thus limiting a "time" to three hundred and sixty days, for three and a half times three hundred and sixty are twelve hundred and sixty. Again he measures the same period by forty-two Chaldaic months, of thirty days each. He makes the Roman empire after its division into ten kingdoms, continue forty-two months. (ch. xiii. 5.) He leaves the Church under oppression forty-two months; (ch. xi. 2;) and in the very next verse tells you that the witnesses will prophesy in sackcloth twelve hundred and sixty days; thus limiting the month to thirty days, for forty-two times thirty are twelve hundred and sixty. Now forty-two months make three "times" and a half of twelve months each. Here then you have a "time" consisting of twelve months, of thirty days each, without any intercalation, and containing three hundred and sixty days. By three and a half of such "times," and by forty-two of such months, and by the twelve hundred and sixty days contained in such months and "times," this period is measured. And now the question is, What portions of duration do those twelve hundred and sixty days stand for? Do they stand for such "times" as they are expressly said to be contained in, or for Gregorian years of three hundred and sixty-five days and a quarter? Why should they stand for Gregorian years more than for centuries? You find them inclosed in three and

The revolutions which are taking place among the nations greatly confirm this construction. The papacy is nearly extinct. The papal kingdoms are expiring in convulsions.(c) The population of the Mahometan world is melting away. Early in the last century, about the time that the career of infidelity began in Europe, a sect of free-thinkers, denominated Wahabees from Abdul Wahab their founder, arose in Arabia in opposition to the prevailing superstition, and by the rapidity of their increase, as well as by the determined character of their hostility, promise shortly to banish that imposture from Arabia, if not from the world. The Turkish empire is evidently on the eve of its dissolution. So exactly do the events of the present day accord with the predictions, both in their kind and order, that we are enabled, with some degree of certainty, to determine how far we are advanced under the seven vials. At least the accordance is so manifest that the most distinguished writers on the prophecies, though differing in other respects, have been constrained to agree in this opinion, that in 1792, the year that the great scene of carnage began in Europe, a new era opened on the world,—an era of wo to

a half Chaldaic "times"; and if they are allowed to represent any longer duration than they express, they ought to represent those "times" to which they stand related as constituent parts. Later calculations have settled a different calendar; but the Holy Spirit, as might be shown in numerous instances, paid no regard to astronomical precision, but accommodated his expressions to the apprehensions of those whose language He employed. Now twelve hundred and sixty Chaldaic "times" amount to twelve hundred and forty-one and eighty-eight hundredths solar years, and form a period which will extend from A. D. 606 to A. D. 1847 or 8.

(c) Let any person make himself acquainted with the present state of religion and morals, and with the judgments which are now endured, within the regions of the Romish church, and then direct a scrutinizing eye to the eighteenth chapter of Revelation, and he will see that spiritual Babylon already answers, with surprising exactness, to the description given of her under the operation of the last mortal blow. Every part of the picture may be distinctly traced, only the tints yet remain to be heightened. The completion of the destruction of that church, and of the kingdoms which support her, is all that remains, of the predictions of John, to be accomplished before the millennium.

papal kingdoms, and to the countries included in the four great empires of antiquity, which is to continue till the dawn of the millennium. It appears from the last chapter of Daniel, that near the end of the twelve hundred and sixty years, and after the Jews are returned to their own land, "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation;" that after the termination of this grand period, two others, distinguished by some great events, will follow, one of thirty, the other of forty-five "times" or years: and the prophet pronounces, "Blessed is he that waiteth and cometh to the" end of the latter period. This is the last step in the progress towards the full introduction of the millennium that is noted in any part of the Scriptures, and is to fall, according to the calculation, in the year of the vulgar era 1941, or rather, (reckoning by Chaldaic years,) in 1921 or 2.(d)

(d) It appears from Dan. xii. 6, 7, that this time of trouble, occasioned by the interposition of Christ for the protection of the Jews, (verse 1,) and involving the destruction of the power mentioned in the close of the last chapter, "between the seas in the glorious holy mountain," (which all allow is to take place after the restoration of the Jews;) comprehending also the remarkable diffusion of knowledge, (verse 4,) the great and successful efforts to convert the *Jews*, (for the vision chiefly respected them, ch. x. 14,) and the figurative resurrection of that nation, some to life, and some to everlasting contempt, that is, some to the condition of believers who will be protected in their own land, and some to the condition of unbelievers who in their own land will perish, (verses 2 and 3;) will all take place *before the expiration of the twelve hundred and sixty "times" or years*. After all these events had been detailed in one short and unbroken series, the plain question was asked, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" The answer was, "It shall be for a time, times, and a half," or twelve hundred and sixty "times" If then the answer met the question, the close of the twelve hundred and sixty "times" brings us to "the end of these wonders." But Mr. Faber has thrown all "these wonders" into the thirty years which follow this period; thus leaving the enemy triumphant on the ground twenty-nine years after the time fixed for his destruction, and leaving no important event to mark the close of the twelve hundred and sixty "times." The lapse of affairs on his plan will still proceed in an unbroken current, with no open demonstration to the world that the period is closed. The generation then living will be unable to discover why that year more

It would appear from this calculation that we have already seen twenty-one years of that period of wo which is to extend to the morning of the millennium. It becomes then a question of great interest to us and our children, How is it to fare with the Church during this scene of destruction? The prophecies had taught us to believe that the deliverance of the Church and the destruction of her enemies would be contemporaneous, as inseparable parts of the same work: but we have now the evidences of our senses. We have had the experience of twenty-one years to cast light on this question. And what have we seen? What have we seen since the year 1792 in relation to those two countries to which the true Church is now almost entirely confined? *That very year introduced the grand era of Missions!* The first missionary society of modern origin was formed in England in 1792, and the next year

than any other should be fixed upon as terminating the existence, or even the triumph of the beast. They will still behold the monster in full vigour, in all the pride of victory bestriding Europe, Asia, and Africa, till towards the close of the thirtieth year. To say that at the expiration of the great period his destruction will *begin*, is not satisfactory; for not to insist on the manifest opposition between this and the hypothesis just stated, the destruction has already begun, both in papal and Mahometan countries. For the proof of this as it respects the Romish church, look at Spain, and France, and Italy, and even the territories of the Pope.

It is allowed on all hands that the power mentioned in the close of the eleventh chapter, is one that will go against the Jews after their restoration, and is the last that will be destroyed before the millennium. It is therefore manifestly the Gog foretold by Ezekiel, (ch. xxxviii. and xxxix.) What power this is to be, is not agreed. Latterly much ingenuity has been employed, (perhaps from the very natural propensity to magnify, and fill the eye with the events of our own age,) to prove that it is the *French*; but after all that has been said, the old opinion of Mede, Newton, Lowth, and many others, that it is the *Turks*, appears the more probable. The countries mentioned by Daniel as subject to this power, (to say nothing of the manifest agreement between the prophecy generally and the Ottoman empire,) are certainly those which are now under the dominion of the Turks; and the nations enumerated by Ezekiel as constituting the armies of Gog, (I must believe, after paying considerable attention to the dispersion and settlement of the sons of Noah,) are precisely those which are now included in the Turkish

commenced the far famed mission to India. Since that time the whole course of missionary and Bible societies, and other institutions in abundance for the diffusion of Christian knowledge, which now fill Great Britain and the United States, have come into existence. Within this period extensive and highly promising missions have been established in Asia and Africa, (to say nothing of America,) and a commencement has been made in translating the

Scriptures into *thirty* pagan languages, including by far the most extensive languages upon earth. In a word, all those surprising exertions of Christian benevolence which have distinguished the present from all former ages since that of the apostles, have been called forth within the last twenty-one years. It deserves also to be noted with devout wonder and gratitude, that precisely at the commencement of this interesting era, began, after a long drought, those

empire, with the single addition of Persia. Now it is intimated that about the time, or immediately after the destruction of the Roman empire in its present divided form, all the countries comprehended in the four ancient empires will be desolated. (Dan. ii. 35, 45, and vii. 12.) Those countries, except what lie in the great field of battle now spread in Europe, are all included in the Turkish and Persian empires. Let then these two empires fall in the expedition of Gog, and let the Roman empire come to its end, (that is, *as the supporter of the Romish church*), by the wars which are now desolating Europe, and you see the whole accomplished; you see "the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces *together*, and [become] like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors." (Dan. ii. 35, 45.)

This opinion receives additional strength from another consideration. Mr. Faber has satisfactorily shown that Mahometanism, as it began with popery, will expire with that apostacy; both being appointed to continue twelve hundred and sixty "times." We ought therefore to expect some great event which will bring the Eastern imposture to a sudden and final destruction about the time that the papal kingdoms fall. It is remarkable that the Wahabees commenced their war upon this superstition in Arabia at the same moment that the infidels in Europe attacked the Romish church. As Arabia never belonged to either of the four empires, that country may probably be cleansed by the followers of Wahab without being swept by the besom of destruction. And Arabia out of the question, all the Mahometan powers on earth, except a few inconsiderable clans in Tartary and the interior of Africa, are comprehended in the Turkish and Persian empires; for since the overthrow of Tippoo Saib none remain in India. Nothing then is wanting, in addition to the causes now in operation, to banish the religion of Mahomet from the world, but for those two empires to be broken by a hand which in the very act should seal before the eyes of all nations the truth of the Christian religion. And this, as will be apparent to any eye that passes carefully over those two chapters of Ezekiel, is precisely what is to be done in the overthrow of Gog.

Let then the destruction of Catholic kingdoms and of the Catholic church proceed as it has begun till it is finished; let the Wahabees advance till they have expelled the koran and

the mosque from Arabia; let the Jews be restored, (*which is the next new event to be expected*); let then the Turkish and Persian empires marshal under their standard the combined forces of the Mahometan world, and perish in an assault upon the Jews on the mountains of Israel; and every prophecy relative to the four empires, and to the two great apostacies of the East and West, will be accomplished. All this, according to the computation, will take place in the course of thirty-four or thirty-five years. The grounds of this computation may be seen at one view. If the twelve hundred and sixty "times" began in 606, and are Chaldaic years; if it is declared in Dan. xii. 6, 7, that the restoration of the Jews and the overthrow of the power mentioned in the close of the preceding chapter, will both fall within the compass of the twelve hundred and sixty "times;" if that power is the Gog of Ezekiel, and the Ottoman empire; (for these are the only pivots on which the hypothesis turns;) then the twelve hundred and sixty "times" will end and all these events be accomplished by the year 1847 or 8, that is, within thirty-four or thirty-five years from the present time; and then the Jews must be restored at farthest in about thirty years.

