

Estados

S E R M O N S ,

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AND

AN ESSAY ON THE PENTATEUCH.

x 25cp

BY ROBERT MEANS, A. M.

OF FAIRFIELD DISTRICT, S. C.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

AND

A SERMON OCCASIONED BY HIS DEATH,

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INTRODUCTION.

IN introducing these writings of a departed brother in the ministry to the notice of the public, the editor feels that he is called upon to say but little. Where the author of the Sermons and Essay were known familiarly, they will need no introduction to insure a favorable reception; and where he was less known, they will of themselves win for him the reader's respect. While it is believed that they have an intrinsic merit which will repay any one who shall peruse them, it is more especially for the region in which he labored that they are given to the world. They are a pleasing memorial to his many surviving friends, of one whom they loved and honored. Though his head is now low, and his voice silent in death, he may speak to them through these pages as affectionately and impressively as when among them. They will be read with profit by those who were the attendants upon his ministry; and from them all may learn their duty towards God, and derive important instruction respecting his word.

Born to the possession of wealth, and educated for the legal profession, our departed brother early renounced the honors of the world which lay before him, that he might preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, which he had chosen as his guide, and had found a consolation to his heart. Though his name never travelled far beyond the bounds of his native State, he deserved to be extensively known; for wherever the qualities of his mind and heart were appreciated, they gained for him respect and strong attachment.

For a narrative of his life, the reader is referred to the Sermon at the close of this volume.

Mr. Means died on the 17th of January, 1836, at the early age of thirty-nine years, after a confinement to his chamber of only a few days. That religion which he had early chosen as his portion, and which he had spent his life in recommending to others, sustained him in view of approaching dissolution, and the expressions of resignation and trust in God, which he uttered as his end approached, will be remembered long by the several branches of the numerous and affectionate family who crowded around his dying bed, and, while he remained on earth, looked to him as their counsellor and example.

The author of the Sermons and Essay which are now presented to the reader, was tall and commanding in person, dignified and polished in manners, an object of attraction to the stranger, and of admiration to those who stood to him in the relation of kindred, or were included in the circle of friends. His voice was melodious, the expression of his countenance in conversation animated, his manner kind and amiable, his knowledge in the walks of literature extensive, his interest in the topics which have agitated the public mind

deep, his love of his native State pure and fervent. The writer of these lines is not alone in the estimation he has formed of the character of Mr. Means.

The following letter, written by the Hon. Mr. Preston to Dr. David Means on hearing of his brother's death, shows the manner in which he was esteemed by that distinguished senator.

“I am sure I need not tell you how deeply I sympathize, or rather, participate with you in this heavy affliction with which it has pleased Providence to visit us. As no one possessed more qualities to attract esteem and affection, so no one was the centre of a more devoted circle than that which now deplores the loss of our friend and brother. With so cultivated an understanding, with so pure a heart, with such exalted piety, and such generous devotion to wise and benevolent purposes, there is something that strikes the mind as mysterious in the fact as well as in the manner of his death. It adds at once to our grief and to our consolation that he met his death with more composure than we can contemplate it. His perfect fitness for life made him ready for death. That which makes us mourn the more, made him the more resigned; and I hear that he approached his end with that quiet and confiding acquiescence in the decrees of Providence, which his precepts and example through life had taught to others. I have not known a man who united in so eminent a degree, the highest qualities of a gentleman and a Christian; in whose life and conversation there was such a uniform beauty, or whose amiable character resulted so much more from the presence of virtues, than the absence of faults. The generous impulses of his heart had prompted him to cultivate his mind as a duty, and his cul-

tivated mind had regulated, refined, and exalted the impulses of his heart, and this blending of his moral and intellectual being, made him a man to be loved and venerated. I hope that my long and tender friendship for him, entitle me to mingle my griefs with those of his family."

Mr. Means's mind was not characterized by brilliancy so much as by strength and independence. His favorite studies are said, by those best acquainted with his pursuits, to have been mathematics and metaphysics. His taste was correct and chastened. The Sermons which occupy this volume will show to the reader the marks of correct sense, expressed in an easy and harmonious style. As specimens of composition, those of them which were the most carefully written, are entitled to praise for purity, clearness and succinctness, as well as for their moral excellence. The Essay on the Pentateuch, as the prefatory article prefixed to it informs us, was written in answer to the pamphlet of Dr. Cooper on the same subject. The Geological theory adopted by this gentleman, then the president of South Carolina college, is irreconcilable with the commonly received interpretation of the Mosaic Cosmogony. Dr. Cooper proceeded, therefore, as many others who did not believe in the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures have done before him, to disprove the genuineness of the Pentateuch as a writing of Moses.

Mr. Means, by his Essay in answer to Dr. Cooper, performed a service acceptable to the Christian public : and he received from several individuals entitled to great respect, their thanks for the service thus rendered to the cause of revelation.* The Essay is commended to the perusal of all

* Among others, from bishop Bowen of Charleston, who, in a letter to Mr. Means, acknowledged his obligations for the satisfaction the Essay in question had afforded him.

interested in such inquiries, and of all who would be prepared to meet the objections of infidels. It will be found preceded in the present volume by an historical account of the controversy on the Pentateuch, from its commencement to the present time, which has been drawn up by the editor.

Some of the Sermons in this volume were selected more for the subjects of which they treat, than for any unusual marks of care apparent in their composition. The whole are believed to afford a fair specimen of the author's ordinary style of preaching. That they may tend to perpetuate his memory in the recollections of the wise and good, and may afford instruction and consolation by the truths they teach, now that the voice which gave them utterance is silent in death, is the desire and prayer of the editor. Their amiable author passed away from his earthly labors in the midst of his days, when apparently the field of effort and the sphere of usefulness were widening around him. His entrance upon the stage of life was early, his part was soon performed, and early and mournful was his exit. He has passed, we believe, to the realms of peace, and a re-union with those pious friends who went before him has already taken place. Let us all work while it is called to-day. Let us show by our deeds that we regard heaven as the only place of rest. Soon, we too, if found faithful, shall hear a voice saying, "Come up hither." May we then 'ascend up to heaven in a cloud, and our enemies behold' our escape from sin and death with unavailing regret.

THEOL. SEM. COLUMBIA, }
September, 1836. }

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SERMONS.



S E R M O N S .

S E R M O N I .

THE TRIAL OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH.

GENESIS xxii. 2.

And He said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

THE history of which these words form a part, is, in all respects, one of the most remarkable portions of the sacred volume. The persons interested—the command given—the result in which it issued, all deserve attention.

In order to understand this passage, it will be necessary to turn our attention to the previous incidents in the life of the remarkable man to whom it was addressed. No one of their ancestors commanded, in so high a degree, the veneration of

the Jewish race, as did the patriarch Abraham. In him, that strong distinction which separated them from the residue of human kind, had its origin. On him, were first bestowed the peculiar privileges in which they excelled. Nor has the reverence and admiration with which he is contemplated, been confined to his own descendants. It is also felt by Christians, who recognize in him one whom the Almighty honored—who was a high example of human virtue, and who was called the friend of God and father of the faithful. In obedience to the divine command, he had left his native country in order that he might dwell as a stranger in a land which should nevertheless become the inheritance of his children. Such was the promise of God, and with it was connected the assurance that an exceedingly numerous posterity should descend from him. Nor was the gratification derived from this hope all that he possessed. His seed was not only to become as the stars of heaven for multitude, but in them all the families of the earth should be blessed. The appointed and glorious Deliverer of human kind was to arise among them.

The deferred accomplishment of the promise might have produced distrust in one less confident of the divine faithfulness. The constancy of his faith was rewarded in the birth of Isaac ; and near seventeen years had passed since that event to the period at which we have taken up his history.

The child of promise was growing up to manhood. Every thing combined to endear him to a father's heart, and hopes long and fondly cherished were in the progress of their fulfilment, when the singular and awful command was given by Jehovah, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there as a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of."

It is intended, on the present occasion, to make some observations on the narrative to which this passage has relation.

It appears, then, that in the early ages of the world, direct communications had often taken place between God and men. These had been frequently enjoyed by Abraham himself. While in Ur of the Chaldees, before he dwelt in Haran, he had been commanded by the Almighty to separate himself from his friends and his kindred, and go into a land which should be shown to him. This command had been repeated in Haran. Afterwards, when he had entered Canaan, God appeared to him in the plain of Moreh and promised to him the land in which he then was. Subsequently to this, the word of Jehovah came to him in a vision to assure him of a numerous posterity. And again, previously to the birth of Isaac, the Lord appeared to Abraham and said, I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect, and I will make my

covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And finally, we note the divine communication made to this distinguished man, which is contained in the text.

The inquiry may be here proposed, Why is it, that under the present dispensation of things, we do not observe such intercourse existing between God and any of his creatures. It will not be difficult to find a reason for this, in the fact that men in the early ages of the world and at the present period are very differently situated. Now, we have a written communication from heaven, fully teaching us what God is, and what he requires of us. Then, no such thing existed. The first parents of the human race had been favored with certain manifestations of their Creator. Among their immediate descendants, the knowledge of God existed by means of oral tradition; and when, under peculiar circumstances, they needed encouragement, or were required to perform some special duty, Jehovah, in some manner, revealed himself to individuals.

Let us proceed to form an estimate of the conduct of Abraham in the trying situation in which he was now placed. He obeyed the divine command, and, leaving his residence in the southern part of Canaan, went three days' journey to the place which had been pointed out to him. There, leaving his attendants, accompanied by his son,

he proceeded to perform the awful task assigned him, when he was arrested by a divine command. His obedience was proved, but the consolation of his age, and the ground of his hope for distant generations was spared to him.

It has been alleged, that the patriarch's conduct was unlawful, and that the narrative of it violates nature and probability. But, surely, if the matter be rightly considered, the first allegation cannot be supported. He acts virtuously and lawfully who acts consistently with the will of God : for this is the sole measure of virtue. There are certain ordinary means by which a knowledge of this will is attainable. One of these is conscience, which is an inward judgment concerning actions as right or wrong. Another is the revelation which God has made of himself in sacred Scripture. Besides these, we may suppose the Almighty to give some intimation of his will to a particular individual. And in this case, it might become the duty of that individual to do what under other circumstances it would be criminal to attempt. Thus was it with Abraham. To take away the life of any human being is, abstractedly considered, an evil, and much more so to deprive of life one who has extraordinary claims upon our regard. But this act ceases to be criminal under certain circumstances. In lawful warfare, or in conformity with the decisions of public justice, death may be inflicted, and the

instrument of its infliction does not receive our condemnation. And much farther shall we be from censuring, when a distinct and special command of God has sanctioned the act. Now the question is, Was the divine will thus intimated to Abraham? There is no doubt but that such was his impression—the record which we have of his conduct is a proof that it flowed from such a belief. But should he have acted under the influence of this persuasion? Should he not have distrusted his senses? Was there not reason to apprehend some diabolical illusion which impelled him to so terrible a deed? These are questions which have been urged. In replying to them, I would observe in general, that the patriarch must have been thoroughly convinced of the reality of the message which he supposed himself to have received. It required the performance of an act from which every feeling of his soul revolted, and which carried with it destruction to his dearest hopes. He was ordered to sacrifice his son—his only and beloved son. And say, ye who know what are a father's feelings toward his child, would he have lightly performed such an act? Remember the emotions with which ye have hung over the sick or dying bed of your offspring, and regarded the wasting progress of disease, and anticipated the moment when what was once blooming and beautiful, full of interest and affection, should become pallid, and cold, and uncon-

scious, and an object which ye would fain have removed from your sight. Think of this and believe that Abraham was not deluded by some passing impression upon the mind, but acted under the true and perfect persuasion that God, from whom all blessings flow, had now required this severe proof of obedience.

Many communications had been made to this favored servant of Jehovah; in none of them had he been deceived. He had doubtless become able correctly to discriminate between a divine command and the dictate of a phrensied imagination, or of deluded senses.

We are the more assured of this fact in the present instance, because the thing enjoined was not to be done at once—ere an enthusiastic persuasion of duty could have time to wear away; but before its performance, three days were to intervene and a considerable journey to be accomplished. During this time and with so awful a scene before him, it is not to be doubted that he would scrupulously examine into the obligation which impelled him to enter upon it.

But admitting that the conduct of Abraham was not unlawful, acting as he did under the authority of a divine injunction; still the objection recurs, that the narrative before us is unnatural, and therefore improbable. It is not to be believed, say some, that a father so affectionate as the patriarch is repre-

sented to be, could, under any circumstances, take away the life of his child. The objection has its origin in an ignorance of the capabilities of the human heart when influenced by a sense of duty, even though it should be a mistaken one. We might be satisfied of its futility, by a reference to facts recorded in profane history. If a virtuous man and affectionate father could doom to death children who had designed to subvert their country's liberties—if such an one could sacrifice a son to a high sense of the duty of military subordination—much more might Abraham have gone so far in opposition to his natural feelings, when he had received a special command from God, whom he knew to be at once just and merciful. But we have no occasion to dwell upon this consideration. There is an observation of St. Paul which places the conduct of the patriarch in a just light. It occurs in the Epistle to the Hebrews, xi. 17—19. “By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only-begotten son, of whom it was said, ‘That in Isaac shall thy seed be called;’ accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead.”

It was this thought which fortified Abraham's heart in the extremity of his sorrow. God had promised, that in Isaac he should possess a numerous posterity. This was yet unfulfilled to any extent; and the command which was given, seemed to cut

off all hope of its accomplishment. Still he hesitated not to obey. He had faith in God. He knew that the divine precept and promise must be consistent, and he believed that rather than the latter should fail, God would raise up his son from the dead. Supported by this high confidence, he was enabled to perform a duty, to which the feelings of human nature would, in many instances, afford an insuperable obstacle.

But it has also been objected, that the conduct which is here ascribed to the Almighty, is inconsistent with the perfections which we suppose to belong to him. We cannot perceive the validity of this objection. Certainly, all creatures belong to God:—for sufficient reasons he may require of them self immolation, or the sacrifice of those who are dearest to them. These reasons we can only apprehend so far as he reveals them, and then they can be but imperfectly appreciated by us. In the present instance, however, we need experience no difficulty. God never intended to have Isaac sacrificed. His command was given to prove the faith and obedience of Abraham—not for the satisfaction of the divine mind, for in that there was no ignorance of what would be the result; but in order that he might become an example to all ages, of unwavering faith and unhesitating obedience.

The remarks which have on the present occasion been offered, are designed to place in a proper light

an important and interesting portion of sacred writ. But we are not to rest here :—" All Scripture is profitable for our instruction in righteousness."—" Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning,"—and all things which happened to saints of old are examples to us, and are recorded for our admonition.

From a view of the transaction which we have been considering, we may learn the nature and efficacy of that faith for which Abraham was so celebrated, and which is urgently enjoined upon ourselves.

" Faith is a reliance upon the testimony, and a confidence in the goodness and justice of God." In other words, it is such a reliance of soul upon God, that we yield unhesitating credence to all he says, and believe that he is righteous and merciful in all that he commands.

This statement is supported by the history before us. Abraham trusted the divine promise when the only means of its accomplishment seemed about to be frustrated. He was confident that God acted with propriety even when he gave a command the nature of which was appalling—and the reasons of which he could not conceive. The consequences were happy. He who proved himself willing to give up his most cherished comfort, was relieved from the painful necessity of doing so. The singular favor with which he had been regarded by the Almighty

was continued to him. In a word, Abraham believed in God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.

Let us, then, brethren and friends, imitate this illustrious example of faith and obedience. To us God has made various communications in his written word. He has promised to us the spiritual blessings which the patriarch inherited, and which are in reserve for all who love God. Shall we not believe this promise? What, although these blessings exist in another world, and our eyes see them not, and the path which leads to them lies through the gloomy vale of death? Have we not the testimony of God concerning them? Did not Abraham, in reliance upon the divine command, leave his own country, not knowing whither he went? And shall not we regard the injunction which bids us seek the kingdom of heaven? Let us not, through unbelief, forfeit our portion in that kingdom. If we do, another and far different portion awaits us. With the unbelieving, we shall die without hope, and share with them eternal condemnation.

Let us, in fine, imitate the obedience as well as the faith of Abraham. Our trials are not comparable to his. God does not require from us the awful instance of devotion which we have been considering to-day. But he requires us to renounce all sin, to fear and worship him, to believe in his Son and trust on him:—and without enjoining it upon us to be instrumental in the destruction of our own

comforts, when those comforts are taken away, he expects that, with acknowledgment of his righteousness, we should submit to his will.

Are not these requisitions reasonable? In living to the glory of God, we secure the highest enjoyment. In believing on the Saviour, we obtain exemption from future wretchedness, and receive a title to eternal life. Let us, then, be stirred up by the contemplation of those worthies, who, having died in faith, now inherit the promises :—imitating their conduct, we shall attain their blessedness, and finally be admitted to that glorious assembly, where we shall see “ God the judge of all, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and the spirits of the just made perfect.”

SERMON II.

ON RESTING IN EARTHLY GOOD.

JOB xxix. 18.

Then I said, I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand.

THE chapter from which this passage is taken, contains a beautiful and striking representation of great worldly prosperity, associated with a high degree of moral excellence. Toward Job the favor of the Almighty had been remarkably displayed. He was blest with inward peace and joy, and he was enriched with many outward possessions. With these, were connected other distinctions the most gratifying to the human mind; the reverence of the young, the esteem of the aged, the respect of nobles and princes; and what was most delightful of all, the blessing of those who were ready to

perish, upon him who had delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him ; who had caused the widow's heart to sing for joy, who had been eyes to the blind and feet to the lame.

Of a condition thus distinguished by the favor of God, the practice of virtue and piety and the veneration of men, it would not seem unreasonable to say that it would be stable ; at all events, as much so as any thing belonging to earth. Accordingly, he who enjoyed such prosperity was lulled into a feeling of security. He said, "I shall die in my nest, I shall multiply my days as the sand." The hope was delusive, the confidence was destroyed. Adversity assailed him in his possessions, in his family, in his own person. He became poor, was bereaved of all his children, was subjected to a disease loathsome and intolerable. Nor was he allowed to cherish the confidence that God was still his friend, notwithstanding the darkness of his dispensations. There were those around him, who, mistaking the intention of those dispensations, harassed him with accusations of wickedness and admonitions to repent.

We can well conceive how intense, under these circumstances, must have been his sufferings ; and, in contrasting them with his former condition, we have a most affecting example of the vicissitudes to which human beings are liable in the present

life. There are instances where the fall has been from a greater height, in a more extraordinary manner, and to a greater and more irrecoverable depth; and, when we call to our remembrance *one*, who, rising from an humble condition, attained to an eminence unsurpassed by man, and menaced with subjugation the whole civilized world—and when we observe him almost in an hour hurled from that eminence, exchanging an empire for a barren isle in a distant ocean, uncontrolled authority for a captivity to be alone terminated by death,—when such things pass under our view or occur to our recollection, we are amazed—we have proof undeniable, that the extremes of prosperity and adversity are oftentimes most suddenly exchanged. But such examples as these are not so useful or affecting to us as those occurring under the ordinary circumstances of human society. One of the former is presented perhaps in an age, and affords a solemn memento to monarchs, and heroes, and conquerors. The latter are continually brought under view; they exist in conformity with the general destiny of the human race. To the mournful reverse we are contemplating, ourselves are exposed. The secondary causes inducing it are always ready, and God may at any time bring them into operation. Were we, therefore, to learn wisdom from the experience of others, or were we to derive a lesson from our own, we should be convinced that human

happiness is continually liable to decay and destruction, that we should not therefore rely upon its permanence.