The twelve hundred and sixty "times" are to be succeeded by a period of thirty, and by another of forty-five "times," which brings us to the complete establishment of the millennial kingdom. (Dan. xii. 11, 12.) Now the destruction of Gog is to be followed at once by the collection of "the *whole* house of Israel," (including the *ten tribes*), till "*none* of them" is left. (Ezek. xxxix. 25—29.) The work of collecting this remnant will be performed by the remains of the hostile army, (Isai. lxvi. 19, 20,) now converted to Christianity by the wonders displayed in the destruction of their brethren. (Zech. xiv. 16.) These new missionaries will go forth to bring home *over land*, "upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts," (Isai. lxvi. 20,) a people which at this day are to be found no where but in the Persian empire and in the regions which lie beyond it. And who so proper to be employed in this work as the Persians themselves?—a consideration which strengthens the probability that the power mentioned in the eleventh chapter of Daniel is the Gog of Ezekiel. When it is considered that these wretched pagans, (for such the ten tribes are,) must be converted before they can

heavenly showers of grace which have ever since continued to fall upon Great Britain and the United States. In this country especially, not a day has passed since the era commenced which has not witnessed some revival of religion, and in several instances the Divine Conqueror has extended His triumphs through counties and states "with power and great glory." During the whole period the cause of evangelical truth and piety has been steadily advancing in both countries, and in several extensive portions of the American Church, advancing with great rapidity. Even in this commonwealth, which has

been brought home, it is easy to see that this mission may exhaust the thirty years. And when it is recollected that the vision related chiefly to the house of Israel, (Dan. x. 14,) it is natural to suppose that this was the very end for which the thirty years were set apart. The connexion and manner in which the period is mentioned help to confirm this opinion. The angel had gone over a long chain of events, extending from the days of Daniel to the restoration of his "people" and the destruction of their last enemy. There he paused. The question was then asked, "How long shall it be to the end of these wonders?" that is, How long shall it be to the time when Daniel's "people" shall be restored and delivered from all their enemies? Now his "people" consisted of two classes; one more immediately, the other more remotely related to him. Accordingly the answer was two-fold: It shall be twelve hundred and sixty years; it shall be twelve hundred and ninety years. (Dan. xii. 7, 11.) The last answer, as it only mentions the time without specifying any event to take place in it, cannot apparently relate to a new subject, but must be regarded as a part of the answer to the question respecting Daniel's "people."

The conversion of the Gentiles will immediately follow that of the house of Israel, (Rom. xi. 12—15,) and will probably be accomplished, as in the first ages of Christianity, by their instrumentality. In this work, as bishop Newton supposes, the forty-five years will be consumed. This brings us, according to the calculation, to the year 1921 or 2, a hundred and eight or nine years from the present time.

It doubtless becomes us to speak with diffidence and modesty on these points, for the prophecies were not intended to make us prophets. But have we not some reason to hope for an order of events not materially different from the one here sketched? Have we not good grounds to believe that the restoration of the Jews is at hand? Is it not high time for Christians to turn their awakened attention to this long neglected people? Whose business is it first to move to bring the children of Abraham home?

been less favoured than some others, it is ascertained that sound orthodoxy and devotion have been sensibly gaining ground through the whole period. But within the last six years almost a new era has opened upon this district of the Church. Astonishing preparations have been made to stem the torrent of infidelity concealed under Christian names, to revive union and discipline in the churches, and especially to supply them with a succession of able, orthodox, and godly ministers. On the whole, as great as the revolution has been which has filled the papal kingdoms with darkness, to an eye that has examined the history of the twenty-one years it is apparent, that the revolution in favour of Zion has been still more amazing. And it ought by no means to be omitted, that while the judgments have been continually thickening upon the devoted nations, every part of this animating scene has been brightening through the whole period, and still continues to brighten. May we not then yield ourselves to the confidence that Zion has seen her darkest hour, and that her light will henceforth continue to shine with increasing brightness to the perfect day?

Returning from this general survey to the commonwealth in which we live, may we not pronounce with strong assurance, that error and the irreligion which attends it have seen their best day on this ground? If the Church, now chiefly confined to two countries, is to rise from this day forth, where is it more likely to rise than in the United States, the most favoured spot on this continent which was discovered, as I may say, by the light of the Reformation? And if in the United States, where rather than in New-England? And if in New-England, where rather than in Massachusetts, which has been blessed by the prayers of so long a succession of godly ancestors? And if in Massachusetts, on what ground rather than this, which among the first received the footsteps of the pilgrims, and was early sprinkled with the tears of pious prayer? Thus the Word of God and the signs of the times join to confirm our hopes that twenty years hence religion will be in a far other state in this commonwealth than it now is; and that in less than a century this region and this

town will be full of prayer and praise. And then the history of your present struggles and embarrassments will be read by a holy posterity with the same interest with which you now read of the sufferings of the fathers of New-England. Yes, my beloved brethren, it is too near the dawn of those happier times for your pious enterprise to fail. This church will prosper; and these walls, unless destroyed by fire or violence, will resound with the songs of a better day. "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." "Lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees." "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompense, He will come and save you." "For the day of vengeance is in [His] heart, and the year of [His] redeemed is come." "Unto you that fear [His] name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye

steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Awake to vigorous and holy activity. The harvest time of the world is coming on; and "he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame." Inconceivably more may be done by your prayers and exertions in this day, than could have been done by the same means in past ages. It is too late for one pious prayer for Zion to remain long unanswered. Up then, every man that has a heart and a tongue, and use them for God; "exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching." "Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

SERMON LVII.

WHEREWITH SHALL A YOUNG MAN CLEANSE HIS WAY?

BACCALAUREATE.

PSALM cxix. 9.—Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.

I AM now to preach for the last time to the class who are going forth into the world. No longer to enjoy opportunities to reach their ear, I am now to give them my parting counsel and blessing. What I say to them will apply, in a greater or less degree, to the rest of the audience, and will, I hope, usefully occupy their attention.

I know not, dear youth, a subject more suitable for this parting hour than the one I have chosen. Of all the questions that could be started, the one most interesting to you is that which is raised

in the text: "Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way?" Moral purity, with the society and knowledge, the dignity and happiness which it brings, is infinitely the most important attainment that you can make. You are set here to act a part for a few days, but you have a higher and infinitely more important part to act through ages of endless endurance. You are citizens of the universe; subjects of an empire whose head is Jehovah. You are under a law the most just and benignant; a law extending to the heart, and requiring

affections of the highest benevolence towards God and his creatures, and actions of the same character; a law calculated to bind the universe together in everlasting love and happiness. It is as subjects of God's empire that you are launching forth on the sea of life. What chart shall guide you but the word of God? What care can better cleanse your way than "taking heed thereto according to" this "word?" Among the directions which the Scriptures suggest, I will select the following.

1. Let the fear of God always be before your eyes. This will hold you back from a thousand evils. To feel that you are in the presence of your Maker,—that an omniscient eye is upon you,—is the best preservative against sin. It is the only preservative. Philosophy has tried her power to reform the world. Plato and Seneca have reasoned. But philosophy, unbaptised, has proved as powerless as it is blind. The fear of the world has been tried; but this has only made men-pleasers. It has merely washed "the outside of the cup and the platter," and left men to do any thing in secret which their hearts desired, and any thing in public which the corrupt taste of the times approved. Nothing can secure a thorough morality which does not mould the heart. The salt must be cast into that fountain if you would sweeten the streams. Nothing but the fear of God,—the God of the Bible,—can make a good man. And certainly nothing else can constitute a servant of God. What is it to be the servant of a man? It is to act under the impulse of his authority and to be employed in advancing his interest; and that, not one hour in a day, nor one day in a week, but habitually. And what is it to be the servant of God? It is to go forth from day to day and from hour to hour under the impulse of his authority and with a hearty aim at his glory. Nothing less than this can make you acknowledged as his servants. You may preserve a fair exterior; you may do many good things "to be seen of men" or to answer other selfish ends; but you are not God's servants any further than you prevailingly act from a regard to his authority and glory: and this is not done by any course of conduct, however outwardly right, while

God is habitually excluded from the thoughts.

2. Be not among those who thrust a Mediator from their religion. Many will speak of God while they studiously avoid every allusion to the Christian system. The name of God is hallowed by many classical associations; and his existence is so manifest to philosophy, and is so generally acknowledged, that few even in youth are ashamed to speak of a supreme Being, or a Deity, or occasionally, even of God, who would shrink from uttering the name of Christ. They will make cold and distant allusions to devotion, while they would consider it cant to speak of repentance or faith or any of the graces which respect a Mediator. This is to throw off the entire influence of that religion which came from heaven, and to hang loosely about us a religion as heartless and as uninfluential as heathenism itself. "No man knoweth—the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." You can have no true knowledge of God without a Mediator. No where does God fully shine but "in the face of Jesus Christ." If you turn away from those peculiar views of God which are exhibited in the Gospel, your god no more resembles the God of the Bible than did Jupiter or Woden. If then you exclude a Mediator, you are without any religion that can reform the heart.

While every principle of honour, and even the prescriptions of good taste, would restrain you from a wordy profession of a religion which you do not possess; it is manly both to feel and to avow an attachment to a religion so full of evidence, so full of reason, so full of the wisdom of God, and which involves all the hopes and the highest dignity of man. Every friend of his race, every friend of the universe, ought to speak of this religion with as little shame as he would speak of the honour of his father or the kindness of his mother.

Nor let it be a mere nominal adhesion to Christ. You are sinners and need a Mediator to introduce you to God. You need the blood of atonement to wash out the deep stains of your guilt, and the righteousness of a Saviour to earn for you an eternal inheritance. Come, with all the simplicity of children and

with all the contrition of the publican, and cast yourselves on the grace and fulness of the Redeemer.

3. Let it be the great aim of your lives to improve the condition of the world. In the selection of your profession ask yourselves, In what course of life can I most contribute to the permanent prosperity of my race? and let that consideration decide your choice. In all your future course, instead of a selfish round of efforts with a view limited to the details of business, let your eye be constantly awake to discover how you can best increase the stock of human happiness. I would not convert you into fanciful projectors. The efforts of your invention, while prompted by a warm and generous heart, should be under the control of a sound judgment. Nor would I excite you all to wander like the blessed Howard through the world, or, like Lancaster and Mills, to devote your lives to one specific method of doing good. It is wonderful how much can be done for the improvement of the world by a Wilberforce or a Boudinot or a Bartlet, without breaking in upon ordinary pursuits. It is an age which offers many opportunities of doing good. Generous minds will not be contented to be drones in such a period, nor to labour in a selfish round of business without extending a thought to the common weal of nations or to the prosperity of the Church of God. Addict yourselves to the great work of charity. Remember that a part of what you earn or inherit is to be returned as a tax to Him who gave you all your talents and privileges. Never let a sordid avarice close your hands while millions are bringing their offerings into the treasury of the Lord,—from the rich man with his hundred thousands, to the day labourer and the little child with their hard-earned pence.

That general benevolence which becomes you as citizens of the universe, although it is not inconsistent with local affections, such as those which concentrate in one's family or country, is altogether opposed to party spirit. Party spirit, whether in religion or politics or whatever else, is a selfish spirit, which debases the affections, perverts the judgment, and injures as well the habits of the mind, as the interests of society. It

severs you from the community and wraps you up in a party. It obstructs the operation of disinterestedness and candour and justice, and substitutes in their stead the dominion of self-interest, self-will, and prejudice. It may place you at the head of a party, but it can never make you philanthropists. In politics it will constitute you a zealot, but not a patriot; in religion, a bigot, but not a Christian. Shun that taint of the mind as the pestilence,—that moral sirocco which blasts in its course all religion and patriotism, all charity and wisdom, and whelms country and Church under the ruin which it scatters.

Among the methods of promoting human happiness, I hope you will arrange yourselves on the side of those who, to every practical extent, are enemies to war. Whether defensive war, in the last extremity, is lawful, needs not to be settled in order to make room for a wide and very important resistance of the common principles on which war is justified and conducted. We know from the best authority that the time is coming when men will "beat their swords into plow-shares and their spears into pruning-hooks" and "learn war" no "more." That time can scarcely fail to be ushered in by a general conviction of the wickedness of former wars, and of the frivolous pretexts on which they have been waged. If all are not Quakers, all must become the friends of peace and the enemies of war to an extent never yet known on earth since the fall.

4. There must be a careful and vigorous and diligent operation upon yourselves. You must take heed to the regulation of your own minds and your own ways according to God's word. You partake of the common depravity of the race. You have hearts which by nature are "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." You are going forth into a world full of temptations; and you have heard of invisible foes which spread snares for incautious souls. The world, the flesh, and the devil are before you. And is there any hope that you can overcome all these without taking diligent heed to yourselves? You have seen what labours and watchings were necessary to over-

come the difficulties of science : but far greater efforts and vigilance are required to control the wayward heart, to eradicate prejudice, to subdue pride, to tame the passions, to resist the syren voice of pleasure, to vanquish selfishness by transferring the supreme affections to God, to expand the heart with those generous feelings and sentiments which are comprehended in heavenly charity ; to do all this over again every day and hour ; to keep the ground you have gained and to make new advances in opposition to two worlds. This will require the most wakeful care and the most untiring exertion.

It should be a main point in the outset to fix your habits right. We are creatures of habit. Once establish those habits which are good, and the warfare is half accomplished. On the other hand, let bad habits once get confirmed, and nothing but supernatural power can ordinarily break them. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots ? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil." If for no other end than to fix your habits right, it would be worth your while to take diligent heed to your ways for the first part of your life. As in the mechanic arts, so in the art of living, habit will make the work easy. Every step you take will increase the facility of taking another. Every battle you win will render future victory more easy and certain. On every man habit, good or bad, is constantly fastening its influence. One is making the progressive attainment of moral purity every day more easy ; another is making a return to it every day more difficult and improbable. One of these processes is passing upon each of you to-day, and has been constantly passing upon you in times past, and will be passing upon you in all time to come. If ever you wish to rise to angelic purity and escape the pollution of the great prison-house of the universe, take care, take earnest care of your early habits. I mean not only those which are external, but those also and chiefly which are mental. Take care of your habits of thought and of feeling. Take care of your habitual temper towards God and man.

After all you must not go forth in your own strength. You must cast your-

selves on the strength of God and seek the aid of his Spirit. But you must seek it in the way of his appointment ; that is, you must diligently and sincerely attend on the means of grace. You must take his word for "the man of" your "counsel." This is the great instrument of conviction, conversion, and sanctification. Make its contents familiar to your minds. Go to it daily,—not merely as the guide of your understanding, but as the means of affecting your heart. Those who desert the word of God, may expect to be deserted by the Spirit of God. Those who seldom read the Bible, are not likely by any influence to be delivered from their old sins.

Another important ordinance of divine appointment is the holy Sabbath. This is the day ordained for special attendance on those means which God has instituted for the conviction, conversion, and sanctification of men, and which he is wont to bless for these ends. This is the day on which the Spirit ordinarily descends to impress, renew, and sanctify those who attend on the ordinances of God. Most of those who are saved are probably first impressed and chiefly sanctified on this day ; and very few who grossly profane the Sabbath are ever brought to repentance ; and none who continue to do this ever reach the kingdom of heaven. Settle it therefore as an aphorism to be engraven on your hearts, *If you lose your Sabbaths you lose your souls.* Set out in life with a fixed determination to hallow this sacred day. Secure yourselves from the danger of neglecting it, by entrenching yourselves in the habit of observing it strictly. Shun, as you would the plague, the practice of profaning the day by vain conversation or idleness or sleep, and especially by business or professional studies. Be diligent attendants in the house of God. This is the place where salvation is to be found. On your regard for the Sabbath and the sanctuary, not only your own souls are at stake, but the souls of others and the good of your country. You are set for an example to society ; and your influence will do much to break down or to build up those habits of order and virtue on which the happiness of the world depends. Be you known as the friends

of order and religion. Your superior privileges entitle your country to expect this of you, and entitle your Maker to demand this of you.

The last thing that I shall mention in the list of operations on yourselves, is the habit of prayer. This lies at the foundation of all the rest and will support the whole. Prayer will draw from heaven an influence to ensure all other duties; and without prayer that influence will never be obtained. It is a fundamental law of heaven that these blessings, if not sought for, shall not be bestowed. On this account, and because prayer is expressly enjoined and cannot be neglected without rebellion, no one can be a good man without the stated performance of this duty. No man without prayer can be saved. Without prayer no man has any security against a plunge into the deepest crimes. Without prayer no man can calculate on worldly prosperity. If this is sent on the wicked and prayerless, it is an act of sovereignty which they had no right to expect, and which, if they continue prayerless, will only sink them lower in perdition. It is most reasonable for creatures to acknowledge their dependence on their Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer, and their infinite indebtedness to him: and the neglect of this duty is the height of ingratitude, and pronounces a sentiment which is a lie. It sets up for independence, as well in relation to the formation of the character, as to all other ingredients of present and future happiness. And what can a poor worm of the dust do in this boasted state of independence? Can he break through and be happy without God? Can he command the agents of nature to work

for his prosperity? Can he keep the breath in his own nostrils a moment? Can he quench the fire of hell and take possession of heaven by force? a creature crushed before the moth, and with no strength or even existence but what he receives?

These thoughts, beloved youth, I have deemed it my duty to suggest on this occasion. You are going forth into a world full of dangers, to encounter you know not what. You will need the shield and buckler of the Almighty. You are going into a world full of trials. No mortal eye can foresee what is to befall you. Some of you will perhaps find an early grave. Others of you may meet with disappointments and bleed under the strokes of a chastising Providence. You will need the consolations of religion and the bosom of a heavenly Parent to lean upon. May you find this relief in every time of need. It is natural for me to feel towards you some of the affection and anxieties of a parent. Wherever you go and whatever befalls you, my best wishes and my prayers attend you. I hope to see you ornaments to your several professions and staunch friends of order and virtue. May you recompense the care of your parents and friends by fulfilling all their just expectations. May your conduct honour and console them. May you enjoy all the happiness allotted to mortals here; and after blessing the world in your passage through it, and scattering happiness as from an angel's wing, may you find an honourable and peaceful grave; and may I be so happy as to meet you all in our Father's house above, to part no more for ever. Beloved youth, farewell.

SERMON LVIII.

AIM HIGH.

BACCALAUREATE.

PHIL. iii. 12—14. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do; forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

I HAVE selected this text for no other purpose than to show how high the great apostle of the Gentiles aimed. He was probably the holiest mere man that ever lived; and yet he was not satisfied, because he had not attained to a complete conformity to the death of Christ by dying to sin, and had not fully attained to "the resurrection of the dead" by rising to spiritual life. He possessed the richest stock of knowledge of any mere man that had then ever appeared on earth, and yet he counted not himself to have apprehended the knowledge of Christ. He doubtless had done more good than any mere man that had ever visited our world, and yet he was reaching forward to still greater measures of usefulness. In short he counted not himself to have laid hold of that glorious consummation of salvation,—that heavenly prize,—for which Christ had laid hold of him on the plains of Damascus to turn him into the Christian race. There is an allusion here to the foot races in the Olympic games, where the competitors made no account of the space already measured over, and never cast their eyes back, but kept them fixed on the prize before them, erected in a conspicuous spot to animate them in their race. In like manner the apostle made no account of past acquisitions or achievements, but stretched forward to others, and pressed towards the goal for the prize there displayed; the prize to which he had been called by the proclamation of the Gospel, as the competitors at Olympia were called out by proclamation to contend for the prize there set up.

If from such an elevation the great apostle was stretching upward to still

nobler heights of holiness, knowledge, and usefulness, how much more should we from the humble clod which we inhabit. The example forcibly calls upon us to elevate our aims in reference to intellectual and moral attainments and to active usefulness. This example I wish to set before the class who are about to go forth into the world and to start in their high career.

Had I at my disposal, my dear young friends, such a blessing as Jacob pronounced, I would freely bestow it upon you: but I can only offer you my parting counsel, accompanied with my best wishes and prayers for your happiness.

You perceive from the text I have chosen that I am about to urge it upon you to aim high. This I am the rather inclined to do as I know it is one of the besetting sins of youth, after leaving college, to sink down into sloth and pleasure. These two evils are almost always paired. One attracts the other. Sloth leads to ignoble pleasure, and especially to the withering vice of intemperance; and pleasure, especially that which besots the man, relaxes all the sinews of exertion and plunges him into the stagnant gulf of indolence. Many a flower which bloomed fair is blighted. Many a youth of the finest genius and fairest promise, has been drawn into the vortex of dissipation or drowned in the stenchy abyss of intemperance, and has found an early and ignoble grave just as his classmates were beginning to command the admiration and gratitude of their country.