Yet, are views very different from this cherished by us, and every man is inclined to indulge in the confidence expressed by Job—"I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand." A disposition to take up our rest, to receive our portion in this life, may be stated as an universal characteristic of our race. And here the inquiry is presented, Why is it thus? Since this world is a state of imperfect knowledge, goodness, and happiness, and the world to come exhibits a great enlargement of these; and since the one exists but for a time, the other throughout eternity, it would seem strange that men should cling to the former, and regard the entrance upon the latter as a subject of dread. And yet, that this should be the fact with respect to the irreligious man, furnishes in reality no occasion of surprise. In this life only he has hope; beyond it, is to him a region of darkness. It may be, that he shall have no existence beyond the grave. It is certain, that he has no reasonable ground upon which to rest the expectation of renewed and increased happiness. The belief of immortality is alone supported by considerations which excite in his breast the most painful apprehensions of evil. No wonder, then, that all his thoughts, all his affections, all his hopes,

are conversant with temporal things. It is proper that he should cherish the only happiness which he enjoys or hopes for. It is natural that he should endeavor to keep out of view, that he should earnestly deprecate an event which may turn all his joy into the bitterest sorrow.

But why should the Christian be wedded to earth and its enjoyments? Why should he wish a prolonged life, when there is laid up for him an inestimable treasure in the heavens; when the happiness which awaits him exceeds what eye hath seen or mind conceived? Ought he not rather to pray for deliverance from this world's bondage? Ought not the hour which terminates his earthly career, to be regarded as the period when the accomplishment of our hopes shall take place? It would be thus, were it not that his views of the future life are imperfect; that his faith often needs confirmation and increase. It was the exclusive privilege of the great Apostle of the Gentiles to be translated into the third heaven; to hear words unutterable, and to behold things indescribable. *Our* knowledge of futurity is not derived from sight, but *faith*; and this may be weak or strong in different Christians. At different times it may vary in strength in the same individual. Now, although the faith of the weakest Christian, concerning the realities of another world, is sufficiently strong to enable him to have an habitual reference to them, and to

influence him to work out his salvation, yet it is not so clear as to produce in his mind an abiding conviction, that to depart and be with Christ is far better than to dwell in a world where sin and sorrow are ever assailing us. There are periods when Christians do experience this conviction; when the mind's eye is intensely fixed upon things not visible to the bodily organ; when there is an abstraction from earthly concerns; when sin, and vanity, and sorrow are forgotten or remembered only to be exhibited in strong contrast to all that is opposite to them; when the period is anticipated at which God shall wipe away all their tears, relieve them from all spiritual as well as natural evil, and receive them into a state of glory and happiness which shall never end. Such are the scenes upon which the Christian's mind sometimes dwells with an intensity of meditation, which subdues in him the too strong love of life, and which nourishes the earnest desire of immortality. Such cannot, however, under ordinary circumstances, be his uniform or even habitual frame of mind. At other times, although there should be no diminution of religious zeal or pious feeling, there will be an obscuration of the views which faith had presented; and in consequence, the want of that entire willingness of which we have spoken, to encounter the closing scene of life.

But in addition to the reasons derived from the

obscurity of faith, there are others which induce a wish to be established in our present possessions. A certain portion of good is allotted to us in life. It is natural for us to employ it in such a manner as will most minister to our gratification. But to enjoy felicity in its highest degree, there must be no reference to its interruption or termination. The occurrence of such an idea will inflict positive pain, or, at all events, diminish our pleasure. For this cause, although we may have a higher happiness in prospect, we had rather repose ourselves in the confidence of possessing a present inferior good, which we hope is to be permanent. We are the more prone to do this, inasmuch as the heavenly inheritance is not to be obtained without previously encountering many and serious calamities, and without the intervention of the gloomy period of death. The man destitute of earthly comfort and harassed by the ills of life, who has hope of a happy immortality, may long indeed for the ending of his probation here. But those who are at ease in their possessions, even although the inheritance of heaven may be theirs, have their aspirations after its enjoyment checked by the consideration of the thick darkness which must precede the revelation of eternal day.

These are some of the reasons why men, religious as well as irreligious, are generally disposed to take up their rest in this life, and to indulge the hope



that their days shall be multiplied as the sand. But how unwise is this conduct; how fallacious this hope, must be exceedingly obvious to every reflecting mind. What is daily occurring in the world should afford us instruction on this subject. We may visit the mansion of joy and behold shining faces indicating hearts free from care and full of pleasure. The circle of friendship is complete. Each is happy in rendering others so. In the consciousness of present happiness, any change of condition is unthought of. And yet how many thousand occurrences are there which may reverse all these appearances. An hour may suffice to bring on gloom, and sorrow, and the withering of all their hopes.

We may behold an individual confident of life, exulting in worldly distinctions, abounding in wealth, reaping every gratification, and we shall to-morrow see him not again. He has passed from the land of the living. His distinctions have not profited him. His possessions he has left to others. His enjoyments on earth have come to an end.

Such things in regard to others come under our daily observation. Such we may reasonably anticipate for our destiny, judging of the future by the past. Our own experience, although less extensive, perhaps less striking, is in no respect deviating from the general experience of mankind. It may have been the peculiar felicity of some of us, never

to have felt the agony connected with the loss of a loved benefactor or highly cherished friend. We may, indeed, never have encountered any signal calamity. Yet there has been enough even in our lot in life, favorable as it may have been, to show that entire security is not characteristic of any human condition. There have still been occasional events, which have deranged our plans, frustrated our hopes, and disturbed us in our enjoyments. And these lesser evils may serve to admonish us of those which are greater, but which also enter into the general dispensations of God to man.

Yet, notwithstanding all these monitions, men rarely attain to true wisdom in regard to this matter. Many will take up their portion in this life ;—and others who are free from this folly, attach too much importance to temporal happiness, and calculate too strongly upon its continuance. Such a state of things is to be deplored—for calamity, being unexpected in its occurrence, is tenfold more severe ; and those who are too well satisfied with their present, will not be sufficiently solicitous about their future condition. The means for obtaining entrance into a future state of happiness, will be overlooked by one who has no object nearer to his heart than the rendering his present condition a permanent one. And they who are persuaded that their most valued treasure should be laid up in heaven, will, under these circumstances,

find it difficult to have their affections so entirely there, as would naturally arise from this conviction.

In reverting to the statements which we have made, the inquiry may arise—Why does the Almighty render human happiness thus uncertain and perishable? Why, although our days are numbered, are we not permitted, during the period, to rest in peace?

This was the subject of the humble expostulation which Job addressed to his Creator. With a similar feeling, it may now be urged by the pious; and with intentions very different, by the profane man.

The inquiry is not why men are subjected to the necessity of death. This is a more general consideration than the one now before us, to which we shall not make any reference. But the question is, why life is not merely short, but often miserable; why it is that we are not to look alone to the *grave* as the destroyer of our earthly happiness, but that we find it continually marred by many other unforeseen circumstances.

In regard to the wicked, we may say that this is a portion of their punishment—that the wages of sin is not merely death, but all the variety of ills which flesh is heir to. But what shall be said concerning the righteous, who are oftentimes more in trouble than others? In general, we conclude, that although guilt may be forgiven so far as respects the consequences of it in another world, yet entire

exemption from the temporal evils connected with it, is not to be expected. It seems good to the Almighty to visit us with these, and this procedure is not only consistent with justice, but accords with the divine goodness. For, since death is inevitable, this circumstance which we have in view, is calculated to render it more tolerable.

Were this world altogether a scene of brightness and joy—were our happiness to flow in a full, continuous stream,—we should experience far greater difficulty than is now felt in renouncing its possessions and gratifications. With all the trials to which we are subject in life—with all the disappointments which occur—with all the severe and numerous calamities which we endure,—how reluctant are we to undergo the great change which is appointed for us.

Temporal happiness is therefore made uncertain and perishable, that the too strong love of life may be subdued. Not finding an opportunity of rest in this world, we may be forcibly induced to seek it in another and better. Experiencing much affliction here, we may finally be brought to contemplate death with less terror—we may learn to regard it not as the end of existence or of happiness, but as the last trial, issuing in pure, exalted, and undecaying felicity.

In view of all these things, brethren, there are two reflections with which I would conclude. In

the day of prosperity let us be considerate ;—in the midst of adversity let us not despond. When life wears its most enchanting aspects—when all things combine to give promise of much and permanent pleasure—let us be suspicious of these appearances, let us know that a reverse may be at hand, and let us wisely prepare for its approach. And when God our Disposer disappoints our hopes, and causes our earthly joys to perish ; let us understand the language of his dispensations. Let our minds be carried forward to the period when worldly joys and worldly sorrows, as to us, shall neither exist nor be remembered—when the former will be merged in the fullness of everlasting happiness, or the latter sunk in wretchedness which is indescribable.

Let us, in fine, not take up our rest in this life ; but, while the blessings dispensed to us are cheerfully and thankfully enjoyed, let us endeavor to have our thoughts, and affections, and hopes, centre in heaven.

SERMON III.

THE RICH MAN.

LUKE xii. 20.

But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.

THE stroke of calamity is most terrible when inflicted without any previous warning. With opportunity for preparation, the most appalling evils may oftentimes be steadily encountered. For their severity may be diminished if they cannot be altogether obviated, or the mind may be braced up to such a tone of desperate determination, that it becomes competent to sustain any earthly trial. But when there are no monitions of approaching evil, when all is tranquillity and happiness at one moment, and all is alarm and agony in the next, then is human nature taxed in its utmost powers of

endurance; it is as though a thunderbolt were to strike us when the atmosphere was serene and bright, as though the gentlest breath of heaven were instantaneously to swell into the desolating tempest. The mind has not time to collect its energies, but sinks under the calamitous visitation; and an unexpected evil is encountered with more fear, and productive of far deeper affliction, than would exist under other circumstances. Confirmation of these remarks occur in our every day experience; and, connecting our own observation with some of the narratives contained in the sacred volume, we shall be led to indulge in reflections which are of a solemn and may be of a useful character.

The observations which I have made are remarkably exemplified in the instance of the deluge. It cannot be said, that of this awful and wide-spread calamity there were no intimations given to men. They were warned of its approach; but being altogether incredulous, it was to them utterly unexpected; and it furnishes a melancholy subject of contemplation, to consider the awful scene which must have been then presented. On one day, there was, save in a single family, all that confidence in the continuance of the existing state of things, which we now cherish. Men enjoyed the gratifications of the present hour, and looked forward to many and distant pleasures as we do. According

to the practice of men in every age, they formed plans for the future and images of happiness to come. That any extraordinary visitation of Providence would thwart all their schemes and expectations, they did not believe ; and in that age, the period for natural death was deferred long beyond the limits to which it is now affixed. On the one day, such was the state of mankind ; on the next, the causes had begun to operate by which the submersion of the earth was to be effected. Doubtless, the extent to which they would proceed, was not at first apprehended. But when this was fully understood ; when there remained no longer any possibility to doubt concerning the impending ruin of the human race ; when the waters were spreading and deepening in their course ; when one eminence after another was becoming covered by a boundless ocean ; when the globe's beautiful surface was hidden from the eyes of men ; when its productions necessary to their subsistence were destroyed, and they had not where to rest their feet ;—how complete was the change in their circumstances ! how awful and sudden the transition of feeling which they experienced ! Their joys and hopes were gone ; they were left in utter desolation ; evil had come upon them when they were least expecting it ; destruction was before them and deliverance was hopeless. Oh, how deep must have been their regret ! how poignant their remorse ! and yet how unavailing

were both, when they remembered, that of those calamities they were warned, that by repentance they might have been averted.

My brethren, I have adduced the instance of those who perished by this judgment of the Almighty, to assist you in conceiving how greatly increased any calamity is by its coming on us unexpectedly. The same object will be answered, by directing your attention to the parable from which the text is taken; and, while considering it, we may derive from it that important instruction which it is designed to convey. How terrible was the surprise, which he, to whom the declaration of the text was directed, must have experienced. "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." This early and sudden termination of his earthly career, was that concerning which he least of all thought, and for which he was most unprovided. He felt that he was affluent; he apprehended no reverse, and determined to be happy. Short-sighted mortal! His vision of happiness was a fallacious one. He was confident of security at a time when in most imminent danger. It was his portion to be surprised by death, and to meet it in an unprepared state. What were the circumstances which induced this state of things? They are stated in the parable. The evil is noted to which their existence may be referred. "Beware of covetousness," says our divine Teacher; of that inordinate, increasing

and restless desire of this world's goods. And why is this injunction given? By what reason is it supported? By this simple fact, that a man's life consists not in—is not secured by the abundance of the things which he possesseth. In illustration of this truth, the parable was spoken. An individual had been exceedingly prosperous. Elated with his success, he anticipated a more abundant measure of it; but the term of his life was fixed, and to prolong it all his treasures were utterly useless.

Let us more particularly observe the circumstances of this man, with the influence which they exerted upon his mind.

Providence had remarkably blessed his exertions. The product of his fields was so abundant, that his former store-houses were insufficient to contain them. Now remark the effect which was produced upon him. In the first place, increase of wealth produced an increase of care. This is a natural circumstance; but, although it may serve to diminish the pleasure consequent on the attainment of prosperity, it does not imply any criminality in its subjects. It is to be dreaded, principally, on account of the withdrawal of our attention from more important subjects, by which it is commonly distinguished. We cannot, however, speak thus lightly of another effect which was produced upon the man in the parable. He became a voluptuary, and his folly was only equalled by his criminality. Note the

confidence with which he was filled, the idea which he entertained of his situation. "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years." He thought not of the numerous accidents, as he would say—visitations of Providence, as we should call them, by which these temporal possessions might be wrested from him. Still less did he consider that the soul was but a visitant here, and that it might be suddenly called to its final habitation, while its treasures on earth were yet unwasted. For, perishable as they are, human life is oftentimes still more fleeting. But happy had been this man, if to him the charge of folly were alone applicable. This was far from being the case. To his conduct, guilt, great and indubitable, was attached. God had been good to him, therefore was his benefactor forgotten. Want was obviated, affluence bestowed, and a course of conduct in opposition to the divine will was deliberately adopted. For what was his determination? "Soul, take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry." Be not concerned about any disagreeable duties. Cherish no apprehensions in regard to the consequences of neglecting them. Indulge, without restraint, the appetites; live in the midst of foolish mirth; in a word, think as little of God and be as much devoted to pleasure as possible. My friends, how must such an one stand in the view of the Almighty? Doubtless, in the divine mind, there

might exist a feeling of pity in reference to this foolish presumption; but a much stronger feeling must be, displeasure against such wickedness. Therefore does the parable represent God as exclaiming, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee"—at once condemning his conduct and resolving to punish it. This sentence was not, perhaps, immediately conveyed to the individual interested; it was, in the first instance, a reflection as well as determination in the mind of Him who knows and directs all things, illustrating the vanity of human hopes and expectations. And he, whose earthly course was foreseen to be so nearly run, might be left a little longer to indulge his dream of security, insensible to danger, until dreadful reality should flash upon his view, and leave not one short moment to prepare for obeying the summons.

The soul was then suddenly required. The body came from earth and will return to it again, until the great day of the resurrection; but our spiritual part came from God, and will pass immediately into his presence, where an account must be rendered, awful in its circumstances and momentous in its consequences. And how could the miserable man, whose case we are considering, prepare for this reckoning? We observe in his previous character a total want of preparation; a state implying not merely the absence of all good,

but the presence of much evil. Say that from the denunciation of approaching calamity until its infliction, a few hours might intervene. A danger so imminent would produce a stupefaction of mind. It could not recover itself sufficiently to apprehend its situation, or to adopt the requisite means of security, were they even at hand. He, then, who is so unhappily situated, if at all apprized of the nature of the evil he is about to encounter, must die in great terror ; and he will certainly pass to an awful recompense. And so terminated the career of the rich man in the parable ; and thus, remarks our heavenly Teacher, is it with all those who lay up treasures for themselves, but are not rich toward God. So they act, and such is the end to which they shall come.

We can look around us, my brethren, in the world with which we mingle, and perceive many, who, while they are deeply solicitous about temporal things, are in no degree rich toward God, nor manifest any concern about this deficiency. Others there are, who, sometimes remembering their Creator, make a feeble attempt to acquire something of which he will approve ; but their strong, and uniform, and persevering exertions respect another object. They are determined to possess this at all hazards ; the favor of God may be gained, if a few feeble and transient efforts will suffice for it. These will fall into the same condemnation

with those first mentioned. Here, then, is a certain character portrayed, which has too many resemblances in real life, and which has connected with it a most melancholy end. It becomes us, in contemplating it, to derive lessons for the regulation of our own conduct.

We should, therefore, guard most carefully against too high and exclusive attention to our worldly interests. Such an attention chills the benevolent feelings and degrades human character, and on these accounts would be severely condemned by the moralist. But there are additional and far more important reasons, which should induce the Christian to reprobate and avoid it. Covetousness in the context does not mean the eager desire of acquiring treasure merely to hoard it up, but it refers to the thirst for the acquisition of wealth, even if it were with the intention of dissipating it immediately. With this disposition of mind, whether gratified or otherwise, there is always associated a multiplicity of cares, which interfere with religious duty and lead to such a state of the feelings as unfits for its performance. To say the least, therefore, it is neglected; if the individual in question does not become more wicked, his religious improvement cannot take place. But, generally speaking, he does not remain stationary. The earnest and exclusive pursuit of wealth is ordinarily attended by success. He who, possessing no

redeeming or controlling principle in his nature, becomes rich, is affected as was the man in the parable. He is intoxicated with prosperity; he presumes upon its continuance; he is forgetful of the God who made him; he may sink into indolent voluptuousness, or he may run to every excess of riotous indulgence. Under any of these circumstances, the soul becomes guilty, is unprepared for futurity and will perish forever. Take heed, then, how you lay up treasures for yourselves. Doubtless this may be done innocently, and so far from proving detrimental to you, will not only increase your enjoyment, but afford you many opportunities of doing good. And such is the legitimate use of riches obtained in a proper manner. But not such is the case with all men. Their conduct you should avoid. The cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches should not prevent the performance of religious duty, nor induce an inattention to the solemn realities with which we shall be conversant hereafter. And while consistently with the Divine will, you seek temporal prosperity, forget not the unspeakable importance of being rich toward God. To him this character belongs, who, knowing the will of God, sincerely desires to practice it, whose affections are fervent and pious, to whom righteousness is reckoned on account of his faith, and whose faith brings forth the fruits of Christian piety. God will regard such with approbation, will receive

them to his favor now, and more abundantly bless them hereafter ; and if you are thus possessed of the true riches, death may come to you unexpectedly, but it will not find you unprepared.