Let me not be misunderstood. When I exhort you to aim high, I do not mean to fan the flame of vain-glory, to excite

the throes of ambition, or inflame that turbulent passion which raised the first rebellion in heaven and turned a seraph's mind into a hell; which has engendered all the duels that have crimsoned and disgraced our world, and produced all the quarrels that have embroiled this great family of children. "Only by pride cometh contention." Flatter it with whatever names you please; call it ambition, call it a sense of honour, call it a reach after virtuous distinctions; so long as it is a wish to be above another for the sake of being his superior, it is rank pride, the first born of selfishness, the disgrace of the creation, the curse of the universe, the abomination of God. Let it dwell in its own proper habitation, the breast of a duelist, the breast of a devil, but let it be far from you.

"Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not." The pomp of riches, the pride of power, the pageantry of state; these are high things after which I dare not exhort you to aim. I dare not fail to dehort you with all the earnestness of love. But the things in pursuit of which I would call upon you to aim high, are these three; moral excellence, intellectual elevation, and active usefulness.

1. Moral excellence. Grovel not among the low pursuits of sin, nor be satisfied with small attainments in holiness. Cultivate the social affections. They tend to humanize the soul, to expand the selfish heart, to refine the manners, to elevate and harmonize the world. I would not give much for the principles of that man who can habitually offend another by vulgar coarseness under the notion of independence or to avoid being a man-pleaser; and but little more for the principles of him who withdraws from society that he may enjoy himself alone and leave others to do as they can. But there are other affections far above the social. If a man were to love the whole world and bound his affections there, he would be an enemy to the universe and to its glorious Head. Even your social affections cannot be properly regulated without the love of God. This is the denomination of that universal charity which comprehends every thing really excellent. At this aim with supreme

desire. It is the nature of this love to be satisfied with no degrees of holiness but those which fill the capacity; of course with no attainments in the present life. Its language is, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

Whoever has the honours and riches of the world, seek for yourselves these high attributes of the heart. This will break down and bind every turbulent passion. This will dilute every corrosive care. This will show you a God on the throne who you wish should be there, and to whom you can cheerfully confide every issue. This will conform you to God and to the inhabitants of heaven, and make you meet for their glorious society. It was to exalt you to this divine temper, that the Son of God left the heaven of his glory "and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

2. Aim high in regard to intellectual character. Even in respect to human knowledge, you have as yet only laid a foundation on which to build in future years. Go forth and employ your talents, and let your two gain other two, and your five other five. Count not that you have "already attained." You have only begun your course. Some quit the pursuit of science as soon as they leave college; and instead of rising into intellectual greatness from one degree to another, they sink down among the mass of the people. But I hope better things of you. I hope to see you all respectable, and some of you distinguished, among the literati of our country, and contributing to the stock of general science in our world.

But it is not to human knowledge that I would limit your attention. There is other knowledge far more exalted, opening to you a richer world and a higher state of existence. "This is life eternal," to "know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." This knowledge will assimilate you to God. "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord," you will be "changed into the same image from glory to glory." A good man is never satisfied with attainments already made in the knowledge of God. Even the inspired Agur complained, "I neither learned wisdom nor have the knowledge

of the holy." Paul considered the present state as only that of childhood, and reached forward to that perfection of knowledge which would constitute him a man. "We know in part and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." Be you never satisfied till you arrive at manhood,—till you reach the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus. "Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go; keep her, for she is thy life."

You are placed here only to commence an eternal course of improvement. This life is nothing but a school in which you are to acquire the rudiments of an immortal education. Your business here is not to sleep,—not to rust in ignoble sloth,—not to stop your growth and be content with knowing no more. You have begun a course which nothing can interrupt. You are to expand and expand for ever. Feel like infant angels. Spurn the earth. Feel that you have entered a class which will never graduate. Age is only a vacation. Death is but a commencement,—an entrance upon a higher standing. Strive to be at the head of your class.

As I stand and measure your immortal destinies, my soul swells with the boundless prospect. What do I behold? beings so high that Gabriel, with his present ken, would need a telescope to trace them under the empyreal arch; and still stretching upwards to more amazing and yet more amazing heights;—or plunged as deep into the profound. But from this my soul turns away.

3. Aim high in regard to active usefulness. Determine, in the strength of the Lord, that the world shall be the happier for your living in it; that if possible you will change the posture of things for the better; that the beneficent print of your fingers shall appear on every thing you touch; that you will not merely lounge on earth and cumber the ground. There are drones

who do this; who eat up the substance of the earth and make no returns; who draw much from the labours and cares and improvements of others, and pay nothing back. But they have their reward. "He that tilleth his land shall have plenty of bread, but he that followeth after vain persons shall have poverty enough." Come not ye near their habitation. Feel that you are bound to pay rent to the Owner of the world for the privilege of living in it; and to pay taxes on all that you possess, for the support of order and improvement through the great family of man. Stretch forward to greater and still greater measures of usefulness. Count nothing done while any thing remains to be done.

Would you attain to the highest usefulness, you must take the stamp of your affections from the Christian religion; you must take your motives and your directions from the Christian religion. Every other spirit is faint and frigid; every thing else is poor and groveling in regard to the motives it supplies. This religion shows you that you are labouring, not for insects that will disappear to-morrow, but for creatures which, as eternity opens, swell into an importance which knows no bounds. This urges you on by the authority of the eternal God, and stimulates you by the offer of rewards as ponderous as the universe. This unfolds to you a bleeding Saviour, and constrains you by the miracle of his infinite love.

Shall I press you with some of the considerations drawn from the Bible, and from the circumstances in which you are placed, to aim at high and god-like usefulness. (1.) God himself has commanded it. The infinite God who made and preserves and owns all these worlds, is your Master, and this is the service which he has assigned you. For this purpose he created you, and built this beautiful world for your habitation, and richly furnished it for your use, and placed you in it, and preserves your lives, and surrounds you with his mercies, and plies you with means, and keeps watch to see whether you perform the service required or not. He does not direct you to labour for a personal and separate interest of his own, but to promote his interest as the be-

nevolent Guardian of the universe,—to seek his glory in the harmony and elevation and highest happiness of the intelligent creation. What a god-like employment! what a sublime destination! And he will not hold you guiltless for the neglect of this service. He will transfix with eternal plagues the wretch that dares refuse it.

(2.) Society expects it of you as educated men, that you will be among the most influential in managing, protecting, and advancing its interests, and in guarding against its besetting dangers. Society looks to you for an influence to check vice, to enlighten ignorance, to further the cause of virtue and religion, to advance the Church in which all the essential interests of the world are wrapt up, to vindicate the cause of civil liberty, to assert the rights of man, and to assist in administering a wise and benignant government. And society has a *right* to expect all this of you. It has reared and nursed the institutions in which you have been educated, and you are bound to make returns for its maternal care. Society has a right to expect it of you because you are fitted by education to act a more distinguished part than others, and to exert a wider and more powerful influence. "For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." It is a fact that learned men have done almost all that has been done towards forming the world, towards founding the institutions of society, towards improving the science of government, towards all the inventions in the arts, towards the support of learning and religion. What would become of our colleges, what would become of our schools, what would become of the arts, what would become of civil liberty, what would become of our churches, but for learned men? You see then the elevated part which you are called to act; the part which is assigned you by the providence of God; the part which is laid upon you by the suffrages and reasonable expectations of your contemporaries. See that you perform it in that high and manly sort which will fulfil the hopes and calculations of the world.

(3.) You live in a world which has been distinguished from all the other worlds that God has made, by being

selected for the theatre of redemption, and of those amazing displays of God which are to carry a report to the most distant world and to enlighten the universe in the knowledge of his glory. It is impossible to believe that the Son of God ever became incarnate and died in any other world than this. For not to insist on the absolute want of evidence to support such an hypothesis; not to insist that one such exhibition of God was enough to answer every general purpose intended by it; not to insist that upon such a supposition, either the Saviour must have a plurality of bodies and souls, or else the identical body which had died in one world and risen to glory, together with the soul inhabiting it, must have been again reduced to the dimensions of an infant; not to insist upon any of these things, it is enough to say that we know the age of the sun, moon, and stars, including all worlds of whose existence we have any evidence; and they are not yet six thousand years old. The first chapter of Genesis seems to give an account of the creation of the whole material universe, and certainly of all worlds that are to be destroyed or changed at our day of judgment. Now it cannot be supposed that between the creation recorded in Genesis and the birth in Bethlehem, the Saviour had lived and died in other worlds. We have, so to speak, his history during all that period, and can trace his course through the whole four thousand years. He appeared in Eden as soon as man fell, and from that moment, (and even before,) took the charge of this world, and often appeared in it, and was constantly employed in managing it and the Church located in it, and in preparing the way for his advent in the flesh. And since his birth in Bethlehem we know that he has dwelt no where but on this earth and in heaven. Soon after he ascended from Olivet, it was expressly declared that he would remain in heaven till the final consummation. "Whom the heaven must receive *until* the times of restitution of all things." And there we are taught to seek him daily, at God's right hand, enthroned in glory, in a nature translated from this world. Besides all this, we are expressly told that "all things were created by him and for

him," as "Head of the body *the Church*;" and that God "created all things by" him, "*to the intent* that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known *by the Church*, [not by redemption in another world,] the manifold wisdom of God." And the angels are represented as sent to school to this planet, in distinction from all other worlds, and as turning their eager eyes to pry into the mysteries of redemption here unfolded.