The specific object of the parable, then, is to show the unhappiness of those who lay up treasures to themselves but are not rich toward God. To such it furnishes a solemn subject of consideration, and upon them it should be deeply impressed. The parable is, however, full of instruction to all who cherish a mistaken idea of the permanency of temporal good. For how affecting and yet how true is the picture which it affords of the instability of all earthly possessions ; how striking is the demonstration given of the impotence of man to control his future lot, of his folly in attempting to project it. Yet the truth which it teaches is not one which would be learned by an observation of the general conduct of men. They rarely reflect, and they still more rarely embody the reflection in words, that the future is altogether beyond the control of man. We may form our plans, confidently anticipate a favorable result, which may also often take place, yet of this we have no security ; the most bitter disappointment may succeed the most highly raised hopes ; the most plausible schemes fail utterly. Yet do not many take these things into view ; they speak as if every thing were

in their power ; life, health, favorable circumstances, —the blessing which gives success. Strange error ! fatal mistake. They should in reference to every undertaking, say, at least internally, if God will, this shall I do. Time is not our own ; vigor does not dwell in our limbs as long as we desire it ; death will not recede from us as we may will it to do. God is our disposer ; in his hands is the alternative of life or death ; what his decision may be concerning us, we know not, nor, had we such knowledge, could we reverse it. Seeing, then, such is the condition of human nature in this life, there is the greatest wisdom in the admonition of the apostle—“But this I say, brethren, the time is short ; it remaineth that those that weep be as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy as though they bought not ; and they that use this world as not abusing it ; for the fashion of this world passeth away.”

With the degree of uncertainty which characterizes all terrene affairs, it becomes us to sit loosely in reference to them, and to stand prepared for life or death, as the providence of God may determine. It is wise thus to act, for it will be attended with the happiest consequences ; we shall not be afraid of sudden destruction, or if human nature must shrink from the approach of the last enemy, yet the

agony will issue, not in confirmed wretchedness but in glorious and durable happiness. When our souls are required by the Almighty Judge, we shall be ready to present them, conscious that we have relied on his mercy, and trusting that the merits of Christ will render them acceptable.

S E R M O N I V .

THE SINNER'S DESTRUCTION CERTAIN.

EZEKIEL XXXiii. 11.

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

UNDER the pressure of present evils, men often utter complaints against Providence ; and while referring to the future recompense awaiting the wicked, they murmur against the equity of the divine dispensations. The principle whence these complaints and murmurings arise, is natural to the human heart in its present condition. Its operation was remarked at the period when the individual whose words we have recited, prophesied in the name of Jehovah. There were Jews who, involved in captivity and its attendant calamities, were

disposed to trace these evils to any other source than their own misconduct. It was not that they had been guilty, but that their fathers had been so—and that God had inflicted upon the former the chastisement due to the latter, or that he had causelessly involved them in wretchedness. Against this presumptuous and impious charge, the protestation of the text is directed. Let us first consider by how solemn a pledge this declaration is supported—"As I live, saith the Lord God." The truth of the statement is as certain as the existence of Jehovah. It is confirmed by the oath of that glorious Being, who since he can swear by no greater one, has sworn by himself. Consider next the fact asserted, that "he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked."

It is not to gratify any malevolent disposition in the divine mind, that men endure misery here or hereafter. Even when justice and enlightened benevolence, regarding the good of the whole, require the punishment of individuals, yet is not that act of severity in itself gratifying to the infinite Judge. On the contrary, he rejoices over the return of his creatures to righteousness; he has pleasure when his own glory and authority—the good of the universe—and the private happiness of every man, are consistent with each other. This is the statement by which the solemn admonition before us is prefaced, and we may have occasion

again to recur to it. I would now however proceed to observe, that there is a great and interesting truth implied in the passage under view. It is this:—"That without conversion our destruction is inevitable." This is only expressing in other language the alternative mentioned, "turn or die."

In urging this subject upon those of my auditors who have not yet attended to the great concern of religion, I would first represent to you "that you are sinners." That God is a being of righteousness and purity, and that he interests himself in human affairs, are truths not more certain than that mankind, while in their natural state, are very far from receiving his approbation. It is known that there exists in the minds of some, an indisposition to admit the general depravity and sinfulness of our species. The assertion of this fact is said to be the result either of a censorious disposition, or of gloomy and mistaken views of human life and character. It is nevertheless in accordance with the declarations of that infinite wisdom which is perfectly acquainted with us, with our propensities, with our actions. That men universally are not grossly wicked is admitted. That there is apparent in the world much that is amiable and useful, and that human nature in its unimproved state has exhibited high examples of paternal, filial and conjugal affection, of devoted friendship, of irreproachable integrity and general kindness, is also freely allowed. Still, placing out

of view entirely the crimes which are perpetrated against society, and omitting to consider the multifarious offences of a less odious character which on all sides meet the eye, it can be made to appear that without religion, without piety to God, the most exemplary character that ever was observed is marked by a fearful deficiency.

Allow me in establishing this fact, to bring the matter home to you, by making an appeal to your own consciences. I shall not then charge any one of you with being dissolute in your habits; with being intemperate in the gratification of your appetites; with invading the possessions of others by fraud or violence; or with disturbing in any serious degree their happiness. On the contrary, I shall suppose you moral in your conduct, upright in all your intercourse with the world, generally benevolent in your feelings. It shall be admitted that you perform almost every social duty;—and yet you are wanting. Where is a reverence toward the glorious Being who formed you—a reverence marked in your whole deportment? Where is your love and where your gratitude to Him from whom you derive all things? What are the external demonstrations of regard which you exhibit? Where is your obedience to the indications of his revealed will? Have you rendered obedience to that command which requires you to honor the Son even as you honor the Father? Have you inclined your

ear to the instructions of Jesus Christ, and obeyed his injunctions? We do not perceive in you these indications of piety toward God—a duty which reason as well as revelation enforces, and the neglect of which is an evil of the most serious character. And is it a trivial matter to be thoughtless of the Almighty and negligent of his service? Surely not! It is a failure to answer the very end for which we were created. If God be a father, is he not to be honored? If a master, is he not to be feared? If he be all perfect, should we not adore him? If he be all merciful, should we not love him?

Who then, even of the most virtuous among you, that is not a Christian, can say, I have performed my duties to my God? Who of you shall presume to say to the most Holy One, “judge me according to what I have done?” There is none. Against every man the charge of transgression lies. The guilt of some is of a more appalling character—but in every instance it is sufficiently dreadful.

2. But if it be true that you are sinners, it is equally so “that destruction awaits you.” It is an awful delusion which men often cherish, that God is not strict in marking their iniquities—that the consequences of sin are not of so alarming a character as they are represented to be. When we consider how excellent, how conducive to our happiness, is that law which requires our observance—how glorious is that being who enjoins obedience to

it—how forcibly gratitude as well as reason inculcates this obedience—surely transgression and impiety cannot be deemed trivial matters. On the contrary, sin must be viewed as involving great guilt, and carrying with it alarming consequences. Such has been the natural judgment of the human heart in instances innumerable. We can trace it in those fears in which have originated all the superstitions which have prevailed in the world. We have observed mankind, conscious of the merited displeasure of the superior powers, submit to rites the most burdensome, and make sacrifices the most costly.

Entirely conformed to this natural sentiment are the declarations contained in the Almighty's revealed will. We are taught to believe that the wages of sin are death and its consequences, which although now unseen, are most awful. We are not permitted to believe that the holy God regards iniquity with the least allowance. It is apparent that the very benevolence of his nature calls for the exemplary punishment of the sinner. There is a judgment to come—there is a future recompense consequent upon that judgment; and the disapproved shall be cast into outer darkness, where there are wailing and gnashing of teeth. Destruction therefore awaits those of you who are yet in your sins; and without conversion that destruction is inevitable.

Let us inquire whether there be any other means

by which the impending calamity can be averted. Can wealth or learning—can power or distinction save you? These are the “gifts” of God—their continuance dependent on his will, and their possession utterly insufficient to recommend us to his regard. You are rich in this world’s goods—every want is provided for—every luxury is within your grasp. Are you therefore secure? Will your riches save you? Oh no! Death will not spare you—others will inherit your possessions, while you stand naked, stript of every defence, before the tribunal of Jehovah. You are wise and learned—you have mastered every science—your mind has become enriched with knowledge—you have acquired a superiority over your fellow creatures, and pride and presumption have entered into your bosom. You have become wise above what is written in the scriptures of truth. You have discovered that religious duty is something of easy performance—that God is all mercy—that the fear of hell is an idle imagination. But you will not be exempted from the necessity of death. It is appointed to all men to die, and after that, however you may have fancied it to be otherwise, is the “judgment.” Vengeance will be taken upon all those, however elevated in station, or invested with power, or distinguished for wisdom, who know not God and obey not the gospel. What is all the greatness of earth when compared with the grandeur which will

invest the judgment-seat of Christ? What is all human power when brought into collision with that which formed and upholds the universe? What is man's goodness when scrutinized by Him who is infinitely holy?

Seeing then you are sinners, that destruction awaits you, and that this destruction is inevitable without conversion, let me apply to you the affecting inquiry, "Why, why will ye die?" You cannot say it is because the Almighty wills your destruction! Hear his solemn and affecting declaration. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Do you charge him with insincerity in this protestation? Where are the evidences by which this blasphemous charge can be substantiated? Do you sin ignorant of the consequences? Are you compelled to perpetrate iniquity? That there is no physical compulsion is obvious; but is there any influence suited to man's moral nature which forces him to transgression? There is none,—we are swayed by the influence of motives; and the motives to practice holiness are infinitely greater than those to indulge in sin. There is moreover a long term of probation allowed. It is not one or many transgressions which involve us in hopeless condemnation. The Almighty passes by many

transgressions, and is ever ready to receive to his favor the returning sinner. Jehovah therefore has declared that he has no pleasure in the death of the sinner—all his dispensations are in accordance with this declaration ;—and who then art thou, O man, who repliest against God ? The reason of the sinner's destruction is to be found in himself. There are several things which are instrumental in producing this disastrous result ; and there is an imaginary good in exchange, for which the sinner sacrifices the only true felicity. These instruments of his ruin are thoughtlessness, pride, the love of pleasure.

Many perish through thoughtlessness. It is impossible to gain from them a serious attention to the things which relate to their immortal welfare. They can never be made to look beyond the present moment,—they “would not” sacrifice their souls for present gratification if they were aware of this fact ; but, from levity and want of reflection, they are kept in ignorance of the awful evils awaiting them, until their salvation is impossible.

Pride is to many others the source of destruction. They cannot acknowledge that they are as depraved as they are represented to be ;—the humbling doctrines of the gospel are an offence to them ;—rejecting the scriptural mode of salvation, they desire another more suited to their own appre-

hensions;—being ignorant of God's righteousness, they go about to establish their own. They thus err fatally, in overlooking the only sure ground of hope, and they must perish.

Others who are lost, fall victims to the "love of pleasure." The "lust of the flesh," the "lust of the eye," and the "pride of life," are the instruments of their ruin. The indulgence of appetite—the gratification of irregular desires—the possessions which inspire vanity of mind,—these are the objects of attention and solicitude; and to subdue the passions, and to live piously, and to seek the favor of God, is a cheerless task; to perform which, the lover of pleasure has no heart. It is in this way that men are made to choose death rather than life; and while they become liable to this terrible evil, what do they gain? Nothing but the pleasures of earth, which are unsatisfying in their nature, and short and uncertain in their continuance, and which do not diminish in the least the impending calamities.

Let me then again urge upon your attention the solemn expostulation of Jehovah, "Turn ye, turn ye; for why will ye die?"

What is it to comply with this command and entreaty? It is, so far as possible, to renounce every thing which does not possess the divine approbation; to seek forgiveness of the sins which are past; to apply the mind to the instructions of divine

wisdom ; to regulate the life by the precepts of the gospel. How often have you been admonished of this duty ? how often urged to its performance ? and how have you been affected ? Have you listened incredulous of the evils of which you have been warned ? If you acknowledge the Scriptures as true, how can you cherish any doubts upon this subject ? In them the certain doom of the wicked is fearfully portrayed ;—their uniform language is, “ Oh wicked man, thou shalt surely die.” But in reply to the gospel message, have you said, and do you now say, with undecided minds, “ Go thy way for this time ; at a more convenient season we will call for thee ?” How often have you thus deferred an attention to your most important interest ! How do you trifle with that interest ! what guilt and what danger attend this proceeding ! This more convenient season may never arrive, and then, if the Scriptures do not err, what will be your condition ?

But have you been for a time affected and resolved to turn, but the love of the world has been restored as your excitement has worn off, and your goodness has been as the morning cloud and early dew, which pass away ? We mourn exceedingly over such an occurrence. Nothing so grieves the soul of those who labor for your spiritual good, as to witness the withering of these buds of promise. Over it, perfected saints and angels weep, if tears be ever theirs. In view of it, the spirit of evil

triumphs, and exultation pervades his gloomy empire.

May God in his mercy grant that such may not be the passing nature of any impressions which may now be made. And may every one who has not yet made his peace with God, engage with earnestness in this great work, remembering that the night of death will shortly come, when the season of probation will terminate forever.

SERMON V.

NECESSITY OF SEEKING TRUE RELIGION.

MATT. vi. 33.

*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,
and all these things shall be added unto you.*

WHEN John, the forerunner of our Lord, entered on his ministry, his declaration was, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He had reference to the opening of a new dispensation, when there would be a full revelation of the will, an affecting disclosure of the mercy, and a glorious exhibition of the saving power of the Almighty. This state of things is here denominated, the kingdom of heaven; elsewhere, the kingdom of God. It is thus designated, because Jesus Christ, by the performance of the object of his mission, has established on earth a spiritual dominion, which,

in the righteousness and peace which it promotes, furnishes some representation of the state of heavenly purity and happiness, where God is revealed in the fullness of his majesty and the brightness of his glory. And this mode of expression was probably induced by an acquaintance with a sublime prophecy of Daniel vii. 13. "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." Our Redeemer taught his disciples to pray for the coming of this kingdom, that "the will of God might be done in earth as it is in heaven"—and in his sermon on the Mount, he exhorts them "to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

What is meant by seeking this kingdom? and what is the righteousness here spoken of? These are questions which now demand our consideration.

Those to whom our Lord addressed this admonition, would understand him as exhorting them, instead of being solicitous about inferior things, to expect earnestly the full manifestation of the kingdom of God, to seek a knowledge of it and subjection to it as far as revealed, and to obtain

the righteousness which was required by Jehovah to render them acceptable. This righteousness involved repentance, and the natural fruits of repentance, and was obtained through the instrumentality of that faith, which is the appointed means of salvation.

But how does this injunction respect us? Jesus Christ has fulfilled his ministry on earth; his kingdom has been established; its laws are promulgated; no farther revelation is to be expected; all that remains, is that its borders should be extended. To us, then, the language of the text conveys this instruction. Become a subject of this kingdom by repenting, believing, and obeying the gospel. Let your anxiety be, in the first place and in the highest degree, directed toward this object. Inferior good should be the object of a subordinate regard, and may ordinarily be expected to attend the subjects of the divine favor. This, then, is the design which I have had in calling your attention to the passage of Scripture under our view; to exhibit the supreme importance of possessing true religion, and to urge upon you the necessity of acquiring it.

On the present occasion, I suppose myself to be exclusively addressing professed believers in the Christian revelation. Many such there are who are not pious; and with them I would confer upon their own admitted principles, without deviating from the

principal object, in order to combat the opinions of unbelievers. What is now to be offered, may want the attraction of novelty ; but it will possess the character of truth, and be invested with solemnity and importance by its connection with the future and endless destiny of man. And it cannot escape the observation of any reflecting man, that we require not so much to be informed of our duty, as to be exhorted to its performance. It is not merely the vail of ignorance that covers the human understanding which is to be rent ; it is the strong principle of depravity in the heart which is to be subdued—a principle exceedingly various in its operations, sometimes openly resisting the impulse of duty, and still more frequently eluding the force of the motives presented.

Taking then the Scriptures for our guide, whose authority you admit, let us bestow our attention upon some facts there stated ; facts which are sufficiently obvious, but to which you do not perhaps give that solemn consideration which they deserve.

1. The fact to which I would first refer is, that there is a God, most holy, who maintains a moral government over his creatures. It is not alone true that this noble frame of nature has a glorious architect whose power and wisdom we may admire, if we have any perception of what is grand or beautiful, and are not wedded to the grossness of animal enjoyment. We must advance a step

farther, and conceive of the Supreme Being as invested with those moral attributes, which render him more illustrious than do his natural perfections. Nor are our apprehensions of God to be confined within these limits. He has not created a world, and neglected to govern it. While his providence upholds it, he maintains over it a just dominion—a dominion not asserted merely in the pages of revelation, but confirmed by a feeling existing in every human bosom, which declares to the creature his obligation to subserve the will of his Creator.

The particular application of this truth is, that you, and I, and every human being, are subjects of the divine government. The career of life is run under the inspection of infinite knowledge and perfect holiness—the moral character of every action is noted; and with all our merits or demerits, we are finally to present ourselves before the tribunal of our Judge.

2. The next great truth to which our solemn attention should be directed is, that we are depraved and guilty. In all parts of revelation, this fact is asserted or implied. But need we have recourse to this authority? Is our real character so liable to be mistaken, that we must look to revelation for an exposition of it? No, my brethren. Would to God it were; that the evidences of our corrupted nature and forfeited innocence were less unambiguous. It is not so. Daily do we feel the impulses

of depravity—continually do we fail in entire obedience to our Creator—often have we sinned deeply against his majesty and his grace. Is there any one of you who doubts this? *You* have then perfectly fulfilled every obligation which binds you to God or your fellow creatures. You have loved the former with all your heart, and served him with all your strength—you have been perfectly just and perfectly benevolent toward the latter. Can you solemnly assert this in regard to yourselves? Do you behold such perfect piety and virtue exemplified in the holiest *Christian*? And, then, far removed from it must the man be who is not a genuine Christian. It is therefore a truth to which our whole experience and observation give confirmation, that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” You, therefore, are sinners, and as such, must anticipate judgment with terror; for the consequence of judgment, in regard to every man, is the entrance on perfect happiness or the subjection to awful wretchedness; and this is another momentous truth, which I beseech you to weigh maturely.

As surely as God has spoken in the Scriptures, so certainly are we to exist hereafter, and so certainly will the wicked exist in awful unhappiness. It is appointed to all men to die, and after that is the judgment.

Here, then, you are called to reflect upon the subjects suggested; you are required to believe

nothing more than you already admit. You admit the divine authority of the Scriptures, and it is to their infallible testimony that the appeal is made. You are sinners before God ; you must stand in judgment before him ; you will receive the sentence which dooms you to misery, for this is the unavoidable consequence of unexpiated, unforgiven transgression. Can you entertain the least doubt in regard to the truth of this statement ? You cannot with the least propriety. How awful, then, is the condition in which you are ! how great the infatuation which admits of such indifference in regard to it ! But, you will say, that God is merciful, and that, therefore, you are not alarmed with respect to the consequences of your sins. True it is that God is merciful—infinately so—otherwise you would not be spared to urge this plea ; justice had long ere this terminated your course of probation. But how does this mercy operate ? to whom does it finally extend ? The careless sinner is long the subject of it, but he will not always be so. Pardon, entire exemption from the consequences of iniquity, and the enjoyment of the divine favor, are only afforded to us on certain conditions, and a compliance with these conditions constitutes true religion, and it is the inexpressible importance of possessing this, that I would now solemnly inculcate.

I shall now proceed to note some of the primary elements of true religion ; and in doing this, shall have occasion to show that their existence is indispensable to salvation.

To men considered as involved in guilt by their transgression, the first intimation of the will of God is that which enjoins repentance and faith in Christ. These were the great duties enforced by the apostles of the Redeemer, and they lie at the foundation of all Christian piety. To one who has, by disobedience, offended his sovereign, and who is desirous of restoration to his favor, the first idea which occurs is, to humble himself at the feet of violated majesty. This humiliation must spring from a lively sensibility of the criminality of his conduct, and be connected with a determination to avoid the repetition of his errors. There is thus made a recognition of the excellence of the divine law, and of the Creator's right to obedience ; there is such a state of mind induced as will naturally lead to the amendment of life. The duty of repentance is, therefore, imperiously enjoined in holy writ. "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish," is an awful denunciation, but which is in strict accordance with the whole tenor of Scripture. But the sorrow for past sin and resolutions of amendment in future, which constitute true penitence, are not alone sufficient for our salvation. Of its independent efficacy in rendering the

Almighty propitious, reason suggests very strong doubts, and revelation invests them with the character of certainty. Repentance, although required by God and exceedingly appropriate to the sinner's condition, is but a single advance in the way of life ; it must be associated with faith in Christ. It is the prerogative of the Almighty to declare the conditions upon which his favor shall be extended. He has connected forgiveness with an humble reliance on the mediation of one who, in conformity with the divine will, died to make atonement for sin. It is a merciful dispensation, altogether suited to our circumstances of impotence and wretchedness. A want of regard to its provisions will be attended with fatal consequences. "For while he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

From faith and repentance proceed all the elements of Christian piety. He who has experienced these exercises of the mind, is prepared to obey the will of God, and to become holy in his life. In relation to the indispensable necessity of this holiness, numerous testimonies might be adduced from holy writ. It is not necessary to do so. It is the admitted object of the gospel to produce the spiritual renovation and moral improvement of our race ; and where it fails in producing these results, through the obduracy of those to whom it is

preached, the consequence must be their abandonment to destruction. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption, while he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

To repent, to believe the gospel, to lead a life devoted to God, are the duties enjoined on us; the performance of them will prepare the way for our introduction into the kingdom of God above.

Seek, then, this happiness and the qualifications for it as your highest object. Nothing is in itself so worthy of regard; nothing is so adapted to our wants. The promise of pardon to a sinful being, of durable happiness to an immortal one, ought surely to be most interesting. I beseech you, therefore, to bring your minds resolutely to the contemplation of this subject; say to yourselves—a few years shall pass, and this earth shall know me no more; but a little while and I pass under the view of my Judge, and receive the recompense of the just or the unjust. I have now two courses of life marked out to my view, the one leading to ultimate happiness of the highest degree, but attended with a few present privations; the other attractive at its entrance, but issuing in final wretchedness. Upon which of these courses shall I enter? Can you make this a subject of deliberation for a moment?

Does not a regard to happiness, the most powerful motive to action, impel you to make a prompt decision? You do make a decision. You are convinced that the favor of God is supremely desirable; you are resolved you will seek it. But when will you do this? Here lies your fatal error, whose consequences are oftentimes irretrievable.

You will become pious when the morning of life is past. Then you persuade yourselves you will be satiated with pleasure; the passions will flow in a more even current and the restraints of religion can be better tolerated. But you remember not, that indulgence in sin while it confirms evil propensities, gives a death blow to the few remaining purposes of good; and, above all, you do not consider that the morning of life may be all that is afforded to you. But you have attained the meridian of life and you are still destitute of religion. You therefore resolve to reserve the great concern of reconciliation with your God for the cheerful period of old age, and for the bed of affliction and death. But the mandate of Jehovah is issued. You are cut off in the midst of your days; the great duty of life is unperformed; the consequence is the loss of your souls. These are awful considerations; I pray you to weigh them maturely; and may the God of grace grant you repentance, reconcile you to himself and fit you for his kingdom.

SERMON VI.

THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

NUMBERS XXIII. 10.

*Let me die the death of the righteous ; and let my last end
be like his !*

THE history of the individual whose exclamation has just been recited, is one of the most remarkable in the sacred volume. It has been thought strange that the gift of prophecy should have been bestowed upon one who was obviously not a good man, and who has been supposed to have been addicted to the practice of sorcery. It does not appear however, that this is an estimate of his character altogether just. In some respects it undoubtedly is, for he loved the wages of unrighteousness. Yet there is no sufficient evidence that he was addicted to the use of unlawful arts, and some expressions in

the scriptural narrative seeming to denote this may be otherwise explained. He certainly possessed the knowledge of the true God, and rendered worship to him, and in the instance at present under view, received direct communications from him. The occasion on which he is introduced to our notice was this: The approach of the immense body of Israelites who had left Egypt excited the utmost consternation in the king of Moab. Despairing of effectually resisting them by ordinary means, he sent to the Euphrates for Balaam, one of those to whom it was supposed was committed the power of cursing things and persons so as to confound all their designs, frustrate all their purposes, enervate their strength, and fill them with terror and dismay. Instances of thus devoting an enemy to destruction occur frequently, in profane as well as sacred historical records.

We shall not make any reference to the difficulty experienced by the king of Moab, in obtaining the coöperation of this prophet or divine, but direct our attention to the result. The ordinary ceremonial being gone through, Balaam instead of devoting the Israelites to destruction, exclaims—"How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him. So the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who

can count the dust of Jacob, or number the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous; and let my last end be like his!"

It is by no means certain that Balaam used this last exclamation in the acceptation in which it has been ordinarily taken. By the death of the righteous, he probably meant, a good old age in which his children's children should be grown up around him. Under the old dispensation, temporal rewards were much insisted on as inducements to the practice of virtue and piety. In commendation of wisdom it was declared, "that length of days was in her right hand, and in her left riches and honor." While therefore the seer contemplated the present and future felicity of the people whom God had chosen peculiarly to bless, and doubtless with some presentiment of his own early fate, he exclaimed—"Let me die the death of the righteous; and let my last end be like his."

But although the meaning ordinarily attached to the text is not precisely that intended by the speaker, it is notwithstanding, exceedingly impressive. It contains a sentiment cherished in many bosoms—and the consideration of it on the present occasion, cannot but be interesting.

Some anticipations concerning the issue of the present life must occasionally arise even in the most thoughtless mind. No one can deliberately think that he is to live always, although many act

habitually as if such a destiny were to be expected. When therefore, the prospect of dissolution is presented, and all its solemn and interesting circumstances considered, we must look around us for something which may be our stay and consolation in that trying hour. And while various grounds of hope are resorted to by different individuals, every sober-minded man must unite in the aspiration—"Let me die the death of the righteous ; and let my last end be like his !"

I shall now proceed to consider the various modes in which our last earthly trial is encountered—and then show how exceedingly desirable it is to die the death of the righteous.

1. There is a death marked by a deceitful tranquillity, the result of an imperfect illumination of the understanding, and insufficient awakening of the conscience. Many die without terror, who certainly have no well grounded hope of the mercy of God. Of the multitudes with whom we associate in the intercourse of life, what a great number are there who seem to cherish no religious principle—who evince no reverence toward God, or regard to his precepts ; and who, while in common with others they attend to the preaching of the gospel, furnish no evidence that it has at all affected their hearts. And yet, when we attend the death-bed of such, and witness the ebbings of life, we do not see them terrified at the crisis

which is approaching—we do not observe that intense and absorbing interest which the occasion would seem to demand—we do not witness the distressing exhibitions of doubt and apprehension. There is rather a state of listlessness induced—they either pass from the world with no expression of hope, or with an avowal of some vague expression of trust in the general mercy of God. But, because there is this apparent tranquillity, is such a death to be desired? Does it furnish any assurance that all will ultimately be well? It does not. We must have some other ground on which to rest the hope of a happy immortality than is furnished by a seemingly quiet death. It is not indeed surprising that those who through life have cherished a false security, should preserve it in the hour of dissolution. The delusion is sometimes, but not always, dissipated at that period. It is afterwards, that the truth is fully known, and their condition becomes fixed.

2. But there is a death apparently unattended with terror, observable in the instance of those who have professed a disbelief in all invisible or spiritual existences, or have rejected the doctrine of a coming retribution. That infidelity may in many instances have sustained its advocates at the period of all others the most trying to human nature, we do not pretend to deny. Neither is it important that we should, were we even authorized to do

so. The mind doubtless becomes sometimes as thoroughly imbued with error, as it can be with truth—danger is not apprehended, and therefore disregarded ; and death being viewed as an endless sleep, or the expectation of judgment being taken away, there is nothing to alarm the dying skeptic.

But in addition to this, there may be much real though concealed apprehension in the mind of such an one. The pride of opinion and a regard to consistency, may subdue the outward expression of feelings which produce the most intense suffering. But what does this perseverance in error, or this fortitude in resisting the operation of truth upon the mind, prove ? If a strong conviction of their truth be sufficient evidence of the correctness of any particular principles, then shall we be compelled to adopt opinions, heterogeneous, conflicting, opposite. Strong conviction has furnished martyrs to every faith, however destitute of reasonable support ; and it is not surprising that infidelity should come in for its portion. But, that the fact of unbelievers dying in peace is a proof of the truth of their principles, is a supposition utterly absurd. Were such indeed to return to us, after having seen what man is not now permitted to see, and after having experienced the destiny awaiting us all, and should declare that the hopes of religion are delusive and its terms imaginary ; then, if we were assured of their sincerity, we might concede something to their

authority. But until then, who shall assure us that the strong confidence with which they leave this world, will not speedily be changed into alarm and horror. But passing over this consideration, is the death which such die at all becoming the dignity or consistent with the noble attributes of human nature? In illustration of this remark, you may be referred to the instance of a particular individual, celebrated as an historian and philosopher, and who, in the estimation of a very distinguished contemporary, furnished in life and death the model of a perfectly wise and virtuous man. His death has been triumphantly appealed to in support of the principle that on that awful occasion man needs not the consolations of religion. But may the mercy of God secure us from a death so marked with levity, profanity, and insensibility to the noblest feelings and aspirations of humanity. After all the prosperity which during life had attended him, there is not one expression of gratitude to an overruling and beneficent Providence. Amid all his pleasing retrospections of the past, there is not one respecting the performance of his duties toward that God whom his reason, unperverted, would have taught him to honor. And in the near prospect of separation from this world and all that is in it, there seems to be cherished no hope of a future existence; there is only a shocking jesting, founded on the fables of pagan antiquity. And died not this man

as the brute dieth—unconscious of his accountability—ignorant of his immortality? It will be said that his end was in entire consistency with his principles. True; but does this circumstance prove that it was either wise or safe to retain those principles? By no means. And if there should be a God who challenges the homage and service of his creatures—if there should be a future state, and that one of retribution, who would not tremble at the thought of living and dying as did this infidel philosopher.

We have now considered two classes of persons who, through a delusive hope or the influence of false principles, possess some measure of tranquillity in death. It may now be observed that there is a death attended with deep distress of mind, and awful apprehensions of futurity. These feelings in different instances vary in intensity; but in all, there is a foretaste of their coming misery. There are some cases on record, the narrative of which is sufficient to freeze our souls with horror;—there are some which we may all have witnessed, of the most melancholy character. And the only ground of surprise is, that amid all the irreligion, impiety, and wickedness which prevail in the world, the moment of dissolution is not more uniformly one of extreme terror. For it is undeniable that those who have lived in forgetfulness of God, neglect of religion and violation of social duties, have the

highest cause of alarm when the hour of their departure is at hand. The term of their probation is drawing to a close—the forbearance of God will cease—and after death comes judgment and its tremendous consequences. And may not, ought not human nature to shrink from encountering such awful evils? Yet they are generally excluded most studiously from the contemplation—hope of recovery is cherished to the last—and notwithstanding all the monitions of his approach, death at last comes unexpectedly, and the mind is not permitted fully to conceive the momentous results attendant on his visitation. It is on this account, that the wicked do not always in the hour of death experience the terrors which are appropriate to their condition.

After this reference to the various methods in which the last enemy is encountered by those who have no reasonable hope of the divine favor, we may now proceed to consider what is the death of the righteous, and why it is exceedingly desirable that we should experience it.

It is then a death—always peaceful—sometimes triumphant, and uniformly the prelude to full and eternal happiness. It is always peaceful. True religion, the possession of which is evinced by the fruits of piety and moral goodness, invariably affords a security against the terrors experienced by those who meet death in an unprepared state. Imperfect religious attainments or constitutional infirmity may

during life prevent high Christian confidence, and induce distressing anticipations concerning their latter end ; yet when the hour of trial comes, a fortitude and hope are imparted which, under less difficult circumstances, had neither been enjoyed nor expected.

But, not only is death in the instance of the Christian, encountered with fortitude and hope—it frequently becomes the occasion of exultation and triumph. The energy of faith imparting a full confidence in the reality of things invisible, and the full assurance of hope in reference to eternal happiness, enables him to feel that “to die is gain.” He knows that if this earthly house of his tabernacle were dissolved, he has a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Under these circumstances is it not natural that he should groan under a consciousness of the infirmities of life, and an experience of its numerous ills—that he should dwell with rapture on the contemplation of the peace and joy which are the inheritance of the blest—and that he should regard death not as an awful or unwelcome visitant, but as the precursor of a happy immortality. Such was the experience of St. Paul, who was in a strait between the desire of being useful in the present life, and the wish to enter upon his reward ; and who was persuaded that to depart and be with Christ, was far better than any thing which this

world could afford. Such has also been the experience of many to whom it has been given not only to encounter the last enemy with fortitude, but to triumph over him.

But, are we not here falling into the same error which we have condemned in others? May it not be retorted upon us—if the composure of mind preserved by the infidel in the hour of dissolution be no evidence of the correctness of his principles, can we say that the happy death of the Christian demonstrates the truth of his religion? We are not guilty of this inconsistency. We do not argue that Christianity is true because its professors die happily. But, establishing the truth of its doctrines by other means, we are enabled to pronounce confidently that the peace which they enjoy when human nature is in extremity, is not fallacious and temporary. And we are thus led to mention the most interesting characteristic of the Christian's death—that it is not only always peaceful, and sometimes triumphant, but invariably succeeded by happiness which “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the mind of man conceived.” Here then is the grand distinction between the pious and wicked man. The latter may die as he lived—may be to the last impious or thoughtless, or negligent of the great salvation—and notwithstanding all this, remorse shall not fill his bosom, nor the apprehension of impending evil distress his mind. Yet will that

evil surely overtake him—the light of eternity will dispel every error, and its interminable course be marked by the tribulation and anguish which are the recompense of unrepented, unforgiven guilt. Not thus is it with the pious man—the serenity of the evening of life furnishes no fallacious inducement to the happiness awaiting him on the resurrection morn. His is not the hope of the hypocrite, which shall perish;—its accomplishment is as sure as Jehovah's covenant can make it.

And now let me in conclusion ask,—Of all who are this day present with us, is there one who does not wish to die the death of the righteous—who would not pray for an end so happy as his? But, with a conviction of the desirableness of such an issue to your earthly course, what measures are you taking to secure such a result? Are you exerting yourselves to live the life of the righteous—to repent and be converted—to obtain redemption through Jesus Christ—to fear God and keep his commandments? Many, we would hope, are thus acting; and to them we would say, be not weary in well doing, for in due time ye shall reap, if ye faint not. But, how many more are there who are living without God, and therefore without any reasonable hope in the world. You wish to die the death of the righteous, but how can you expect to do so? It is only reserved for those who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory

and immortality. How little claim have you to this distinction, and how then can you hope to enjoy its exceeding great reward? Yet this most delightful issue of the labors and sorrows of life is still within your grasp. Deserving as you now are of the divine condemnation, and utterly disqualified as you are for the enjoyment of the divine presence, a change in your condition and prospects may yet be effected. The mercy of God is full and free—your doom is not now fixed—and the gospel calls you to flee from the wrath to come, and enter upon the path leading to happiness. Obey this call—seek the Lord while he may be found—work out your salvation with fear and trembling; and you shall die the death of the righteous, and your last end shall be like his.

SERMON VII.

THE HEAVENLY STATE.

1 JOHN iii. 2.

It doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is.

A GREATER inquisitiveness concerning a future existence, than is actually observed among men, might be reasonably expected. The subject is surely one of sufficient interest to excite universal attention, and to excite it in a very remarkable degree. When we reflect that, since the world began, generation after generation has existed and in its turn disappeared from the face of the earth, is not the inquiry a natural one, Where has this multitude of human beings gone ? Have they utterly perished ? Is the memory of them all that remains ?

Again, when we call to our recollection many whom we have most ardently loved, for whose happiness, as much as our own, we have felt concerned, who have associated with us many days and years, and when in vain we now search for them among the living, how can we avoid indulging some conjectures concerning their present condition? And when the mind takes such a direction, how natural is it with the thought of their continued existence to associate some picture of its nature and circumstances?

And when we consider that in the way in which all flesh has gone we shall also go, that as others have died so must we, how strong should be our desire to pierce the thick darkness which gathers around the tomb, to obtain a distant view of another world, if such world exists, and to obtain a hope and confidence that when this earth shall know us no more, we shall yet live and live in happiness. Taking into view the considerations which I have suggested, it would seem that every man's thoughts would be much exercised in regard to futurity, and that the formation of some system of belief in respect to it would be the uniform result. On the other hand, however, there are reasons which induce an opposite course of conduct, which influence many to confine their views to the present life, and which produce an indisposition in all to think as much as they otherwise would of the state

which may be consequent upon the dissolution of the body.

In the first place, this is, in itself, a gloomy subject of contemplation. It is conversant with the sufferings most appalling to our nature. It calls to mind the loss of earthly happiness and the separation from endeared friends. In this view, then, it is natural that the mind should not more frequently recur to it than is unavoidable. But in the circumstances of multitudes, the subject to which we are referring is not merely gloomy, but terrible. The consciousness that they do not possess the approbation of God ;—the knowledge that upon him depends the ordering of their future lot ;—the consequent anticipation that their final condition cannot be a happy one—all concur in producing a disposition rather to rest in their present enjoyment, than to speculate concerning their future prospects.

These considerations, however, do not affect the pious man ; and contemplations which impress others with alarm, may to him be productive of pleasure. To such an one, the declaration of the Apostle will furnish a grateful subject of meditation. “It doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him ; for we shall see him as he is.”

I shall from these words take occasion to consider

I. What is mysterious in the future condition of the pious.

II. What is determined in Scripture concerning it.

I. "We know not yet what we shall be." There is therefore a present obscurity in our views. God has not removed the vail from before our eyes. There are indeed beams of light which allure and guide us home, but there is not enough to satisfy our curiosity. Now we see things as through a glass, darkly.

Our first inquiry is, What is there mysterious in the future condition of the pious?—There is much of this character. I shall however only adduce a few particulars.