Open then your eyes in some clear evening on the starry heavens. Contemplate the worlds revolving around our sun; some of them furnished with satellites, and all of them enjoying the vicissitudes of day and night, of summer and winter, and fitted to be the abodes of happy beings. Then extend your eyes to the fixed stars which sprinkle all the heavens, and which are doubtless suns to other systems. And when you have lost yourselves in the contemplation of unnumbered worlds floating in boundless space, and find this planet dwindled to a speck, you stand amazed that it has been selected to hold so conspicuous a place in the universe of God,—to be a point whence shall radiate a light to illumine all worlds,—"*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*;" and you rise with much the same astonishment as David did from the same contemplation: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honour;" a declaration expressly applied by the apostle to Christ himself, as if the Psalmist had been thinking of the selection of this world from all others to be the theatre of redemption. (a)

The inhabitants of this world are probably as a drop in the ocean to all the creatures which God has made; and yet you were selected from the unnumbered myriads passed by, to dwell on a planet where the Son of God was to be born and die, and to found a Church, and in

his person and work to stand forth "*the image of the invisible God*," to bring out to the view of creatures the secrets of the Eternal Mind. Amidst these amazing operations, into which "*the angels desire to look*," you stand; amidst this flood of light which is to carry the splendours of immortal day to the most distant world. And yet some of you perhaps pass it by as of no account. Perhaps the Bible, in which, as in a candlestick, this light is placed, lies neglected upon its shelf. But you have the infinite privilege to live in a world where a Church, founded in blood, is training up for glory,—to live among the records and memorials of the most astonishing facts that ever commanded the admiration of creatures,—among Bibles and sabbaths and sacraments and operations of the Holy Ghost. What an infinite privilege is this. Let them sleep in Mars and Jupiter and Venus, but let not the inhabitants of this world sleep. In this little circle of light, which is to be the sun of the universe, you stand. All this light has been struck out by efforts to redeem your souls. Are you not affected at the sight of a world illuminated by rays like these? In the midst of these amazing operations, which are to send their report echoing through the universe, you stand. These operations are to be brought forward by the agency of man. For no other end did you receive your immortal powers; for no other end were you placed in this world; for no other end are you suffered to linger here a day. To what a god-like sphere of usefulness are you raised. You are among the happy few whose efforts are to consummate the work of redemption and to send out a report, through planets and stars and constellations, to the remotest world. In this laboratory of the universe will you be idle? Let them sleep in Mercury and Saturn and Herschel; I had almost said, let them sleep in heaven; but sleep not ye in such a world as this.

(4.) It is your lot to live in one of the most interesting periods of this most favoured world; in an age peculiarly marked by activity in every department of enterprise, and which may emphatically be called *the age of action*; an age which by convulsive spasms is bursting the bonds of tyranny and throw-

(a) Heb. ii. 5—9.

ing out free nations upon the world ; an age in which all nature seems travailing together to bring forth the consummation of Zion's glory ; an age in which the Church has arisen from her long sleep and joined in one united struggle to send salvation to the ends of the earth ; an age which shows by every token that the millennium is at the door. If you would fall in with the spirit of the age, you must come up to beneficent action. If you will not do this, get ye back to the dark ages ; ye do not belong to the present period. You see the dawn of that day which prophets and kings desired to see, and which is watched by millions of eyes from heaven. They might sleep under the Old Testament dispensation ; they might sleep in the ages of papal darkness ; but now it is high time to awake out of sleep. Go, young gentlemen, and act a high and holy part on the theatre of life. Go and prosper. May you be a blessing to the world, an honour to your friends, and a comfort to yourselves. My best wishes attend you.

I have now finished my separate arguments to persuade you to aim high in moral attainments, in intellectual expansion, and in active usefulness. One word more that will press upon all these points alike. The hopes of your parents centre in you. The comfort of their age depends upon you. Their cares, their anxieties, their exertions have brought you forward to this. They are looking for you to make the most amiable and exemplary members of society, and the most elevated and useful and honoured men. It was for this that they exerted, and perhaps denied, themselves to provide the means of your education, and have daily breathed for you the breath of prayer. The expenses they have incurred, their many anxious cares, and their never-failing love, all bind you with bonds never to be broken.

My dear young friends, you are entering on a sublime race in presence of many witnesses. First, your parents

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and friends will follow you with eyes sharpened with intense interest, and when you know it not, will watch, with strong emotions, every correct step and every aberration, every success and every failure. A thousand glances from the domestic circle will fall upon you which you will never know till they are discovered in the revelations of the last day. Then your college acquaintance, and literary men in general, forming a world by themselves that can see each other through the earth, will take knowledge of all that you are and do. Then the mass of society, with various kinds and degrees of interest, will be looking on. Then your pious friends who have gone to glory, will be bending an eye upon you from the battlements of heaven. The holy angels, as they visit this planet in their ministrations to the Church, will notice all you do. Devils will watch your steps like prowling lions. The Lord Jesus Christ, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and the eternal God, will behold you continually. In what a boundless amphitheatre do you stand. Never were the Olympian competitors animated or awed by an assembly like this. "Seeing" then that you "are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,—lay aside every weight and the" indolence "which doth so easily beset us," and press towards the high and glorious mark. Let not another take your crown. I shall not be present to witness your success on earth. Ere that day arrives this head will sleep beneath the clods of the valley. But I hope to meet you in a higher sphere and to exult to see you crowned, and to join with you in eternal anthems of praise to him who redeemed us with his blood. Once more I say, Go, dear youth, and act a high and holy part till we meet in heaven. May every blessing which a God has to bestow, be yours ; and may you arrive late and welcome in those fields of light where many shall hail you as the servants of God, and thank you as the high benefactors of mankind. Amen.

SERMON LIX.

HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

BACCALAUREATE FOR 1826, AT THE CLOSE OF A GREAT REVIVAL.

Zech. xiv. 20, 21.—In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, **HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD**; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar: yea every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts.

THIS refers to a day which is yet future. We cannot mistake the period alluded to when we look at the order of events marked out in the context. There is first an account of the death of Christ; (a) then of the subsequent dispersion of the Jews; (b) then of their final return to their own land; (c) then of the great assemblage of nations brought against Jerusalem, (the Gog of Ezekiel); (d) then of the signal interposition of God for their destruction, by a rapid plague, by mutual slaughter, and by the arms of the Jews; (e) then of the permanent tranquillity of the holy land (f) and the universal diffusion of religion and peace. (g) At the conclusion of the whole comes in our text: "In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, *Holiness unto the Lord*; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar: yea every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts."

Jerusalem and Judah are referred to first in a literal sense, but, as is common, they are ultimately referred to as a type of the universal Church in the latter day. In its real scope therefore the prediction extends to the whole world. Nothing later in this entire scene has yet taken place than the dispersion of the Jews. All the rest is yet to come. But every thing in prophecy and providence unites to prove that the entire fulfilment is at the door.

And what is the meaning of the inscription? The term *holy* signifies *set apart* or *devoted*. To be *holy to the Lord* then is to be consecrated to him. But *HOLINESS to the Lord* is a still more forcible expression, and denotes consecration in the abstract. It was the inscription on the plate of the mitre of the high priest, (h) to denote that by office he was wholly consecrated to God. But in that glorious day which is coming on the world, this inscription is represented as put, not merely on the most sacred things, but on "the bells of the horses," and on the common utensils for dressing food. "The pots in the Lord's house," (those used for culinary purposes in the families of the priests,) shall, in point of consecration, "be like the bowls before the altar," which received the blood of the victims until it was sprinkled. "Yea every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts." The kitchen furniture, not of the priests only, but of the common people, shall be "holiness unto the Lord." Instead of being regarded as the means of luxury or display, the commonest articles will be held devoted to God. Faith and love will see his name written on them all, and will regard them all as sacred to his service, and will ask, every hour of the day, what use of them will best accord with this design. And what is true of small things will be specially true of great. Men will write *Holiness to the Lord* on all that they are and have. This implies that they will go through and re-examine all their habits, and bring all to the touchstone of Scrip-

(a) Chap. ix. 9—11, and xi. 12, 13, and xiii. 6, 7.

(b) Chap. xi. (c) Chap. xii.

(d) Chap. xii., and xiv. 1, 2.

(e) Chap. xii., and xiv. 3, 12—16.

(f) Chap. xiv. 10, 11. (g) Chap. xiv. 9.

(h) Exod. xxxix. 30, 31. Lev. viii. 9.

ture ; and, instead of servilely following the custom of ages, will spare nothing that does not subserve the Redeemer's kingdom. They will then better understand what is implied in the command, "Whether—ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." They will consecrate to him all their powers of body and mind,—all their time, influence, and possessions. They will no longer dote on wealth as the means of power or splendour or pleasure, but as a talent to be employed for their God and Saviour, and will stand ready cheerfully to resign it, wholly or in part, as he shall call for it.

I would fain write *Holiness to the Lord* on this beloved class, and offer them up on the altar of affection as a living sacrifice to God. On this solemn occasion, when you are about to go forth into the world, among the desires of anxious love, my most fervent wish is, that you, dear youth, may be devoted to God, not in a partial and halting manner as Christians of former generations, but thoroughly and without reserve,—with all your heart and soul. My heart's desire and prayer to God is, that you may go forth more devoted than any of your predecessors,—than any of your fathers,—and that you may achieve wonders for Christ and his Church, and be the honoured instruments of making a great and happy change in the state of the world.

In past ages most men in active life have been aiming at any thing rather than the interest of the Redeemer's kingdom. They have been pursuing private gain and honour and pleasure. They have been seeking to aggrandize their families. At best they have been occupied with the policies of kingdoms and aiming at the glory of their country. Even Christians have been living with their heads and hands, and too much of their hearts, in the world. Few have lived wholly for Christ. Few have had a heart to say with strong emotions, I prosper if the kingdom of Christ prospers : if Christ is but glorified I am made for a long eternity. But I desire better things of you. I long that you may be more decidedly and entirely for Christ than any former generation. I long that you may be wholly for Christ.

Others go forth with plans for ease and self-aggrandizement, but I wish you to lay all your plans with a reference to the Redeemer's kingdom. I know this is an extensive and complicated interest, involving many things ; comprehending the empire of science, the order of society, the best forms of civil government, all the social relations, and innumerable secular employments. I wish you to be fully aware that the instrumentality which this kingdom demands, is not confined to the prayer meeting and the conference room. Still it is an instrumentality wholly estranged from selfishness. It is entirely distinct from an instrumentality which looks no further than the domestic circle,—which looks no further than the policies of an empire,—which traces human interests no further than the present life. I wish you to take an enlightened and comprehensive view of those innumerable and vastly diversified means which subserve the Messiah's kingdom,—which respect the support, the order, the illumination, the improvement, and the unnumbered relations of a world ; but I wish you not to rely on the proud inspirations of reason. I would have you guided in all your course by that glorious chart and blessed compass, the holy Bible. I would have you sit, as little children, at the feet of Jesus, and learn all your wisdom in that school. Under this guidance, and with these enlightened and expanded views, I would have you lay all your plans of business, of relaxation, of expenditure, and form all your connexions and habits, with supreme regard to the authority and glory of Christ. I would have you hold yourselves and all that you possess distinctly and sensibly devoted,—your powers of body and mind, your time, your influence, your property, and all your means and opportunities of doing and getting good ; so that no exertions shall be kept back from any shrinking of the flesh from self-denial ;—so that no contributions shall be withheld from any remaining love of filthy lucre. Consider it a privilege to wear out in the service of Christ, and the sweetest luxury to give of your substance to him. I would have your heart move and melt at the mention of his name, and your eyes fill with tears at every opportunity to do

any thing for him or to lay your treasures at his feet. I wish you to feel like that blessed man who, after the death of an only son, was heard to say, Would to God that I had an only son to give him every week. As to property, feel that it is not your own,—that you are only stewards,—and make him heartily welcome to his own as fast as he calls for it. Then you will easily discover the whole extent of your duty as to alms-giving. Let a man be brought to feel no more interest in retaining his property than he has to hold a little longer the money of another which he is employed to carry to a third person, and he will find no difficulty in ascertaining the extent of his duty in this respect. It is his selfish propensities which warp his judgment.