1. We know not then the place of their abode. We indeed commonly designate it by the name of heaven, and suppose it to be at an undefined distance above us. The imagination passes from earth to the aerial regions surrounding it; thence to the expanse in which the stars are apparently fixed; and beyond this, rests in a world of light and happiness, which it portrays. There is something natural in this process, and there is countenance given to the conclusion at which it arrives, by holy writ. The process is a natural one; for, in endeavoring to form the conception of all that is bright, and glorious, and pure, we do not allow the mind to sink into the dust beneath our feet, but seek to be removed from it as far as possible, and to attain a natural elevation correspondent to that

moral exaltation characteristic of the Creator. And there is a ground for this proceeding in the oracles of truth. These represent the abodes of the blest as far above us;—the invisible is situated beyond the visible heaven;—and St. Paul, in his rapturous vision, was lifted up to it. Yet the general tenor of holy writ, and the reason of the thing, instruct us that heaven is to be conceived of rather as a state than as a place. Scriptural language on this subject is often highly figurative; and when there are descriptions of future happiness given to allure our desires, these are to be considered as referring to the condition, and not as determining the place of abode assigned to the righteous. With this understanding, it may be that the redeemed are widely distributed through regions of space unknown to us—that their situations may be varied while their happiness is undiminished—and that there are gradations of excellence and felicity almost interminable, through which they may be permitted to ascend. All this may be, and yet Scripture does not decide upon it.

In the conclusions to which we have arrived, there is nothing inconsistent with the idea that there is a local heaven; such a state there must be after the resurrection of the body. But we are not informed where it is, and conjectures on this subject will be fruitless. We are far, however, from conceding any thing to the frivolous objection that

the received notions of the heavenly state are distinguished by any absurdity. Admit that many of the expressions on this subject are unphilosophical, yet, is the thing unreasonable? We lift our eyes from the earth upon which we tread, and we behold shining bodies apparently innumerable. Science has taught us that there are globes like that which we inhabit. Reason suggests the strong probability that they are also the abodes of sentient and intelligent beings. But what is the condition of their existence? Is it like our own? or, having never sinned, is their situation one of imperishable felicity? Or may not some of these distant worlds be the theatre on which God's dispensations begun on earth are completed, where the individuals of our race are rewarded or punished? Is there any thing improbable in such a supposition? It does not appear that there is. Yet, in regard to this matter, we are, for a time, doomed to uncertainty.

2. But again, "it doth not now appear" what shall be the nature of the resurrection body—what the increased capacities of our souls—what their knowledge of transactions in other parts of the universe. All that unenlightened reason had been able to dictate concerning man's future destiny was, that the soul survived the destruction of the body; and the popular notion had invested it with a shadowy, unsubstantial form, which met the eye but eluded the touch. It is exclusively a doctrine

of revelation that the body, although apparently dissolved, is preserved in all its elements to be again reunited to the soul. Yet the body which shall be, must differ greatly from that which now is. Its organization must be varied to obviate the liability to derangement and tendency to dissolution. Matter must be purified and become more ethereal, for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. These general conceptions concerning the corporeal part of those who dwell in heaven, we can form, but cannot go beyond them, for then all is obscurity.

Neither are we able to comprehend the change which passes upon the soul in its translation from earth. I have reference to its intellectual capacities. These we are informed will be greatly invigorated, and be conversant with objects now unknown to us. We shall then understand many mysteries, but whether all difficulties will be removed is not determined. Probably the enlargement of our faculties may be progressive, and yet, the attainment of a perfect knowledge of God and his perfections, may forever elude their grasp. He who is all-wise can only be comprehended by such an one as himself.

Moreover, it doth not yet appear what acquaintance glorified spirits shall have with those parts of the universe with which they are not directly conversant. Is it with them as with us, that they

only know what is transacting within a limited sphere, while all beyond is utterly unknown—or can they look back upon this stage of existence which they have left, and mark its passing events, and note the conduct of those whom they have loved on earth, and exult with them in their joys, or mourn with them in their sorrows? It would seem reasonable that the latter supposition is true; and yet we know not how sorrow and sighing can flee away, when the soul can look back and see the objects of its fervent love involved in suffering, led astray by temptation, and in danger of eternal ruin. On this subject therefore, our minds must be greatly perplexed.

II. But we have dwelt sufficiently long on the mysteries connected with the future lot of the pious. We shall now proceed to consider what is decisively known concerning it. “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

The period to which the final happiness of the redeemed is referred, is the appearance of Jesus Christ. It is not to be supposed that in the mean time they are unhappy or destitute of consciousness. Doubtless, in passing from earth they enter immediately upon a state of blessedness—but the departed spirits of the just await the redemption of their bodies, ere they enter upon the full possession

of their joys. This event will take place at the time when Jesus Christ shall appear, at the end of this probationary state, to judge the world. Scripture affords us an awful and magnificent representation of this stupendous transaction. Our concern at this time is only with its consequences with respect to the pious.

In the state which shall ensue upon the winding up of God's dispensations upon earth, the believer in Christ shall be fully conformed to the likeness of his Redeemer. It is declared that he shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like his glorious body. This is doubtless within the scope of the text; but when it is said we shall be like him, particular respect is had to the impression upon the soul of the moral image of Him who is all holy. This fact is stated as the consequence of our seeing him as he is. Excellence contemplated with right dispositions of mind has a powerful influence in transforming the heart of the beholder. Now, through the exhibition contained in the gospel, we are enabled to behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and thus ascend from one degree of holiness to another. Hereafter by continually observing all his excellence and loveliness with no obstacle between, we shall be made perfectly to resemble that which we admire and love. One particular then of the blessedness of the redeemed, is the possession of holiness without

blemish, of dispositions perfectly pure. This is an element in their feelings which is much insisted upon in the oracles of God, and however little it may impress the irreligious man, it is the subject of delightful anticipation to those whose regenerated hearts mourn the evil influences to which they are now subjected, and long for the period when the dominion of corruption shall be utterly destroyed. And those who are distinguished by this perfect holiness, will live in the presence of God almighty, all-sufficient, all-merciful. No man hath seen God at any time. He is a spirit not to be beheld or touched by the material organ. He is an universally diffused intelligence, not to be limited by place. Yet there is no doubt that he can reveal himself to finite spirits—that he can even without assuming a corporeal form, become the object of their senses. Heaven, the abode of saints and angels, is also said to be his dwelling-place; not because he is there confined, but because while universally present, he is there peculiarly manifested, and imparts to holy beings joys unutterable.

But what are those joys? Are they sensual? are they merely intellectual? They are spiritual. There is the gratification of beholding all that is excellent—of associating with all that is holy—of praising Him to whom all glory is due—and of expressing the intense feelings of love and gratitude to Him who “having washed us by his blood, has

redeemed us out of every tongue and kindred." In a word, we shall possess higher faculties and holier feelings, and we shall have access to all that can exercise the one or gratify the other.

Now, brethren, are you desirous of entering on the heavenly inheritance? Consider well what is involved in its enjoyment—consider the character necessary to its attainment. St. John declares, that every one who hath this hope in him, purifieth himself as God is pure. And such conduct is reasonable and proper. It is only the pure in heart that shall see God. It is only such who could be happy in his presence. Let me therefore earnestly beseech you to grow in grace—to subdue earthly and sinful desires, and to cherish those which are heavenly. Do not remit your exertions while any advance in Christian piety is to be made, and use every means which can conduce to its perfection. Let this world be chiefly regarded, as it affords opportunity of obtaining entrance into another and better, where guilt and sorrow are alike unknown; where all those who die in faith shall reap their imperishable reward, while they join in ascribing blessedness, and honor, and glory, and praise, to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and forever.

SERMON VIII.

THE DISCOURAGEMENTS AND CONSOLATIONS OF THE
CHRISTIAN MINISTER.

ISAIAH XLIX. 4.

Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain : yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.

THE words of the text were uttered by the prophet while personating that Messiah to whom so many of his predictions related. The Almighty had declared to him, "Thou art my servant, in whom I will be glorified." The reply was, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nought." This had reference to the fact that Israel, the chosen people of Jehovah, would not in general be gathered to Him who should be revealed as their Prince and Saviour. The animating declaration is subjoined on the part of the Father. "It is a light thing

that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel : I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."

Such is the connection in which the text appears, and such was its original application.

We may regard the language of Jesus Christ as employed by one of his followers, and from it be led to take a view of the discouragements and consolations of the Christian ministry.

The object for which this ministry is instituted, is the preparation of human beings for the last stage of life and for the scenes of another world. In the fulfilment of this purpose it effects another. By rendering men wiser and better, it greatly contributes to their present happiness.

There are others who labor worthily to promote the temporal welfare of men—to add to the sum of their innocent enjoyments, and to exalt human nature by imparting useful knowledge. It is our province to labor for your eternal happiness—to exhort you to the pursuit of the knowledge and favor of God, and to aid you in the acquisition of these inestimable benefits. From this representation let it not be understood that we arrogate to ourselves any superiority over you. Very far from it. On the contrary, we regard ourselves as your servants in this matter, and all that we demand of you is

your serious attention; all that we expect, is the regard due to those who are sincerely desirous of your happiness.

Having ourselves through the mercy of God been brought to attend to our own spiritual interests; having been instructed in the word of revelation, and having, according to the provisions of that word been ordained as ambassadors for Christ, we are bound to warn you of the dangers from which we trust that we have escaped, and to present to your view the blessings which we have in prospect. It is incumbent upon us to call your attention to the things of another world, to establish their reality, and to illustrate their importance. We are to consider the questions of duty connected with their existence, and to show that if man's highest and most durable interests exist in futurity, then should not this world engage his strongest solicitude? We are to teach you that the favor of the Almighty God is the greatest of blessings, and the foundation of all others. We must declare to you how, by a being who is already sinful, this is attainable. And thus, while exhibiting the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and pressing upon you the obligation to lead a holy life, we appear as the heralds of salvation and the teachers of Christian morals, and Christian piety.

Such being the duties of the gospel ministry, when may it be said that the end for which it exists

is accomplished? The inquiry respects the instances of individuals. Our labors then have produced their highest fruit in regard to any individual, when he has been brought to experience repentance—to exercise faith, and perform new obedience—when he has recognized his obligations to his Creator and Redeemer by partaking of the rites and submitting to the regulations of the Christian community—when, by holding the truth in its purity, and preserving a deportment consistent with the gospel, he affords evidence that he is undergoing a preparation for a happy immortality.

This is the state to which we would bring every one of you. Having done this, we should be satisfied; all that would remain would be to exhort you to persevere in well-doing. To admonish you of dangers which, when perceived, would be immediately avoided by you—to enjoin upon you duties which would yet be more powerfully enjoined by a principle in your own bosoms.

But if in regard to you we fail in attaining this object, we are not satisfied. You are yet exposed to the displeasure of God—salvation is yet far from you—the end of our labors is not accomplished. Under these circumstances, we are induced to take up the complaint of the text: we have labored in vain, and spent our strength for nought and in vain; yet surely our judgment is with the Lord, and our work with our God.

There may, however, exist some sources of encouragement under these dispiriting circumstances. When among those to whom we minister, we perceive few who, convinced of the vast importance of securing their salvation, enter upon a life of devotedness to God, we are not to suppose that we have labored altogether in vain. Even where we have failed in our highest object, inferior good may be attained. When men are not completely brought into a state of salvation, there may be undergone much preparatory discipline.

1. On this subject I would observe that much useful knowledge may be imparted which will hereafter be productive of good. The practice of religion must be founded upon a knowledge of its principles. God must be known—his perfections acknowledged, and his law understood; before a conviction of guilt and danger can be produced in the mind of the sinner. Jesus Christ must be apprehended in his person and offices, ere he can become the ground of reliance. The respective retributions of the just and the unjust must be impressed upon the mind, before the one can become the object of hope, or the other of dread. The Christian minister, therefore, has not labored for nought, if through his instrumentality there has been impressed upon the minds of those whom he addresses, a firm conviction of the truth of the gospel revelation—if the arguments which support it have

been diligently exhibited, and the objections to it satisfactorily answered. And far less should he suppose that his strength has been spent for nought, if his hearers have been made thoroughly to understand the contents of that revelation ; if they have been made not only to understand, but to admit them, even although that admission should not have so powerfully influenced the conduct as it should do. Under such circumstances as these, we are not to despond. Were indeed the knowledge imparted always to remain unfruitful, we could not possess much ground for self-gratulation, inasmuch as those who persevere in sinning against light, sin more deeply and fatally. But we indulge a hope, and it is not an unreasonable one, that what is now known may be hereafter practiced. He who is well instructed in the principles of religion, is in a condition far more hopeful than one who is ignorant of them.

In addition however, to the preparation for the experience of true religion, which those under our ministry may be undergoing, there may be much good actually effected, although it fall short of that which we principally desire.

Although that supreme regard to God may not be induced which brings into captivity every thought of the mind and every desire of the heart, yet there may arise a general feeling of reverence which did not before exist, and which operates most

beneficially as a restraint upon the evil dispositions of men. The knowledge that there remains a rest for the people of God, while it fails to allure us to the earnest pursuit of this rest, may still prevent so wide a deviation from the path leading to it as would otherwise take place. Without experiencing the faith which changes the heart and leads to salvation, men may possess that belief of religious truth which will produce a respect for the gospel and its institutions—a veneration for its author, and some degree of attention to its precepts.

The consequence of this is, that those who might have been profane, infidel, immoral, are entirely the reverse. Many excellent sentiments in regard to religious subjects, may be cherished—the tone of moral feeling in any particular community may be elevated and strengthened—a general propriety of conduct may exist, all which form an interesting subject of contemplation. But although the view of such a state of things is truly grateful to the Christian minister, yet it falls far, very far short of that which he earnestly desires, and for which he labors. And if he is not satisfied with this result, still less should *they* be to whom he ministers. For it cannot be too frequently or too solemnly inculcated upon you, that good morals, and general respect for religion, and a vague feeling of reverence toward the Almighty, are not sufficient to secure his favor, and will not qualify us for the inheritance of heaven.

Although then, under the circumstances which I have mentioned, the minister of Christ will not despond altogether, yet must he be much concerned—and happy will he be should he be enabled to exclaim, “my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.” When he can thus refer his labors to be estimated by Him who can best appreciate them, he should be satisfied. Although he should have failed in effecting the salvation of the people of his charge, he shall save his own soul.

He indeed must incur the charge of presumption, and must really be very deficient in humility and self-knowledge, who imagines that he has in nothing failed of his duty. Yet, the Christian minister may be persuaded of his sincerity and general faithfulness in his labors. He is conscious that his prayers are continually offered on behalf of the souls committed to his care—that his thoughts are daily fixed upon their spiritual interests—that in laboring for their salvation his best talents are enlisted. He is conscious that he does declare to them, so far as diligent attention enables him to apprehend, the whole counsel of God—that he does employ every method which he can devise, savingly to affect them.

But, having done this has he done all that is in his power? Who shall dare to say this? and not fear the rebuke of the Almighty?

Is it not enjoined upon us after we have done all

that we can do, to confess that we are unprofitable servants? Shall an apostle say, “in many things we all offend?” Shall we accuse the ordinary Christian of pride or delusion who shall imagine that he has fulfilled every duty? And is it becoming in the Christian minister, whose duties are far more arduous, to say or think that he has perfectly complied with his obligation? Surely not. He might more perfectly exemplify in his own person the dispositions and conduct which he recommends. His love might be more fervent—his exertions more indefatigable. Of this he is sensible, and would that it were otherwise. But with the sincere desire to do the will of God, his hopes of acceptance rest not upon the perfection of what he has done, but upon that atonement which he proclaims to others.

But, my brethren, one thing we can assert confidently, and in stating it, I would apply the subject to yourselves. The assertion is, that in respect to their hearers, many ministers may say—we have so performed our duties as to leave you without excuse. You cannot plead ignorance of your duty, although the Scriptures may have been to you a sealed book. Yet, through our ministrations its counsels have been communicated to you. You know the services which God requires of you. You have been warned of your danger in consequence of your sins. Time after time have you been admonished that except ye repent ye shall

all perish. The futility of every ground of confidence excepting a sincere resort to the salvation of Jesus Christ, has been fully and often exposed. We have addressed to you line upon line, precept upon precept, in regard to your eternal interests—and if our exertions to produce in you a due attention to them have been unavailing, and if they still continue fruitless, are we not absolved from all participation in your destruction? Shall *your* condemnation at the day of judgment involve ours also?

Brethren, shall we still labor almost in vain amongst you? We are now ambassadors for Christ. As though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God. Long disobedient to the divine injunctions, now resolve to comply with them—repent and be converted that your sins may be blotted out. Believe in Jesus Christ, and take upon yourselves the profession of his name.

Then shall we not have labored in vain—we shall have consolation under our toils—and you will inherit everlasting salvation.

SERMON IX.

OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN.

MATTHEW vi. 9.

After this manner, therefore, pray ye : Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

IN the passage under view, our divine Teacher gave to his disciples direction in regard to the performance of an important duty. Whether we consider the interest of the subject or the character and authority of the speaker, our attention should be much excited. The intercourse which the soul maintains with God is principally comprised in the exercise of prayer. To perform this duty in a proper manner, and with right feelings and apprehensions, should be an object deeply interesting to us. Jesus Christ had just referred to some prevalent abuses in regard to the performance

of this duty ; he had noted the motives of ostentation by which some were actuated in the discharge of their religious obligations, and he had condemned those vain repetitions which argued a belief that their much speaking would recommend them to God. In opposition to these practices, he enjoined it upon them to withdraw from the observation of men when they addressed their private devotions to the all-seeing God, and in every act of prayer, whether public or private, to be brief and comprehensive, persuaded that God knows all things which we need before we ask him. He then proceeds to give a short and most admirable formula of devotion. We do not believe that our Saviour designed to confine us to this one form of supplication, or to intimate that any fixed form is requisite to the acceptable worship of Jehovah. At the same time, we have no objection to urge against those Christians who deem their edification most promoted by the use of such prescribed ceremonial. We are persuaded merely, that the text does not enjoin such a mode of worship. It is only to be viewed as an exemplar according to which our supplications are to be conducted, and in this light it is of great value to us. It is designed to-night to make some observations in elucidation of the verse which has been read to you. Two things are involved in this passage. There is an invocation of the object of our worship ; there is mention made of the general

feeling which should be cherished toward the Author of all good.

We address "Our Father who is in heaven." Prayer is either offered up in public, and then we join with many worshippers, or in private where we nevertheless use the same form of address, "our Father." The design of this is to intimate that there are many others connected with God in the same relation as we are, and that in our most secret prayers we should recognize them and cherish a brotherly feeling toward them. The appellation of *Father*, which we are instructed to bestow upon the Almighty, also carries with it many important considerations. It exhibits him to our view as our author and benefactor. From our earthly parents we, in a subordinate way, derive our existence, and they confer upon us numberless favors. But God is properly the author of our being, and gives us richly all things to enjoy. He is, therefore, our father in the highest and noblest sense imaginable. Viewing him as sustaining this relation, we should regard him with feelings of *love* and *confidence*—love, when we consider all his goodness and excellence; confidence, when we reflect how able and how willing he is to bless us.