Most professing Christians of former ages have been contented to leave the world as they found it. Satisfied with doing it no harm, and shrinking from the toils and dangers of innovators, they have hugged their ease and gone down to the grave, leaving all the earth unenriched except six feet by three. Let other calculations possess your minds. Go forth with a firm determination that the world shall be the happier for your living in it, and let all the efforts of your lives be directed to change the posture of things for the better.

You have come upon the stage, beloved youth, at a time when Christendom is teeming with projects and institutions to meliorate the condition of man and to advance the kingdom of Christ. See that you give these institutions your firm and unwearied support. Fall in with the spirit of the age. Be not seen lagging behind when all the rest are in motion. Cast not yourselves a dead weight upon the world. This new spirit will make great advances during your day. If you keep up with the spirit of the age, before you die you will be as a flame of fire compared with the generation which is now retiring. It is a great privilege to have come upon the stage thirty-four years after this new era commenced. I had an opportunity to see the state of the world at the very commencement, and to look far and wide into the regions of death which had not then revived. The change is greater than you can con-

ceive. Rich indeed is your birthright. See that you sell it not like Esau.

You cannot withhold your hand from these great movements from any doubt whether they have come from God or are approved of God. The scene of the last thirty-four years exactly accords with the pictures drawn by the pencil of Isaiah. Open to any page of his prophecy, and you see the destruction of the enemy and the upbuilding of the Church put together as contemporaneous parts of one work. Take the following examples. "Thou hast made of a city a heap, of a defenced city a ruin.—For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress.—Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers as the heat in a dry place.—And it shall be said in that day, Lo this is our God, we have waited for him and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.—And Moab shall be trodden down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghill."(i) Again, "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.—For behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood and shall no more cover her slain."(j) Again, "In that day the Lord, with his sore and great and strong sword, shall punish Leviathan.—And—the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt."(k) Again, "The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man; he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war.—And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not."(l) Again, "I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh, and they shall be drunken with their own blood as with sweet wine."(m) Again, "The Lord shall comfort Zion.—For the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they

(i) Isai. xxv.

(j) Isai. xxvi.

(k) Isai. xxvii.

(l) Isai. xlii. 13, 16.

(m) Isai. xlix. 25, 26.

that dwell therein shall die in like manner; but my salvation shall be for ever.—Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head.”(n) Again, “Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dried garments from Bozrah?—I have trodden the wine-press alone:—for I will tread them in my anger and trample them in my fury.—For the day of vengeance is in my heart and the year of my redeemed is come.—I will mention the loving-kindnesses of the Lord and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us.”(o) Again, “A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompense to his enemies.—Rejoice ye with Jerusalem and be glad with her, all ye that love her.—For behold the Lord will come with fire and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury and his rebuke with flames of fire.—For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me,—so shall your seed and your name remain.—And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me.”(p)

Thus through all the book the prophet goes backwards and forwards from mercy to wrath and from wrath to mercy, as inseparable parts of one whole. He every where exhibits God as coming with mercy in one hand and the sword in the other, to build up Zion and to crush his enemies in one great campaign. And it is plain that these predictions ultimately relate to the day which is now opening on the world. This day manifestly began about the year 1792. That year the first missionary society in the modern continuous series was established at Kettering in England, and it has been rapidly followed by all those institutions of charity which now cover the whole Protestant world, and which have shot out their light to the heathen. That same year, or the year before, commenced, after a long interval of darkness, that succession of revivals of religion in America which has never been interrupted for a

single day to the present moment. And that very year the blood began to flow in Europe,—in those countries which had given “their power and strength unto the beast;” and it never ceased to flow like a torrent for more than twenty years: and after exhausted Europe has had time to raise up a new generation of soldiers, (and perhaps after even a longer interval,) it will flow again, with more or less interruption, until the Romish church shall become extinct and the Roman empire broken and changed.

This great system of benevolent exertion then, which commenced simultaneously with an unbroken series of revivals, and with the burst of wrath upon the man of sin, thirty-four years ago, *must* be from heaven,—*must* be according to the will of God,—*must* belong to the march of the Redeemer’s kingdom; as appears from its accordance with the voice of prophecy, and from its own holy spirit,—as appears from its manifest instrumentality, (attested by thirty-four years’ experience,) to advance genuine religion and human happiness. Attach yourselves then to this great system of benevolent effort. Put your hands to the work in earnest. Be among the foremost in all these operations. Wherever one of the sons of Williams, of 1826, shall stray, there let one be found on whom the friends of this new order of things may safely calculate for ready and efficient support.

This is the high and glorious course on which I anxiously invite you to enter: and now for the enforcing reasons.

You ought to be wholly for God because he made you what you are, and built the world you inhabit, and furnished it for your use, and placed you in it, and commanded you to serve him with all your heart and soul; and has preserved you every hour, and watched over you night and day, and fed and clothed you, that you might live and labour for him; and has never given you any right to work in the field of another for a single day, but has demanded your whole time, your whole heart, your most zealous and devoted service. You are not your own, you are the creatures of God. What right have you in this world if you will not serve the God who made it? This

(n) *Isai. li. 3, 6, 11.* (o) *Isai. lxxiii.*
(p) *Isai. lxxvi. 8, 10, 15, 22, 24.*

world belongs to him. He created and he sustains it all, and he never gave you a right to live in it to yourselves a single hour. What right have you then to walk his earth and breathe his air if you will not be entirely devoted to him? It is God that shines in the sun-beam and melts in the balmy air that circles your head. You see him, you hear him, you feel him in all things. This world is full of God. What do you here if you will not be wholly absorbed in his love and service?

You ought to be wholly for Christ because he died to redeem you from eternal fire and raise you to immortal happiness. O that you could feel as the blessed apostle felt when he said, "The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." O that you could feel as John in Patmos felt when he said, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." The man that said this was prepared to leave all he had on earth by the cross of Christ, and to go through the world proclaiming his Saviour's love and breasting every danger. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price." This world belongs to Christ. It was "created by him and for him." He has received it since by covenant and by purchase, and his charter covers it all. It was created, and it was purchased from destruction, to be the residence of his Church,—the abode of men strung up to a high instrumentality in the service of his kingdom. No other being has a right to erect an interest on this ground. What do you here in *this* world if ye will not serve the Lord's Anointed? if ye will not be wholly for him? Get you into some other world; this world belongs to Christ. But whither can you go beyond his empire? All worlds belong to Christ. There is no escape. You must come up to serve this King under whose empire you are constrained to live, with all your heart and soul.

You must devote your lives to the interests of his kingdom if you would most promote the happiness of men. All true happiness lies in this kingdom. Irrespectively of this, you may give bread to the hungry and do much for the order of society and the temporal prosperity of the world; but the *true* happiness of men you cannot advance further than you promote the kingdom of Christ.

You must be wholly devoted if you would wish for a life of comfort. A divided mind is an uneasy mind. Many people have just religion enough to make them wretched. A heart and life consecrated without reserve to Christ, would bring peace of conscience,—would bring that highest of all ingredients of happiness, the strong exercise of benevolent affections,—would bring the satisfaction of a delightful employment,—would bring that gratification of desire which is involved in success,—would crown all with ecstatic communion with God and with an assured hope of immortality. Give me this instead of crowns and kingdoms. Hanging thus under the empyreal arch, I could look down and pity kings.

God has done great things for you. His word and his Spirit have blessed you. His heavenly calls have assailed your ears in tones affecting to angels. Of some of you I can say, "Jesus sought" you "when a stranger wandering from the fold of God." When you were just entering the gates of hell, he threw his everlasting arms around you and caught you up to the throne of God; and while your companions are left to perish, he has put a title to heaven in your hands, and made you the children and heirs of God, and given you to own suns and stars. Surely if ingenuousness ever moved your hearts, his love must be your perpetual song. You will forget father and mother before you will forget him. Your heart, your soul, your time, your all, will be devoted to his service.

Some of you have consecrated yourselves to God by covenant. In that act you professed to devote to him all your powers, all your time, all your influence, all your property, all that you are and have. See that you keep back no "part of the price." Remember Ana-

nias and Sapphira. Their only crime lay in professing to devote all their property to God while they kept back a part. For this they were struck dead by a bolt from heaven, and held up as a warning to all future professors not to keep back any part of their powers or possessions or time or influence. Let the fate of Ananias and Sapphira ever stand before you when you are tempted to withhold your property from Christ or to live to yourselves for a single day.

You belong to that age, or are fast approaching that age, when men will be devoted to God as their fathers never were. There is to be a course of activity higher than ever was known since the days of the apostles. Different ages have their different characteristics. That which is now opening is to be an age of action, of energy, of enterprise, of devotedness, of generosity, of which, in their indolent and selfish repose, former generations had no conception. This is to be the character of the whole Christian Church, to a degree never approached since the days of Constantine. It will be the fashion and drift of society. The sordid wretch who lives to himself, however polished and clean in his exterior, will be marked and scouted as a swindler now is. With what disgust and surprise will such a generation look back on the contracted ages gone by, when those who were rolling in wealth could not spare enough to support the Gospel at home, and when for a thousand years scarcely a dollar was given for the salvation of the heathen. A new era will have commenced. New scenes will be opened. New intelligence will come in by every mail. New subjects of conversation will open,—new subjects for meditation and prayer. Blessed be the Lord that we did not live and die a century ago. Everlasting thanks to God that we have been suffered to live in such a day as this. To this heavenly spirit the world is fast waking up. If you would fall in

with the spirit of the age, set yourselves to great and manly action,—to entire devotedness,—to a high and glorious instrumentality in the kingdom of Christ.