He, whom we address as the object of our worship, is also exhibited as being "in heaven." Not but that we are to consider him as having the universe under his inspection, as operating through-



out all nature; but we regard him as peculiarly present in that place where he is most strikingly manifested to the apprehensions of his creatures. This place the Scriptures denominate heaven. This term denotes, sometimes, the atmosphere, sometimes the visible heavens; the firmament in which the stars appear fixed. But the heaven of heavens, or the third heaven, as St. Paul terms it, is the centre of the divine dominion, the residence of angels and perfected spirits of men. In the Old Testament, God is often spoken of as being in heaven, and with this phraseology, there are several important ideas connected. His *universal presence* is expressed by it—"The heaven of heavens cannot contain thee"—that is, Thou fillest immensity. His *majesty* and *dominion* over his creatures are also denoted. "Art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen?" 2 Chron. xx. 6. So, also, his *power* is in this way referred to. "Art not thou God in heaven? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee." His omniscience is likewise expressed in this manner. "The Lord looketh down from heaven, he beholdeth all the sons of men." And, in fine, we are led to reflect on his infinite purity and holiness. "Thou art the high and lofty one, who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy." When, therefore, we address God as our Father in heaven,

we contemplate him not only as abundant in goodness, but invested with all other perfections in the highest degree.

The petition which immediately follows the invocation, is, “Hallowed be thy name.” The *name* of God is often used to denote God himself, in his person, attributes, and works. Any thing is said to be “hallowed,” or sanctified, when it is separated from earth and earthly purposes and employments. The Almighty is said to be sanctified in our view, when in our thoughts we separate him from and elevate him above all created things. We are to consider him as infinitely removed from all human ignorance, feebleness, imperfection, and impurity. We shall thus be remarkably distinguished from the worshippers of all false gods, who cherish most degrading views of their divinities. Let us more particularly inquire, how we may act consistently with the petition now under view. We are, then, in the first place, to hallow God’s name with our *lips*. This is done when our conversation is pure ; such as will have no corrupting influence, such as will not be offensive to the ears of good men, such as becomes one who is sensible of the continual presence of the pure and holy God. This is also done, when we reverently use the divine names in conversation and worship, or when we speak of his works and dispensations with becoming modesty and humility. God is, more-

over, *sanctified in our thoughts*, when we have an abiding sense of his presence and a conviction of his glorious perfections. It is thus a spiritual homage is continually paid to him, even in the midst of the avocations of life. It is thus by the continual contemplation of perfect goodness and righteousness, that we become transformed into the same likeness. The last particular in which God is to be sanctified by us, is in the *actions of life*. Believing him to be infinitely worthy of our regard, and feeling our obligation to subserve his will, we shall, in all our pursuits, have a regard to his *glory*. We shall not only ourselves adore him, we shall endeavor to excite this adoration on the part of others. We will, ourselves, obey his holy precepts, and, as far as in us lies, promote his rightful dominion over all his creatures. Bestowing a due attention upon these things, our lives and our prayers will be consistent, our supplications will not indicate a regard to one thing, and our actual conduct prove a devotion to something different and opposite.

These observations have been designed to elucidate the first portion of the prayer, which Jesus Christ taught to his disciples. It is not necessary to add any thing more with the same intention. We may, however, appropriate the remarks which have been made, with a reference to the government of our hearts and the direction of our conduct. It has been seen that the text contains an invoca-

tion of God as sustaining a particular relation to us. Have we, then, the right to claim this relationship to its full extent? and are we under the influence of the feelings belonging to it? Perhaps we have not this right, for it does not pertain to all men in its most striking sense. Our Saviour is, in this passage, instructing his *disciples* how to pray. And their condition was not that which is natural to the human race. They are the creatures of God and beneficiaries of his goodness, and may thus call him Father in a sense which may be applied to every man. But God was their father in a peculiar sense. They were penitent, obedient to his will, and relying on his grace, and were thus brought into a new and interesting relation to him.

Now it is most important for us to know, whether we have been brought into this relation; otherwise we can neither pray with correct feelings, nor can we indulge a reasonable hope of being accepted. For genuine prayer only has its origin in a soul humbled and contrite. With any other feelings it is presumptuous to address as our Father him whom we have so deeply offended. Let us, moreover, inquire whether, in our addresses to him, we bestow due attention in having his name hallowed in our thoughts. He that comes to God aright has deep impressions of his glory and awful reverence of his majesty. He allows not his thoughts to be engaged with vanities; he presumes not to name

the Almighty without deep self-abasement. And, in fine, brethren, when we pray that God's name may be hallowed in our thoughts, let us pray in sincerity and strive to have our souls occupied with glorious meditations on him ; and let the sense of his majesty and the conception of his excellency, which exist in the hour of fervent devotion, be in some degree preserved during every moment of our lives. We shall thus be prepared for every duty ; be enabled to contend with temptation, and fitted for praying without ceasing.

S E R M O N X.

THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE.

MATTHEW vi. 10.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

GOD maintains over the universe the kingdom of his providence. He possesses a supremacy over all created things, and in the exercise of it he performs all his pleasure. He hath appointed to all nations the place of their habitation,—the revolutions of empires are the result of his will; nor is the destiny of individuals less under his control. He raises up those destroyers of mankind who are the instruments of his justice, and he abases them again when this end is answered. He renders a nation prosperous and renowned, and he again reduces its glory to the dust. Individuals have their

portion assigned to them in life. They are nourished in affluence, and exist in continual happiness,—they are born in poverty, and dwell in misery ; or their lot comprises a mixed experience of enjoyment and suffering. Such things doth the Almighty, and none can resist his will, or say unto him what dost thou ? All his designs advance surely and steadily to their accomplishment,—pious and impious men ; good and evil angels ; all must yield to his irresistible sway.

But God has also established in the world the kingdom of his grace. It is a dispensation of things designed to restore the human race to holiness. It has for its object to restore in the hearts of men that dominion of God which had been destroyed in the evil hour when the tempter triumphed. Originally, the moral influence of the Creator over his creatures was concurrent with his controlling providence. But when man had lost his primitive righteousness and depravity had taken hold on his nature, he did not respect the authority of God, but stood in open rebellion against him. Affectionate obedience will, however, again be rendered, and subservience to the will of the most holy One will distinguish every man ; when the “kingdom of God shall come, when his will shall be done in earth as it is in heaven.” These expressions indicate the prevalence of perfect righteousness and holiness among men. And for this

issue to the present disordered state of things, we are directed to pray and look. Let us for a moment reflect how happy the world would be in such a condition. The desolating contentions of nations would cease. Torrents of human blood would no longer flow to gratify the ambition or hatred of individuals or of states. Wars would cease to the ends of the earth ; “ swords would be beat into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks.”

There would also exist no longer those strifes which distract communities and embitter social intercourse. The vices which involve injurious treatment of others, or which are ruinous to ourselves, would be corrected ; and thus the calamities of life would be to a great degree obviated. Some of the natural evils arising out of the decaying condition of our bodies would alone remain. Such are the happy consequences, in a negative view, which would follow the coming of God’s kingdom, from his will being done in earth as it is in heaven. In a positive view, the happy results of this state of things are most striking. Men would worship and serve the Almighty, and feel a delight in so doing—they would love and do good to each other, and harmoniously concur in the advancement of the general happiness. These are delightful anticipations ; but may we expect ever to see them realized ? Whether in their full extent we shall

see them, we know not. We are directed to pray for this entire prevalence of the kingdom of God, and there are many predictions which authorize us to expect this prevalence to a great extent. And these predictions cannot be fulfilled without a far wider extension of the gospel and subjection of the hearts of men to its principles, than what we now witness. You may take any of the numerous prophecies concerning the Messiah and his spiritual reign on earth. But we would direct your attention to that remarkable one contained in Daniel xi., where an account is given of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. A great image was seen, whose head was of gold, the breast and arms of silver, the body and thighs of brass, the legs iron, and the feet part of iron and part of clay. In the interpretation of the dream, the different parts of the image are referred to the several great empires which successively extended over the civilized world. In the dream there was also seen a stone cut out of the mountains without hands, which struck the feet of the image and broke it in pieces. This stone is said to have become a great mountain, and to have filled the whole earth. The meaning of this is explained in the following terms; "and in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall beat in pieces and consume all these king-

doms, and it shall stand forever." We have seen the empires referred to in the prophecy successively arise and flourish—we have seen them in turn subdued—and, during the continuance of the last one, that of the Romans, we have seen the God of heaven set up a kingdom in the hearts of men, which we are authorized to believe will increase in extent until the whole earth shall submit to its sway. Christ was manifested—his gospel was preached by his apostles, and then the kingdom of God was come—not, however, in its full glory. This is yet the subject of hope, and our Saviour has enjoined it upon us to make it the object of our prayers. The obvious instrument of this advancement is the preaching of the gospel—the invisible instrument, whose concurrence is necessary, is the secret operation of the Spirit of God. The one is in a great degree in our hands. The other is beyond our control; and yet, in the use of the divinely appointed means, we may expect the blessing of Him who has ordained them. As therefore we pray for the advancement of the kingdom of God, it is our duty to promote this object by our exertions. But how may our labors be instrumental in producing a result which must ultimately depend upon the power and grace of God. It is in this manner. There are two great means which we have in our hands, which, under the divine blessing, will be effectual. These are the

extended distribution of the Scriptures, and the mission of its duly authorized ministers into those situations where the gospel is unknown. There are nations into which the light of revealed truth has not penetrated ;—there are those in lands generally Christian, who sit in darkness. Faith in Christ is the appointed way of salvation. And in the language of the apostle, “ how can they believe in Him of whom they have not heard ; and how can they hear without a preacher ; and how can they preach except they be sent.” We who enjoy the light of truth and numerous spiritual blessings, are bound to impart the same knowledge and privileges to others. It was thus Christianity was propagated at the beginning. Men zealous for the glory of God and the good of souls passed from nation to nation preaching Christ crucified as the only Saviour of men. It is in this manner we must expect the conquests of the cross still farther to extend. The Almighty does not usually operate otherwise than through the instrumentality of human agents. And he calls upon us to bear our part in communicating the blessings of salvation to the whole human race. The good will and the assisting hand should not, therefore, be withholden from this great and excellent work, otherwise we are guilty of mockery when we pray, “ Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.”

There is another view in which this petition may

be regarded. In praying for the universal prevalence of holiness, we pray for our spiritual improvement. With respect to our own conduct, we pray that the divine will may be done by us in earth, as angels and perfected spirits perform it in heaven. In this view, the petition is a most comprehensive one. It has for its object the sanctification of all men, and our own with theirs.

My brethren, while we offer up this prayer, let us have our hearts deeply impressed with the importance of the object had in view. We indulge a hope that when the trials of life are passed, we shall be admitted to the divine presence. But how can we cherish this hope, unless we are earnest in our exertions to obtain the character which will qualify us for this privilege? If we are not deceived in our expectations, we shall hereafter perfectly do the divine will. Let us therefore now diligently endeavor to make approaches toward this perfection, by growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I have yet one more observation to make, which relates to the order in which the petitions are placed in the text. The first of these, which has been most under our view, relates to spiritual blessings; the one which succeeds, has for its object temporal good. This arrangement denotes the estimation in which we should respectively hold these blessings. The former we should first seek,

and that with the most earnest desire. The reason of this is obvious. The former are connected with the interests of the soul; the latter with those of the body. The former are therefore far the most worthy the pursuit of a rational being. But the most striking difference between them is, that the one relate to eternity, the other are limited to time. The one make us happy for a few days and years, the other ensure our eternal well being. Are you not then satisfied which deserves your preference? Your judgment cannot hesitate. Act then consistently with its dictates; and, whether Christians or otherwise, I pray you to obey the Saviour's injunction, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these" inferior "things shall be added unto you."

SERMON XI.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD.

MATTHEW vi. 11.

Give us this day our daily bread.

WE are ready always to acknowledge that spiritual blessings flow immediately from the Almighty. Forgiveness of sin and a title to eternal life, are not to be expected from any other source. As these most obviously depend solely upon the will of God, no one presumes to seek them in any other way than by obtaining the divine favor. The case is different with respect to temporal good. In regard to this, we are apt not to be so sensible of our entire dependence. We imagine that our own exertions are sufficient to compass this object. And thus there is a species of atheism cherished by those who would shudder at the name. For this charge is not

merely applicable to those who deny the being of a God ; but in a subordinate manner may be directed against those who detract from his perfections, or limit his operations. By the mass of men it will not be denied that God created all things ; but that all things are ordered by his providence, is often forgotten—or at all events we admit this truth in a very general sense. We may perhaps adopt the notion so derogatory to the Almighty, that created things have such tendencies given to them, and are subjected to such general laws, that like a well constructed machine, they discharge their appropriate functions independently of any subsequent care of Him who formed them. And thus it is concluded that God concerns not himself with the affairs of men. But this idea is in itself, most erroneous ; in its consequences, most fatal. The Scriptures not only teach the general doctrine of providence, but the petition of the text inculcates that it extends to the minutest circumstances. It concerns itself with our most common wants. Our very subsistence depends on the care and goodness of God. Do you doubt this fact ? Reflect for a moment, and you will be satisfied with regard to it. It rests solely with the Almighty how long the means of support which we now enjoy will be continued to us. A single one of the many calamities with which he could visit us, would reduce us to poverty and distress. Moreover the success of our daily ex-

ertions depends on him. He gives us health, supports our strength, and arranges those numerous circumstances which have a great influence in promoting our prosperity. It is therefore apparent that we should feel and acknowledge entire dependence upon God for temporal, as well as spiritual good. The cherishing of this feeling is of very great importance. Its permanent existence in the heart, is a more certain evidence of piety than any stated expression of praise, or rendering of acknowledgment. It is always connected with gratitude to God. For in the numberless blessings which the subject of this feeling enjoys, he recognizes the beneficent hand of Providence continually operating. It is also attended with a solicitude to obtain and preserve the divine favor, which will strongly excite to obedience. And thus is a state of mind produced which will be agreeable to God, and which will conduce to our own goodness and happiness.

But not only does the text inculcate a sense of dependence upon the Almighty for temporal good ; there is a moderation in our desires with regard to its possession, which is implied in the language of the petition before us. We pray to the Author of good to "Give us our daily bread." About the meaning of the original word, rendered in our translation "daily," there has existed much diversity of opinion. As our object on these occasions is not to deal in critical illustration, but to take practical

views of the doctrines of the gospel, there will not be any time spent in referring to these various opinions. It will be enough to state the explication which is deemed most satisfactory, and which sufficiently agrees with the word in our translation. This explication of the original term is "sufficient for our support." "Give us bread sufficient for our support." We thus pray for competence, not for abundance. It is reasonable that we should do this, and it is improper for us to do more than this.

It is our duty to be diligent in business, and if the blessing of God make us rich, let us be thankful for his gifts, and let us improve them wisely. But we should not pray for wealth in an absolute manner, that is, without making the proviso that it be really for our good. For in truth we know not what effect great prosperity might have upon us. We cannot say confidently that our actual enjoyment would be increased by it. Or if this should be the case, in a moral and religious view, we may suffer great detriment. In taking this view of the subject, we cannot but be struck with the admirable wisdom displayed in the prayer of Agur, "Give me neither poverty nor riches : feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee, and say, who is the Lord ; or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain." You have here very distinctly noted the danger of prosperity, "Lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord."

The first evil to be dreaded is forgetfulness of God. Have you not seen the fear of the Almighty effaced from the mind of one who has been raised to great affluence ; and when far greater reason for thankfulness had thus been afforded, much less of it has been rendered. The cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches have choked any good impressions which were springing up in the heart. The soul is either filled with pride, or intoxicated with pleasure, and the most solemn duties of life remain unattended to.

Do we not also observe oftentimes the corrupting influence of wealth upon the morals of those who have acquired it ? Those who have been sober, modest, and diligent in business, become intemperate, arrogant, and negligent even of ordinary duties. Now this is a change much to be dreaded, and when we feel disposed to pray to God to give us more than a competence, we should bear in mind that the granting our petition might be the greatest calamity which could be inflicted upon us. But the prayer which we are considering not only implies moderation in our wishes after temporal things, it also forbids our anxiously looking into futurity. We are not to distress ourselves in relation to the wants of future days. Give us to-day or each day, our daily bread. Let us not, however, be misunderstood. It is not the design of the Scriptures, neither is it ours to discountenance a wise provision

for our future wants ; the evil forbidden, is an indulgence in anxiety on account of them—an anxiety which argues a distrust of divine Providence, and is therefore improper. It is in this light we are to regard the admonitions of our Saviour. “Therefore take no thought,” i. e. be not anxious, “saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed?” The reason is assigned. Is not life more than meat, and the body than raiment? God has conferred upon you life, and formed your bodies ; will he not support the one and clothe the other? Having conferred the greater gifts, will he withhold the less?

Our Saviour’s intention, therefore, was to inculcate a reliance upon the goodness of divine Providence ; a reliance which, although inconsistent with anxious carefulness about the future, is perfectly compatible with the exercise of diligence in our temporal concerns. And in perfect consonance with this precept, is the feeling which prompts the petition, “Give us this day our daily bread.”

The prayer which is under our view as far as we have considered it, appears to refer to two species of good, spiritual and temporal ; both are necessary for us, but in very unequal degrees ; both proceed only from God, and should be therefore the object of prayer to the Giver of all good. Let us, then, in our daily employments feel our entire dependence upon Him in whom we live, and move, and have

our being ; let us expect his blessing to crown with success our exertions for the attainment of present good. But let our strongest desires and greatest exertions, be directed toward obtaining reconciliation with God, and preserving communion with him.

SERMON XII.

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

MATTHEW vi. 13.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

It is becoming in us to form a sober estimate of our powers, and it is as wise as it is becoming. This remark is true in reference to the common concerns of life. The want of a proper conception of our strength or our weakness will induce a spirit of presumption. And this will induce us to undertake enterprises to which we are incompetent, from which will necessarily result the shame of defeat; or it will place us in circumstances of difficulty, out of which we cannot be extricated. But our remark applies more forcibly when viewed in reference to our spiritual concerns. Ignorance of our own weakness in ordinary life, may lead to

great evils. In the life of the Christian the evils which arise from the same source may be fatal.

The petition before us is dictated by that humility of mind which, sensible of human depravity and weakness, desires not to be too severely tried. The prayer is—

I. That we may not be brought into circumstances of pressing trial.

II. That if it be the divine will that we should be so tried, he would by his power and grace extricate us from the danger which threatens to destroy us.

I. In considering the language of the text we are struck with a peculiarity which belongs to it. To intimate that the holy God leads us into temptation, seems to savor of impiety. This difficulty may, however, be easily removed. It was common among the Jews in accordance with the idiom of their language, to represent God as doing that which he merely permits to be done. We may therefore understand the petition before us as meaning—"Suffer us not to be led into temptation." As to the temptation referred to, it may either mean seductions to sin or a trial of our faith by severe affliction. In regard to the former, God has no agency. "He is not tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." The latter may be the direct visitation of his hand. Temptation in either of these senses is often the prelude to transgression, and transgression issues in

death. That accordingly, from which such fatal effects may arise, should be greatly the object of our dread. We have in ourselves tendencies to evil which are always operating. Certain circumstances may, however, give them increased force, or furnish greater facilities for their operation—and then is our safety greatly endangered. Let us for a moment consider this fact more particularly.