Let no difficulties discourage you. If you go forth in the name of the Lord, what is too great for God to accomplish? What mountains will not a grain of faith remove? At the present day it is only to put your hand against a *world* in the name of the Lord, and it will move. All the counsels of God are on your side. All the strength of the universe is for you. Thus supported, what may not an individual accomplish, going forth, with his whole heart and soul, in the name of the Lord of hosts? How much did Howard accomplish amidst the prisons and dungeons of Europe? How much did Swartz accomplish? How much did Samuel John Mills? How much has Carey accomplished among the archives of Brahminical literature and the editions of the word of God? And I put it to you individually, what mighty changes in favour of human happiness and pure religion may, under God, be produced by the exertions of your single arm?

Educated men have it in their power to do much for Christ and their generation, and their fellow men require it of them; the Church of God requires it of them; the blood of Calvary requires it of them; the Lamb in the midst of his Father's throne requires it of them. Go forth, beloved youth, in the name of the Lord of hosts, and acquit yourselves like men. And may the richest blessings of heaven come upon you. May every comfort, consistent with this militant state, be yours. May you rest like the beam of the morning upon the hearts of your friends. May you leave a strong and benign impression on the world when you retire, and may I see you crowned. O may I see you crowned, and sit down with you on thrones prepared, and sing with you for ever the song of redeeming love. Amen and Amen.

SERMON LX.

THE DANGERS OF YOUTH

BACCALAUREATE FOR 1829.

PSALM cxlii. 3.—In the way wherein I walked, have they privily laid a snare for me.

THIS was the complaint of a young man,—of David under the persecutions of Saul, when he was in one of the caves of the wilderness. And it may, in another sense, be the complaint of every young man. Although there is not a Saul to persecute in every instance, and, through his emissaries, to spread snares privily for the feet, yet there are other enemies which lie in wait for youth and spread their secret snares through all the way. Many and special are the dangers which beset this period of life.

I see before me a class of young men about to go forth into the world. I know their way will be strewn with dangers. By all the love I bear them I am constrained to point out to them some of their perils. I cannot go into a full detail; I can only mark some general classifications. And when I have given this partial account of their dangers, love will constrain me to display, as I am able, the defences to be set up. These will constitute the two heads of my discourse.

I. The dangers of youth.

Among these I will mention,

1. A general exposedness to temptation. Full of passions easily excited, and warm as the current of their youthful blood; led on by an imagination as active as their youthful limbs and mostly unchecked by experience,—forming images which are constantly mistaken for realities,—which inflame and mislead the passions and bewilder the judgment; set down as strangers in the midst of a world whose objects and inhabitants present destructive blandishments to their inexperience,—whose beauties and amusements, in the absence of the love of God, are fatally adapted to their youthful tastes; how

can they escape? at least how dreadfully exposed are they.

2. Under all these exposures they are constantly forming habits, as uncontrollable and despotic as an eastern sultan, and harder to be dethroned. Through inexperience and incaution, and the impetuosity of their youthful passions, they are liable to become petrified in evil habits, as fixed as the coral reefs of the ocean.

This danger extends to their intellectual operations as well as to their moral feelings. They are exposed to form the habit of making up their judgments under the control of passions and prejudices and selfish interests. It is of infinite importance to fix the habit of subjecting the judgment to the empire of truth, free from all these impulses and biases.

This danger of forming biased judgments, will, under such a government as ours, be specially besetting in the department of politics. The whole, or nearly the whole, of that angry warfare which agitates our country at every election, and keeps up the bitterness of newspaper war through all the intervening period, may be traced to this cause. Were all the individual judgments of an enlightened community formed on the principles of candour, without any of these corrupt biases, what a peaceful and happy and prosperous and powerful republic might be reared.

Another part of this danger of habit in relation to the intellect, respects its cultivation. There is great danger that young men will become indolent in their intellectual labours, and form the habit of neglecting to study and neglecting to think,—neglecting both to advance in knowledge and to reason for themselves.

These dangers of habit, so far as the effects are regarded, relate as well to the depression of their own character for both worlds, and consequently to the loss of their souls, as to the perversion of their influence upon others, that is, the loss of a good influence and the confirmation of a bad one,—the bad consisting both in their example and in their impulsive agency. Every thing they do is likely to have an extensive influence on society,—how extensive no man can calculate. Educated men are sure to do much good or much harm. The loss of their good influence, as you take into view the wide connexion of events and an eternal duration, is a loss altogether incalculable; and the evil of their bad influence cannot be measured.

3. Young men, as they enter into business, are in danger of settling down into the love of the world, into views and aims confined to themselves and their own circle, separating them from the great republic of man, and keeping them from employing their powers and their property in promoting the happiness of the human family. This is annihilating them as citizens of the world, as benefactors of the race, and leaving them to manure a little farm.

4. Another danger to which young men are exposed is indolence in action; betaking themselves to no profession, or pursuing it saunteringly, unsteadily, and to little effect; wasting life in idleness, or worse than wasting it in pleasure; in either case enervating the man in both body and soul, and making him a burden to himself and a disgraceful cumberer of the ground,—in plain and palpable defiance of that book which says, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work nor device nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."

5. Young men are exposed to theological errors, of every form and every degree of criminality and danger, from the slightest obliquity respecting a positive institution, up to blaspheming infidelity. It is an age of bold and daring speculation, in which reason has ceased to be a learner in the school of Christ and has gone forth into the regions of discovery; in which reason has been exalted above the revelation of God and reared

on a throne of judgment to judge the Judge himself. The associations which bound men to the religion of their fathers, have been dissolved, together with the chains of political despotism; and men, loosed from all restraints, are rushing to the extremes of licentious liberty,—uniting civil freedom and independence with a bold independence of belief that tramples on the word of God, so often as that word presumes to contradict their preconceived opinions or to question the omniscience of their self-sufficient reason. Under these perils of the present day, our youth are dreadfully exposed to be swept by the torrent into the gulph of fathomless perdition.

These are some of the dangers; and now I am,

II. To point out the defences to be set up against them.

I. In regard to the last mentioned danger, my advice to you, young gentlemen, is, that you, first of all, settle your minds on the question whether the Bible is a revelation from God, and such a revelation as will guide believers into all truth unmingled with error; in other words, whether the inspiration which directed the sacred writers was plenary. This point ought to be settled according to the strictest laws of evidence. It does not shun investigation, but courts it. And in order that your faith may rest on the testimony of God and not on the authority of men, you ought to find the fullest evidence that God has spoken, and spoken in a way to furnish a safe and sure rule of faith and practice.

All this being settled in the affirmative, you ought to lose no time in grounding yourselves on a system of doctrines drawn from the obvious meaning of that book, supported by the general analogy of faith. When that book is proved in all its parts to be a revelation from God, whatever it teaches you are bound to believe, however opposed to your own preconceived opinions or to the stammering of blinded reason. Subject your reason to the divine teachings. Put it to school to Christ as an humble pupil.

Great mistakes are made here from not understanding the proper province of reason. It is not the province of reason to discover truths without evidence;

for instance, to discover, without information, what the king of England intends to do, or how many people there are in London, or whether it rained the last week at Canton. Reason can know nothing on these subjects without information. And for the same cause it is not the province of reason to discover the mode of the divine existence, or whether God will pardon sin, or on what conditions or in what way if at all. It is not the province of reason to originate knowledge on these points, but to listen to instruction, to weigh evidence, to compare thoughts and facts revealed, and to apply them to mould the heart and life. What a figure would the reason of a child make, if, instead of listening to instruction and comparing and combining the ideas taught, it should spurn at the information given and set up for a discoverer? Reason in its mature state has exactly the same province,—depending on information and taking the attitude of a learner, in all those cases where it cannot discover the truth independently. There are cases in which it can make discoveries, but they are perhaps limited to these two. First, where it has experience or analogy for its instructor, it can discover general truths, because it has access to those facts from which the general truths are deduced or analogically inferred. It is in this way that advances are made in the physical sciences, in the science of government, in the arts, and in every department of practical wisdom. Secondly, it can discover remote truths in mathematics by perceiving them to be clear inferences from truths already known, or results of numbers or dimensions compared or combined. To these sources of knowledge some have added what they have called the moral sense, which, as they describe it, may perhaps more properly be referred to instinct, or a sort of natural inspiration, than to reason. But how, on any principle of induction or analogy, or by any deduction from truths already known, or by any natural instinct, can the mode of God's existence, or his purpose concerning the pardon of sin, be discovered? How, any more than the modes and purposes of the emperor of China? These matters depend on intelligence received, and not on experience or analogy,—not on

induction or deduction or instinct. Of course it is not the business of reason in these cases to discover, but to learn. But proud man, no longer content to be a pupil, sets up for a discoverer, and arrogantly refuses to bow to the instructions of heaven, and to receive, implicitly and without a question, information from God himself.

Another mistake consists in assigning to reason too wide a field, and setting it to judge in matters too extensive for its ken, its experience, or its information. It can judge of what is right by analogical reasonings from God's word, or by synthetically applying to particular cases the general truths there revealed, or, (if any one wishes to add,) by applying the test of common sense to those things which God has plainly submitted to this trial. But when it undertakes to judge independently what sin deserves, and whether God was right in assigning to it an endless punishment, it exercises itself in matters too high for it. A child cannot determine what punishment an instance of civil rebellion deserves, because he cannot look through all the connexions of things in a great state and weigh the evils it produces, or the interests it assails, or what punishment the public safety requires. For him to complain that he is debarred the use of his reason because he is not allowed to give laws in such high concerns, would be indeed to show the waywardness and folly of a child. The same may be said of bold and independent judgments of what is right and what is wrong for God to do. A child cannot determine what is right and what is wrong for the commander of an army to do in conducting a battle, or even in the case of a desertion; and yet that child has reason in full exercise, though limited in its reaches and comprehensions by the limitation of his experience and knowledge. Every one can see that the office of reason in that child is not to decide on matters of such high import, but to take its lessons from intellects which have filled a wider sphere.

2. Avoid all kinds of professional business, and all occasions, which are specifically fraught with temptation.

3. Avoid all connexions with bad men; and, as far as possible, with men whose influence would tend to warp

you from the truth, or from a correct course of judging or of acting.

4. Vigilantly guard against the beginning of every evil habit, in heart, intellect, or conduct. By watchfulness it is easy to prevent the first irregularity; but who can vanquish an evil habit? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil." You may defend the Thermopylæ by which the enemy would penetrate into your country; but when he has once entered and taken possession of all the strong holds, who shall dislodge him? Paley says that some things ought to be done if for no other purpose than to preserve good habits. The preservation of these is a matter of incalculable importance; and the first step towards the breaking up of a good habit and the contracting of an evil one, should be guarded against with the most vigilant care.

5. Let your reading be safe. Not many novels, not a perpetual round of angry politics, not a constant poring upon theological errors. On the subject of religion, there are men who read little else than controversial writings, and always on that side which supports their preconceived opinions against the truth. This is a fatal course, and betrays a determined hatred of the light, and a resolute purpose to take shelter in impenetrable darkness. When the errors thus defended are cardinal, there is little chance that the miserable man will ever attain to salvation.

6. Let it be a settled rule to make some advance in knowledge every day, and every day to bring to pass something for the good of mankind. To do both of these is a duty in itself, and the rule would be a powerful guard against the beginning of evil habits.

7. Establish the settled habit of prayer. Without prayer you have no security against one of these dangers. Without Christ you can do nothing. Without assistance from above you never will prevail against one temptation or one bad habit: and without prayer you cannot expect assistance from above. And then your obligations to God for all his mercies,—to God in whom you "live and move and have" your "being." To live without pray-

er,—without thinking of him on whom you are so dependent,—whose operations fill the world,—who sustains heaven and earth and all their motions; to turn him out of the world which he has made, and to fill it with your thousand idols;—how ungrateful, how awfully wicked, how desperately hazardous. To think of breaking through and being happy without asking leave of God, when he commands every agent and every operation of nature,—how daring, how insane. Yet all this does the man who casts off fear and restrains prayer.

These rules you will find it hard to keep with a fallen nature, and impossible unless you observe another; which leads me to say,

8. That in the outset you must devote your hearts and souls and lives to the service of God. Without doing this you will not pray effectually, and of course will have no security against one of these dangers. Without this you will be the enemies of God: and what security against any evil can an enemy of God have in a world which he governs? What security against the deepest evils in a world which the Son of God, for their redemption, bathed in his blood, and whose blood they are constantly trampling under foot? O my dear friends, you are under the greatest obligations to devote your hearts and souls and lives to the service of God. He is your Creator: he made you what you are and owns you altogether. He is your Preserver: he sustains you and every fibre of your frame and every faculty of your immortal soul, by his own deliberate purpose and by his own almighty power, continually. All the operations of nature around you, by which the world is filled with beauty and with bounty and with song, are nothing but the constant action of his goodness. No other eye watches over you when you sleep; no other arm bears you about by day; no other breast nourishes you and pillows your aching head. No other being "so loved the world" as to give "his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." No other being is so holy and just, or administers so right and so kind a government. In the service of no

other being could you be so happy. No other frown is so terrible to enemies. He sent you into his world for no other purpose than to serve him. He supports you here for no other end. He watches you every moment to see whether you are faithful, or whether you have forgotten your errand into the world. And the time is rapidly approaching when you must give an account. O beloved youth, I expect to meet you at that awful bar, to hear your answers, and to give an account myself, respecting the four years we have been together. Those years are now with the years beyond the flood. The account is sealed up to the judgment of the great day. The seal will never be broken till that tremendous morning. And when the whole page is opened, how will the four years appear? This is for you to think of, young gentlemen, when far away. You will go forth into the world, but the time for you to die will come. It will steal upon you before you are aware. Life now looks to you like a little eternity; but should you even live to three-score years and ten, that period will soon arrive; and then the whole will appear to you "as a dream when one awaketh." But the greater part of you will never reach

that age. Some of you will probably die young. Even now I see not all your number present. One is missing from his place. Can any monitor tell me where is Williams? Where is Williams,—the young, the amiable, and, I trust, the good? Where are the promises he held out on earth? But the promising flower, I hope, has been transplanted into a better soil, to bloom and to shed its fragrance in the paradise of God. I seem to hear a voice from the tomb, entreating his classmates to be also ready. You will die far apart from each other and from me. But wherever you go or whenever you die, my best wishes attend you. My own head, I hope, will first be laid. But if it be otherwise, my wishes and my prayers will accompany you to the end, and will follow you to a dying bed. Go and bless the world in your passage through it. Go and gather around you all the blessings which God bestows on his favourite sons. Go and die in peace. And if we are permitted to meet in heaven, it will not be for four years, and then the parting tear. It will not be for four millions of years. It will be a union of soul as enduring as the union of the Sacred Three. Till then, my dear young friends, farewell.

FORM OF SELF-EXAMINATION.

I. God. In my love to God am I affected with mere kindness without a moral character? or do I love that holiness which seeks to bottom the happiness of the universe upon holy order? which requires me to love him better than myself? which hates sin as the disturber of the public order and happiness? which hates and forbids my sins? And do I love that justice, (another name for universal rectitude,) which respects the rights of all beings, and in defence of the rights of the universe punishes sin? Do I rejoice that such a God reigns? Do I love to lie at his feet and look up from the dust and see him

on the throne? In the most trying scenes do I submit to him? Am I glad that all my interests and circumstances are at his disposal? Do I depend on him for all things? Can I trust him for all that I need for time and eternity? Is it my supreme desire to see him known and honoured as God? Is it my sincere wish and purpose to serve him all my days? to promote the benevolent interests of his kingdom? to recommend him to all? Do I love to be in his presence and commune with him in prayer? Is it because he is there that I wish to be in heaven? Am I thankful to him for my rational existence, my unnumbered com-

forts, and my immortal hopes? For love like this do I feel incapable of making any returns, and put myself down for an everlasting bankrupt? Is it a joy to reflect that God will be his own reward,—all that reward to himself that he ever expected or desired? that he is infinitely happy in gratified benevolence?

II. LAW. Do I love the divine law? Does it appear glorious that God forbids all selfishness, pride, and idolatrous attachment to the creature, and requires men to love him with all the heart and their neighbour as themselves? Does it appear glorious that he has taken such strong measures to render this lovely and harmonizing temper universal, by promising to reward it with endless joys, and threatening the opposite with eternal death? Do the threatenings, and the execution of them, appear just? Does this blessed law, proceeding from the heart of God as a stream from the fountain, show him to me full of the very love which the law requires?

III. SIN. Have I the deepest sense of sin when I have the clearest views of God? Do I hate sin? and chiefly because it is against him? Do I long to be delivered from it, more than from any other evil? Do I pant after universal holiness with groanings which cannot be uttered? and that, not so much for the reward, as because it is right and agreeable to the will of God? Are the remains of indwelling sin my greatest grief and burden? Do I realizingly feel that I deserve eternal death? Do I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes? Do I *love* to repent? Is it a luxury to lie low in the dust at the feet of God and mourn for sin? Am I generally the happiest when I feel the most unworthy? Did I ever see myself to be utterly undone; unable to induce God to change my heart or pardon my sins, and too desperately wicked to think a good thought of myself? and did I then cast myself helpless and dead upon his *self-moving* power and mercy? Did I see my perishing need of a Saviour, through whom alone that power and mercy could be exercised?

IV. CHRIST. Does it appear to me a *reality* that Christ died for sinners, to answer the end of their punishment? Do I fully credit the oath by which God constituted his Son the High Priest of

the world, and engaged to accept his sacrifice and intercession for sinners? Do I realize the sincerity of the invitation and promise as extended to me, and that God will certainly receive me for Christ's sake if I go to him aright? Does the whole Bible appear more true and more precious than it once did? Do I find that a view of my own vileness and of the awful purity of God is necessary to give me a sense of that glorious High Priest? And does a view of that glorious High Priest, so necessary for my acceptance with God, make me feel that I am polluted and vile? Do I really depend upon his death as the ground of my pardon? Do I hope to receive all positive good as his reward? Do I cast myself upon his intercession? Do I see that, vile as I am, I may go to God through him? Do I see him to be a medium through which a whole world may come? and do I long that all should see him as he is and should go to God by him? Does this way of salvation appear glorious, as supporting all the holy principles of the law, disclosing the wonderful perfections of God, and saving a guilty world? Is it my hearty wish to be saved in no other way? Is Christ precious to my soul; the chief among ten thousands and altogether lovely? Do I esteem all things but dross in comparison with the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord? Does that cross crucify me to sin and the world? Do I feel myself not my own but bought with a price? and have I heartily consecrated all that I am and have to the service of my Redeemer? Have I not kept back a part? Are my powers, my time, my influence, my property, my friends, all devoted, and held ready to be employed or resigned as fast as he shall call? Am I willing to deny myself and even to die for his name's sake? Do I long to see his kingdom advanced, more than any other interest? And when I see it do I rejoice more than in great riches? Is it ravishing to see the Lamb in the midst of his Father's throne, extolled and honoured by all heaven? Do I long to be there, casting my crown at his feet, and ascribing to him all the glory of my salvation? Will that constitute the sweetest part of my heaven?

V. OBEDIENCE. Do I habitually obey

all God's commands? Is there no single sin that I habitually indulge? Is there no single neglect that I habitually allow? Do I select and pursue my business, and regulate my expenses, and conduct my intercourse with society, from a sacred regard to the divine authority? Do I act with a sensible reference to this from hour to hour? Do I habitually know what it is to be moved to action by the love of God, and to draw from him all my motives to active service and holy living? Does my religion reduce my selfishness, pride, and love of the world, and make me more and more disinterested, humble, dead to the world, and devoted to God?

VI. MY NEIGHBOUR. Is there a human being on the face of the earth whom I would harm? at whose calamity I would rejoice? to whom I do not

wish well? whom I would not befriend if in my power? Take my rival in business or honour,—my greatest enemy; and am I hurt at any assault upon his feelings or good name? In my temper and conduct do I render to him what I might reasonably wish him to render to me? Do I feel more benevolently than I once did towards all mankind? Do I make conscience of doing them daily all the good in my power? Do I daily deny myself for others in little things? Do I conscientiously discharge my *relative* duties? Am I charitable to the poor to the extent of my means? Am I concerned for the spiritual interests of those around me? and do I show it in my prayers and in my faithful dealings with them? Have I a special delight in the character and company of Christians?

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