The disposition to forget God is a natural one in the human heart. And God may be forgotten either through the hurry and vanity of mind induced by a life of dissipation, or through the press of temporal business. Now, averse as we are at all times, to preserve the remembrance of the Almighty in our hearts, this aversion is felt with redoubled force when we mingle in gay society—when we indulge in fascinating amusements—when the pageantries of life are presented to allure our desires. Under these circumstances we are tempted, and whether this temptation be moderate or severe, there is great danger—for if yielded to, we become lovers of pleasure more than of God; and this is one of the marks of reprobation.

2. The tendency to forget God to which we have alluded, is moreover increased by too much occupation with our temporal concerns—and we are led into temptation when we suffer our minds to bestow much thought upon them.

But, besides this tendency to forget our Maker,

human nature is distinguished by many evil propensities which require to be kept in subjection, and whose influence becomes much stronger under certain circumstances. The propensity to dishonesty for instance, where it exists, becomes powerful when there is something very alluring in the object, and when there is perfect security against discovery. The disposition to indulge in intemperance is fostered by the habit of associating with certain individuals, or frequenting certain places, and so it is in regard to many other things. Now, in regard to this species of temptation, when we utter the petition of the text, we should connect with our prayers our own exertions—for when we ourselves rush into that very evil which we are deprecating, we are guilty of a solemn mockery of God. Let us beware that we are not at any time guilty of this offence.

We have seen that one species of temptation consists in a seduction to sin—of this we have spoken. There was another mentioned by us, which consists in the trial of our faith by severe affliction. Such was the trial which the upright Job sustained. Such was that to which the holy martyrs were subjected—they were put to the proof, that it might be ascertained whether their hope in God and attachment to him could be shaken. To similar trials are the saints in all ages subjected; and these are sometimes directly

inflicted by the Almighty, sometimes they arise from the agency of men, but not independently of an overruling Providence. Through the furnace of affliction our graces are often purified—yet the affliction may be so severe as almost to overpower us. It is therefore perfectly consistent with submission to the divine will, and with a confidence in the power of the divine grace to support us, that we pray—“Lead us not into temptation.”

II. The second part of the petition is—“but deliver us from evil.” And we before remarked that its meaning was, that God would deliver us out of this severe trial, should it be his will to subject us to it. For wise and merciful purposes our heavenly Father sometimes places us in circumstances of danger and distress—he sometimes permits his children to be assaulted by violent temptations to sin. Then our only confidence must be in his strength who is alone able to deliver us.

The closing part of the supplication of the text may however be taken in a more extended sense—there is nothing to limit the term evil, so as to confine it to temptation—it may refer to all that we can imagine as the opposite of goodness and enjoyment. In this view of the passage we pray to be delivered from sin and suffering—from the crimes and afflictions of this life, and from the wrath of God in another world.

Some remarks have thus been made on the prayer before us, and I would now close by exhorting you, earnestly and at all times to use this supplication. You are exposed to many temptations—you are liable to many afflictions—evils of the most awful character, in another world, await the impenitent. From all these evils God can deliver you—and you have every encouragement to seek deliverance. Come then to a throne of grace that you may obtain mercy and strength to support you under every difficulty.

SERMON XIII.

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM.

MATTHEW vi. 13.

*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
for ever. Amen.*

WE are not inclined to repose confidence where we believe it to be undeserved. We will not exercise dependence upon one whom we believe unable to benefit us. And God will not be the object of our reliance, the Being to whom we direct our prayers, unless he is in our apprehension, an object worthy of the highest regard. It was therefore most proper that a perfect formula of devotion, such as our Lord designed to give his disciples, should have reference to the reasons which authorize a full reliance upon the Supreme Being. This is contained in the doxology which

closes the prayer—"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

To God belongs the kingdom of universal nature, and the fullness of Almighty power, and the glory of infinite perfection. And should he not be loved, and honored, and obeyed, and trusted, by all his creatures?

"To God belongs the kingdom of universal nature." This we had occasion to consider while explaining one of the first petitions of the prayer under view. We endeavored to represent in a striking manner, the control which the Most High exerted over the destinies of nations and individuals—and we thence made a transition to the administration of grace under which men were placed, and which had reference to their spiritual interests.

2. This kingdom of nature, providence, and grace, is supported by the fullness of almighty power which distinguishes the Supreme Being. By that power every creature was formed, and to its sway is the universe subjected—and this dominion is founded in justice and characterized by equity, for God is distinguished by the glory of infinite perfection. He is infinitely good—he is most holy—perfect wisdom is his. Were he not therefore our Maker and Benefactor demanding the homage of gratitude, his perfect righteousness would require our adoration and love. If such be the

character of God, then should he be the object of our fear, and we should desire that his name might be “hallowed by us.” Religious reverence becomes us whenever we present ourselves before the throne of the Most Holy—neither is it allowable in us at any time to cherish any other feeling, for God is ever with us, and he is ever equally glorious and venerable. Moreover, if these be the attributes of the Almighty, we should expect and pray for the manifestation of his kingdom, and long to have our hearts subjected to his influence. All things are within the compass of the divine power, and when it shall please him to exercise it, the souls of all creatures shall be filled with holy affections; their lives shall be examples of righteousness, peace and happiness shall prevail on earth, and a foretaste of heaven be given to us here below. And seeing that all this is not only very desirable, but to the Almighty quite practicable, we should unceasingly pray—“Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.”

3. Again, since to God belongs the kingdom, and the power, we should seek from him every temporal as well as spiritual gift, and we may do this with full reliance. The almighty Being who formed us, is alone able to preserve us, for we are feeble, perishing creatures, liable to be destroyed every moment by numberless evils. The operation of these can be resisted only by Him who possesses the kingdom of providence—upon him should we

feel dependent, and to him should we address our supplications.

4. But the sentiment contained in the doxology also shows in a striking manner the necessity of praying for the forgiveness of our sins—and the propriety of forgiving others, as we ourselves desire to obtain forgiveness. When we consider the glorious perfections of God, we must be struck with awe—we must be deeply sensible of the propriety of our rendering to him entire obedience—we must be convinced of our frequent failure in rendering it—we must perceive how impure, disobedient and ungrateful we must appear in his sight. And then, when we think of his awful justice, and the power which is prepared to enforce its decisions, can we avoid experiencing a sense of our danger?—will not the conviction arise in our minds, forgiveness must be obtained, or I am lost!

5. Yet again, since all things are under the control of Him whom we worship, we may with confidence pray that “we may not be led into temptation, but delivered from evil.” Nothing can take place in the world without the permission of its divine Governor. The events which exert an influence upon our spiritual or temporal welfare, are all within his control. Our career in life will be that which he allows it to be.

This rapid review of the petitions contained in the Lord’s prayer, has been taken for the purpose of

showing how completely the concluding ascription of praise furnishes a reason for presenting each one of them. Every particular which has been referred to, may, and ought to become the subject of our addresses to God, for, or *because* his is the dominion, and power, and glory, for ever.

The concluding expression indicates that these divine attributes, which render the Almighty the proper object of hope and reliance, will always exist. There never can a period arrive when He will not be supremely adorable—when our being and happiness will not alike depend upon his will.

I have now, in a series of brief lectures, presented the most important thoughts which arise from the consideration of the several parts of the prayer which our Saviour taught to his disciples. With a few reflections I shall now dismiss it from our view.

1. I would then note the excellence of this prayer. From Him who spake as never man spake, and who is the great medium through which our worship is to be offered, this excellence was to be expected. Nor are our expectations disappointed. The language and spirit which distinguish it are such as become creatures such as we are, addressing the awful, yet merciful God—and no blessing which we need is unsolicited.

And in reference to this I would in the second place note the comprehensiveness of this prayer.

The pardon of our sins, the subjection of our souls to the influence of grace—a sufficiency of the temporal blessings in the gift of Providence—a preservation from evil—what more do we want? Is there any thing which it is proper to ask which is not comprehended in one of these particulars? There is nothing.

The last reflection which I shall make refers to the brevity of this form of devotion. Our Saviour did not design to restrict us to this particular form, neither has he forbidden us to dilate upon its several parts. Yet from this formula, from his express declaration, and from the reason of the case, we learn that our prayers are not to be protracted to tediousness. We know that the disciples were cautioned against imitating the Pharisees in the use of long prayers, and the heathen in the use of vain repetition. And, as we have just remarked, the reason of the thing will lead us to the same conclusion. In the first place, the practice of extending our petitions to a great length, seems inconsistent with the obvious fact, that our heavenly Father knows what we want before we ask him. In the next place, this practice often leads to the endless repetition of the same ideas, with perhaps some slight variation in the language. In the last place, it renders our devotions not so profitable as they would otherwise be. The attention should be lively and the feelings animated, when we worship God ;

but this state of things cannot exist when, by the tediousness of him who leads in prayer, weariness is induced in the auditors.

Let us, then, my brethren, endeavor to cherish the spirit of prayer. When we come before the mercy seat, let our words be few, well ordered, and expressing the language of our hearts; and let our addresses to the Author of grace be frequent in the sanctuaries where he is publicly worshipped, in the circle of our family, and in the retirement of our closets and our bosoms.

SERMON XIV.

FAITH WHICH WORKETH BY LOVE.

GALATIANS V. 6.

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision ; but faith which worketh by love.

AMONG the early converts from Judaism to Christianity, there prevailed much misapprehension concerning the degree of regard due to their ancient institutions. The gospel indeed was fully adequate to correct those misapprehensions, and gave sufficient information that the Jewish dispensation with all its ceremonies and institutions was superseded by one of more perfect character and extensive authority. Yet it was not surprising that their veneration for an ancient establishment which had for many ages been the pride and consolation of their nation, and their conviction that this establishment had rested on the authority of Jehovah, their

God and protector, should induce many to respect its ordinances, even after they had been instructed in that revelation which the Almighty had given to them through his Son. Accordingly we find that the rite of circumcision was still practiced by many of the primitive Christians of the race of Israel. In itself this was no serious evil ; yet when respect is had to the motives and views in which this practice originated, its impropriety is exceedingly obvious.

The error to which respect is now had, is the substitute of this observance, and others connected with it, in the room of those merits of Jesus Christ, which must be the sole ground of our justification before God. This conduct is strongly reprobated by the Apostle in the passage at present under view. "For I testify again," he declares, "to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law ; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." Then comes the text. "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision ; but faith which worketh by love ;" i. e. under the dispensation established by Jesus Christ, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, nor any similar observances, are of any avail in the matter of our salvation. Faith working by love

is the essence of true religion and the only sure and rational ground of hope.

This passage has been selected as the subject of remark on the present occasion, because in it is solved one of the most interesting questions which can engage the attention of reasonable and accountable beings. What is true religion? that which comprises our duties to God and to our fellow creatures, and which is the only preparation for everlasting happiness? This is the inquiry alluded to. It is believed that every man who thinks at all has formed some scheme of belief on this subject. But as such systems are often formed without recourse being had to the only source of accurate information, they are generally not more false in themselves than discordant with each other. Yet, according to the views which men respectively cherish, will be the conduct which they adopt. Each one finds something in his condition and character which satisfies his mind and furnishes him with grounds of hope. It may be useful to note some of the modifications under which the general error in question appears. It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to enumerate them all. The most prominent only will receive our attention. Among those, then, who fail in attaining correct views in religion, there are some who are latitudinarian in principle and lax in their views of morality. The confidence cherished by such persons

does not arise from the extent of their own performances, but from the easy terms upon which they imagine security can be attained. They do not endeavor to elevate their character to a conformity with the law established by a just and holy God ; but they lower the requisitions of that law so as to suit their own desires. If accountability be at all acknowledged, it is admitted with many restrictions, and is regulated by principles of the utmost leniency. Want of thought, force of natural passion, and the pressure of temptation, furnish in their view many palliatives of crime, and as for the rest, it is supposed that the mercy of God is of so universal application, that little apprehension need be cherished concerning any retribution for transgression. It is obvious that, according to this system, virtue and piety are things of little importance, and that there are few inducements to cultivate them, when, by their neglect, much present gratification may be secured. This scheme is, however, most evidently dictated by the inclination and not by the judgment and conscience of men. To these it is as much opposed as it is irreconcilable with the principles of revealed religion. And yet there are many who embrace it as correct, and who, if it be not so, are in a state of awful danger. Among the multitude of those whom we observe to be immoral and irreligious, although there are many conscious of their errors and designing at a future day to

correct them ; there are not a few who persuade themselves that the irregularities of their conduct are exceedingly venial, and as such have no alarming consequences attached to them. Yet, when the hour of judgment shall come, they shall perceive with deep but unavailing sorrow, that they have erected the structure of their belief and hopes upon a foundation of sand, and that a sudden and fearful desolation has taken place. Such is one of the errors into which men fall with respect to the obligation and nature of religious duty.

II. There is another less obviously false, and therefore more widely disseminated, and corrected with greater difficulty, which we may now consider. Respect is had to the expectation which many entertain of procuring the Almighty's approbation and favor by the possession of such a morality as we commonly observe in the world ; a morality not founded in religious principle, comprehending only our social duties and exclusive of any proper regard to the Supreme Being. Of all the methods in which men deviate from the only path leading to happiness, this is decidedly the most common and specious, and therefore the most dangerous. It is thought strange that he who is temperate in his habits, just in his intercourse with mankind, and of kind disposition and beneficent conduct, should not possess the approbation of his Creator and receive the recompense awarded to the pious. Now we

are far from undervaluing these qualities ; we love and respect him in whom they appear, and we know that they are indispensable elements of true religion. Yet they do not, of themselves, constitute it. They are not sufficient to obtain for us the divine approbation. They are not available for our final salvation. And why not ? In the first place, they are only a part, not the whole, of our duty. They have respect only to one of the two important relations which we occupy. They constitute the sum of our obligations toward our fellow creatures ; but do not at all fulfil those which we owe to our Creator. And can he who attends to one, and that an inferior branch of duty, be considered as absolved from any farther claims on his services ? Is he excusable in the breach of those higher obligations upon which all inferior ones depend ? Because I impose a due restraint upon my appetites and passions ; because I wrong no man, and do all in my power to render my fellow creatures happy, am I, therefore, guiltless when I forget my Creator, experience no gratitude for his mercies, nor love to his person, and pay no respect to his solemn injunctions ? Assuredly not.

But is this one branch of duties perfectly fulfilled by those who rest their hope of salvation upon their moral excellence ? We are persuaded that it is not ; and this is admitted by many of the individuals in question. Their goodness is, indeed, merely rela-

tive. When compared with that of multitudes of mankind, it may appear very considerable ; yet, when reference is had to a perfect model, it is lamentably deficient. But, as has already been observed, this deficiency is admitted on the behalf of many, and it is supposed that God, in his goodness, will pardon their imperfections in consideration of their general rectitude of conduct. It is true, that no man, in the present condition of human nature, can claim the divine approbation on the ground of perfect obedience, and that salvation can only be the inheritance of any, through the exercise of the Almighty's mercy. Yet, if we rely upon his mercy, we should only expect it through that medium which he may have prescribed. There are no promises to those who rely upon an imperfect morality. And mercy and grace are only extended to those who exercise repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ.

Thus there are some who substitute in the room of religion, that morality which is but a part of it. But there are others who fall into an opposite error, and form to themselves a system of religion of which morality constitutes no element. If the former mistake be a fatal one in reference to the happiness of a future state, the latter is equally so, and is moreover of actual detriment to the interests of society. The moral man, however he may fall

short of salvation, may be useful and estimable. The latter can neither be the one nor the other.

Under this general denomination, however, are comprised many varieties of character in other respects widely different from each other. There is the man who rests in the forms of religion. There is the one, who, mistaking the true nature of faith, and imagining it to be something of a merely speculative character, perverts the gospel, and derives from it encouragement to neglect the practice of righteousness. And in the last place, there are those in whose estimation piety consists in highly raised feelings, and strong confidence in the divine favor, but who, in the every day transactions of life, do not sustain a character consistent with their high professions.

All these forms of error have insinuated themselves into the Christian community, and are calculated to produce a fearful amount of evil. Under these circumstances, and while we are exposed to so many dangers, it seems of the highest importance that we should frequently fix our attention upon the nature of true religion; that having our hearts brought under the influence of its principles, and our lives conformed to its precepts, we may so run the career of human life as to attain the inheritance of a happy immortality. Having corrected some common mistakes in reference to the subject under view, we may now consider the apostolical decla-

ration, "that neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love."

This statement of the qualities to which the approbation of God is extended, is brief, but exceedingly comprehensive. He whose mind is thoroughly impressed and influenced by divine truth, and in whose heart dwells that love which is a fulfilling of the law; will not fail to possess great excellence, in the view both of God and man. Let us more particularly consider this description of the pious man. In the first place, he possesses "faith." There is much involved in this statement; but nothing of that mysterious nature which some have supposed, and which has in the view of many thrown discredit upon the principle we have in view. We do not mean by faith, that disposition to credit all the reveries of human folly, or all the inventions of human craftiness which distinguished the darker ages, and which is yet observable in some parts of Christendom. This implicit faith, as it has been termed, was the more meritorious in proportion as it stood in opposition to all reasonable ground of belief. We utterly disclaim any respect for such a principle. The faith of the gospel is a rational belief; resting upon testimony of well established authority. The communications which it receives are professedly from heaven, and they are not admitted before they are duly authenticated.

The term faith suggests to our minds the idea of trust or confidence ; and it may be considered in reference to two distinct objects. First, as it respects the principles of religious truth communicated by revelation ; and, secondly, as it regards the promises of mercy and grace contained in the gospel. Under the influence of this feeling, the mind readily assents to every communication which God has made to us ; whether it respect his own nature, the character of his dispensations, or the obligations of his creatures. The soul also earnestly embraces and fully reposes upon every expression of God's kindness to sinners—attends with joy to the message of peace brought by the Son—and is prepared to receive, with lively gratitude, the blessings which he has procured.

We have said that faith is a reasonable principle, and this general illustration of its nature may serve to confirm that statement. For surely, when we have satisfactory evidence that God, the fountain of truth, and the dispenser of all happiness has spoken to us, we may and ought to believe in his declarations, and confide in his promises. This principle moreover possesses an intrinsic moral excellence. It is a submission of the understanding to a teaching to which it ought to be subjected. It involves a subordination of the affections, where it is justly required. But waiving this and every other consideration, it is enough that this is the feeling upon

which God has chosen to make the communication of his grace to depend. Without faith, it is impossible to please him; and he that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life. If, therefore, we hope for the Almighty's favor—if we wish to inherit the blessings consequent upon it—then must we possess faith in its purity. And if we do not experience faith in its genuine character, any spurious resemblance of it will avail us nothing. It is not merely the profession of the lips, nor the simple assent of the understanding that will save us; with these must be conjoined the approbation of the heart. The faith that justifies us never exists alone, it is always associated with the other great elements of true religion referred to in the text. It is a faith which worketh by love. If then the guilt in which we have become involved is effaced through the instrumentality of faith, the production and increase of love in our souls is the very essence of our sanctification. With the existence of this feeling, is inseparably connected every devotional exercise, every act of piety or moral goodness. Love toward the Giver of our lives, the Author of our salvation, and the fellow creatures who participate with us in the blessings flowing from the one or the other, appears to provide effectually for the performance of all our duties, and to afford security against every error of conduct in a moral view. To love the Lord our

God with all our heart and our neighbor as ourselves, is the first and great commandment, comprehending in itself all others.

Let me, then, exhort you to yield a solemn and immediate attention to the great duties enjoined by religion. You should feel this to be your highest concern. The salvation of your souls is the object at which you should aim with unremitting ardor. If you are successful, you will be happy forever; if you fail, you perish. And in pursuit of this object, be careful that you do not fail in attaining it by the use of improper or inadequate means. Do not rely upon any of the various erroneous grounds of confidence this day exposed to view—be solicitous to possess that piety which has its seat in the heart, but controls for good the conduct of life; knowing that neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but **FAITH WHICH WORKETH BY LOVE.**

SERMON XV.

CHRIST'S EXPOSITION OF THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

MATTHEW v. 21, 22.

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt not kill,' and, 'Whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment : ' but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment : and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council : but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.

THE decalogue has by some been imagined to be an incomplete rule of moral conduct. In strictness of interpretation, it may be so ; yet, in the view taken of it by our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall find it to embrace a great number of cases, to which at first sight, it might not seem to apply. Much of the discourse on the Mount was taken up with

animadversions on the erroneous conceptions with respect to the moral law then prevalent, and with an exposition of its true and full import. The general principle of explication adopted by our divine Teacher, is that when a greater evil is forbidden, all its inferior degrees are so also by necessary implication. For instance, that under the general prohibition to kill, was intended a condemnation of those feelings even in an inferior degree, which in the most violent form led to this atrocious crime.

Such was not, however, the view taken of this precept by those who had undertaken to expound the law of God to their countrymen. While they were ready to bring to judgment such as had taken away another's life, they were inclined to tolerate violent resentment, reproachful language, and injurious conduct, provided it did not extend to the infliction of death. Our Saviour has given us a more accurate understanding of the will of God; and in the passage now under view, there are three particular instances in which the spirit of the sixth commandment is stated to be violated. The first is, 'being angry without cause.' This offence respects our fellow creatures in general; for in the morality of the gospel, they all sustain to us the relation of brethren. The inquiry which now presents itself, is this, Is anger ever to be indulged—can it in any instance be viewed as innocent? It

would seem from the text, that these questions must be answered affirmatively. The prohibition of causeless anger implies the allowance of that for which there exists reasonable grounds. And elsewhere an apostle has thus expressed himself, "Be ye angry and sin not." Eph. iv. 26. It is, however, of great importance to understand this subject aright, for every man who is incensed against another, fancies that he has just reason for being so; and that in fostering his feelings of animosity he is not acting criminally. A few observations will therefore be made on this subject, although it is difficult accurately to discriminate between what is to be allowed, and what is to be condemned. Anger, implying an uneasiness or discomposure of mind under the reception of an injury, is a principle of our nature, which like all others has its appropriate function; and under due restrictions, while it secures our own rights from violation, it is in no wise detrimental to the general welfare. Yet anger should not be causeless; it should not assume undue violence; it should not settle down into violent hatred, or an implacable spirit of revenge. Anger should not be without cause, and when it has cause, there should be a just proportion between the offence given, and the displeasure felt. This is very far from being the case in the intercourse of life. Imaginary insults or real injuries of a very trivial kind lead to immoderate transports of passion,

issuing in violence of speech and action. This, undoubtedly is highly criminal. And even an inferior degree of indignation, even if produced by the most sufficient cause, is greatly to be censured, provided it do not pass away with the occasion which excited it. It is to prevent malice from taking the place of transient anger, that the apostle, after the injunction to be angry and sin not, requires us not to let the sun go down upon our wrath. Such is the first evil against which we are warned, and which our Lord declared to his hearers would render them liable to the judgment of God, although it might not come under the cognizance of any human tribunal.

The next offence mentioned in the text, is the use of insulting, contemptuous language. Whoever shall say to his brother, "Raca;" the expression indicates the greatest emptiness and worthlessness; it was a common term of reproach among the Jews, as we learn from some collections taken from the Rabbinical writings. This offence, our Lord observes, would render him who committed it, liable to the sentence of the sanhedrin, or great council of the nation, who were competent to the infliction of the highest temporal punishment.

The third instance in which the spirit of God's commandment is violated, is of a similar nature with the one just mentioned. It differs from it in degree, but not in kind. It is the use of language

opprobrious in the extreme. To those who are only acquainted with the ordinary acceptation of the term "fool," it might not seem to convey any great censure. Yet occurring in scriptural language, the original word denotes not imbecility of mind, but perversity of heart. In the Proverbs and in the Psalms, it is frequently used in the sense of "rebel against God," "apostate from all good." He, therefore, who applied to another the epithet "moreh," or fool ; who by this term accused him of the highest offence against the Jewish law and the majesty of God ; and who did this unjustly, should be in danger of hell-fire—*literally*, shall be liable to the hell of fire. The word here translated hell, is "Gehenna." It is derived from Ghi Hin-nom, the valley of the son of Hinnom. It was a place near Jerusalem. It had been the scene of those abominable sacrifices in which children had been made to pass through the fire to Moloch. From this circumstance, among the Jews contemporary with our Saviour, the name of this valley had been used to express hell, the place of torment, the receptacle of lost souls.

It appears, then, according to our Lord's exposition of the sixth commandment, that it refers not only to the highest injury done to another's happiness ; but to unreasonable anger, to contemptuous language, to malignant reproaches. He, therefore, who would preserve a conscience void of

offence toward his fellow creatures, and who would avoid the just judgment of God, must not fall into these evils. Their criminality seems to rest on two considerations. In the first place, the feeling of anger leading to reproachful language and injurious conduct, is often causeless ; it springs from little or no provocation. Others become the objects of our hatred, or are much injured by us when they are entirely innocent. But in the second place, admitting that just cause of offence has been given, to us does not belong the prerogative of judgment : Vengeance is mine and I will repay, saith the Lord. Where we are not called to act judicially, and punish crimes committed against the well-being of society ; where we do not jeopardize the happiness of ourselves or others, we are to forgive those who have injured us, even as we hope for pardon from God whom we have in numerous instances offended.

Since, then, offences, comparatively so trivial, do not escape the divine judgment, with what terrible indignation must He regard one who raises his arm to destroy another's life. When you behold a human being in the last period of life ; when you witness the sufferings and the agony which issue in death ; when you contemplate the ruin which remains after the spirit has fled from its earthly habitation ; are not all your sympathies in operation ? do you not mourn over human calamity ? do you

not bitterly regret that human power is so inadequate to its relief? And such being the fact, does it not seem incredible that any one possessing the heart of a man, should become the voluntary agent in subjecting his fellow to evils so dreadful? He who takes away another's life, deprives him of the highest good which he possesses—a good which no power on earth can restore. The murderer may, moreover, become the instrument of still greater evil to his unhappy victim—by hurrying him to the judgment seat, with all his sins unrepented for, unforgiven. Dreadful however as it is, infliction sometimes becomes necessary, and even proper. When our own life can by no other means be preserved, we may lawfully take away that of him who assails us. The very highest requisition which duty makes is, that we love our neighbor as ourselves. It has never been enjoined upon us to love him better than ourselves. In the subordinate concerns of life it is indeed still our duty to respect his rights, however he may violate ours—but, should he proceed so far as to put our existence in jeopardy, all laws human or divine, hold us guiltless, when our own safety is secured by his destruction.

Another instance in which life may be taken away is judicially, as a punishment for certain crimes. There is one offence for which, beyond all controversy, this punishment may righteously be inflicted. For the crime of murder it is the just

retribution. It is the divine sentence—"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." Reason approves this decision, and the sentiments of our bosoms are in entire accordance with it. Other offences there are against the well-being of society and the happiness of individuals, to which this penalty is attached. The propriety of this proceeding is not in any of these instances entirely clear; in some of them it is of an exceedingly questionable character, and it is believed that the natural feelings of most men revolt from the spectacle of death inflicted, where there has been merely an infringement of the rights of property.

Excluding, then, the cases which have been mentioned, it is in all other instances deeply criminal to take away another's life. The degree of atrocity which marks this offence will vary according to circumstances, but it is at all times a crime of the greatest magnitude. When it springs from the immediate impulse of passion, arising from real or imagined injury, it is not of so high malignity as when without any previous offence taken. Murder is committed in order to effect some object which can only be attained by this horrible sacrifice. In the one instance, evil is done when it is repented for in a cooler moment, and a man acting while blinded by passion, however criminal, is decidedly less so than one who, in cool malignity or sordid avarice, commits a like offence.

While discussing the subject at present under view, we cannot forbear all reference to a glaring evil which has for several ages been the reproach of Christendom. Reference is had to murder, sanctioned by the opinion of the world, called for by the principles of honor. An individual deliberately taking away another's life, shall, under ordinary circumstances, be the object of abhorrence, and be shunned as the subject of the primal curse. Yet if this crime be perpetrated in a certain way—if the criminal while aiming at the destruction of his antagonist, shall expose himself to a like evil—then, is a wonderful change wrought in the estimate which the world takes of the action in question. We admit that there is a greater semblance of generosity in this conduct, than exists under other circumstances, where the midnight assassin assails his unsuspecting victim. Yet precisely the same injury is wrought in both instances; and the motive in which it originates is also the same. Life is destroyed, and it is destroyed for the gratification of revenge. The only difference existing is, that in the one instance there is an opportunity afforded to our antagonist to save himself by perpetrating the very crime which is intended against him. Accordingly, the practice to which we are referring is severely reprobated by all sound morality. It is alien from the spirit, condemned by the precepts of Christianity. As has already been observed, its

essential principle is a spirit of revenge. And before this practice can be justified, it must be shown that revenge of the most unrelenting character—revenge inflicting the most terrible evils on account of the most trivial offences, is allowable. The resentment of the honorable murderer, is pitiless. It makes no allowance for what may have been done in a moment of levity, and which may have been repented of the next hour, and for which apology would promptly be made, were it not that a corrupt public opinion condemns him who seems desirous to adjust, amicably, an existing difference. And what an immense disproportion in most instances exists between the injury inflicted and the satisfaction demanded. An offence which deserves not to be recollected for an hour, shall become the occasion of death to one or perhaps two human beings—shall remove the unhappy subjects themselves from all their joys, and hurry them to an awful retribution—and shall inflict evils upon seeming friends, for which compensation can never be given. Were it not descending from the high ground which the Christian moralist should take on this subject, we might say much in reference to the absurdity of the practice which we have been condemning, and inquire how any reasonable man can, for a moment, suppose that he obtains satisfaction for an injury, when on the field of blood he meets his antagonist on terms of perfect equality, and

when instead of being revenged for the insults already given, he may receive in addition to that insult, an injury of a more dreadful and irretrievable nature. But where a particular action is of a character so decidedly and awfully criminal, it would be only weakening the force of the argument, to advert to any considerations of mere expediency.

There is one reflection, with which I would dismiss this branch of the discussion, which may have weight with those who, in opposition to their better feeling and principles, are induced to resort to this preposterous mode of deciding differences, by a regard for their worldly reputation. The reflection is this, that they are about to commit an offence against God and their fellow creature, for which there may be no opportunity of repentance afforded. In the very act of destroying the life of another, they may lose their own, and thus be brought before the judgment seat of God with the guilt of blood upon their souls; with no interval of time in which the soul may be fitted for her passage to eternity. And if such a consideration do not induce them to pause ere they incur such a calamity, it is difficult to imagine a motive which could influence them.

I would now in conclusion, and in reverting to the general subject of this discourse, observe, that the evangelical spirit and morality are opposed to all violence and contention, inspiring peace and

gentleness and forgiveness. They, therefore, consist as illy with the pride, as with the spirit of revenge, which distinguish corrupted human nature; and the man of the world contemns the precepts of the gospel as productive of an abjectness of spirit degrading to human nature. This is not the case; these precepts enjoin forbearance and non-resistance to injuries. They do not produce their effects by infusing a contemptible pusillanimity, but by bringing the conduct under the control of a sense of duty to God and a feeling of benevolence to man; and when the Christian's conduct is supported by these principles, it is consistent with the greatest fortitude and evinces the truest magnanimity.

Let us, then, Christian brethren, who hope for redemption through Jesus, and who have called ourselves by His name, endeavor to possess His spirit and obey His precepts—and while all outrageous conduct is avoided, let us also be blameless in speech and disposition. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you with all malice, and be ye kind toward one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.

SERMON XVI.

GENUINENESS AND AUTHENTICITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

LUKE XXIV. 44.

And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.

IT was remarked by a distinguished writer* of the last age, “that a notion had very much spread of late, even among many who would be called Christians, that the truth of Christianity was independent of the Jewish dispensation.” It is believed that this sentiment is not a very uncommon one at the present time; and the consequence of its prevalence is, a neglect of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and an inattention to the evidence by

* Bishop Warburton, Divine Legation.

which their authority is supported. The idea which has thus been entertained is exceedingly erroneous. The former and latter part of what we are accustomed to receive as the canon of Scripture, are most intimately connected. Jesus Christ and his apostles refer in such terms to the writings accounted sacred among the Jews, that the fact of their spuriousness and want of authenticity would carry with it inevitable destruction to the claim to inspiration advanced by those by whom they were quoted. And as it has been very much the practice in modern times to wound Christianity through the sides of Judaism, we should be cautious how we leave the latter undefended, considering its intimate connection with the former.

It is believed that the authority of the Old Testament can be very amply supported, and that so far from presenting an obstacle to the reception of the religion of Christ, it yields to it as well as receives from it, additional confirmation.

The investigation and establishment of this truth is the object at present had in view. — And, in the course of our discussion, the claims to our regard made by the ancient Scriptures, will be supported on the following grounds:—

I. The Old Testament is the most ancient history extant, and possesses the most undoubted marks of authenticity.

II. It contains representations of Deity and exhi-

bitions of human duty, far transcending the sublimest speculations of heathen philosophy.

III. Its claims to inspiration are justified by the accurate prediction of future events.

IV. It is supported by the testimony of Jesus Christ, and thus appropriates to itself all the peculiar evidence of Christianity.

I. Our first proposition involves the fact of the genuineness and authenticity of the books of the Old Testament.

By the genuineness of any production, we understand that it was written by the person whose name it bears, and at the time when it is represented to have been composed. By its authenticity we understand, its possession of those characters of truth which entitle it to our belief. The pentateuch, for instance, is genuine if it be the production of Moses; it is authentic if the narrative which it contains be true.

Our inquiry first concerns the genuineness of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. In what age and by what author any book was written, are facts which can only be determined by historical evidence. This evidence may be—1st, The testimony of those who possess the means of information, and who have no inducement to deceive us. 2d, Certain marks in the work itself as respects language, style and sentiment, which indicate at what period and by whom it was written.

1st. The evidence of the former class possessed by the works in question, is most ample. They have been handed down from generation to generation as the productions of those whose names they bear. Those who were coeval with the authors, and transcribed any of these books, together with those who in successive ages transcribed them, form a series of witnesses to their genuineness. This is a proof which we never hesitate to admit in regard to the profane writers of antiquity—and in respect to the Jewish writings it is still more satisfactory; for there was an express and remarkable provision made, to preserve among them the traditional knowledge of all that was memorable in their history. We perceive evidence of this in the last address of Moses to the Israelites—Deut. xxxii. 7. “Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee.” In the 78th Psalm, also, there occurs this passage—“I will utter dark sayings of old, which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us; we will not hide them from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord.” But, as another reason why the true knowledge of the origin of these books could not have been lost, we may assign the fact that a particular tribe among the Jews was set apart for certain express purposes, one of which was the watching over their historical documents.

Observe moreover, that the Old Testament is not the production of a single author, nor belonging to any one age. Between the time of Moses, who was the first of the sacred writers, until the close of the canon, an interval of eleven hundred years elapsed. During this period we find in the later writers repeated references to those who had gone before them ; and this reference is an express testimony to the genuineness of the productions quoted. Having ascertained the fact that the Jews have always received their sacred books as genuine, and that they could not have been mistaken in their apprehensions, we may inquire whether they had any inducement to deliver a false testimony on this subject. Every candid man, sufficiently informed, must be sensible that they had no such inducement. It should be kept in mind that our present concern is not with the truth of the Jewish historical records, but with the simple fact of their having been written by certain individuals at a particular time—and what motive could the whole Jewish nation have had to concur in a misrepresentation of this matter ? There is no conceivable one. On the contrary, there are strong reasons why they should have exposed such a forgery, had it ever taken place. The representation given of the conduct of their forefathers is any other than a favorable one. The faults of individuals dear to their recollection are freely exposed. The religious institutions of a ceremonial

nature were most burthensome; and surely, they would not too readily acquiesce in the claims of an author who made such statements, and enjoined such observances.

But, we may pursue our investigation into the historical evidence of the genuineness of the Old Testament, in a manner more particular. We may commence our inquiries at a certain period, and ascend into a remoter antiquity. It may then be remarked, that the Scriptures of the Old Testament as we now have them, were in existence about the commencement of the Christian era. In regard to this fact, which is susceptible of proof from various sources, I shall merely cite the testimony of Josephus in his treatise against Apion. "We have not thousands of books discordant and contradicting each other: but we have only twenty-two which comprehend the history of all former ages, and are justly regarded as divine. Five of them proceed from Moses—they include as well the laws as an account of the creation of man, extending to his, i. e. Moses' death. This period comprehends near three thousand years. From the death of Moses to that of Artaxerxes, who was king of Persia after Xerxes, the prophets who succeeded Moses committed to writing in thirteen books, what was done in their days. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and instructions of life for man."

Extending our researches farther into antiquity,

at the distance of two hundred and eighty years before the Christian era, we meet with the Septuagint version of the whole Scriptures, which was made for the use of the Alexandrian Jews. This affords incontrovertible evidence that the Old Testament in its present form, existed at that period, and was received as genuine by those who had sufficient means of information on the subject. In regard to the pentateuch, the direct and conclusive evidence which we have, refers to a still greater antiquity. There are now extant, as there have been for near 3000 years, two distinct copies of the five books of Moses—the one in the ancient Hebrew character, which is called the Samaritan pentateuch; the other in the modern Hebrew character, which has been preserved by the Jews, and since the Christian era by Christians also. These copies have been preserved in such a manner as to render perfectly incredible the idea that the one should have been derived from the other, for a period at the least extending near a thousand years anterior to the Christian era. And we are thus led to the conclusion that an original existed prior to that time, from which both were derived. Let us consider the circumstances of the case. The Samaritans were a mixed race of people, consisting partly of a remnant of the ten tribes which were carried into captivity by the king of Assyria, but principally of

nations which had succeeded them in the occupation of their country.

Subsequently to the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, which took place B. C. 500 years, there existed between them and the Samaritans the most extreme hatred, which was productive of continual exchange of ill offices ; and this state of things continued until the coming of Christ. Now it is not to be believed that either of these nations would receive upon the authority of the other a book accounted sacred. Yet it is an indisputable fact, that by both has the pentateuch been preserved. The conclusion then is inevitable, that the production in question existed and was in high estimation prior to the period of which we have spoken.

But, before this time a division had taken place between the tribes inhabiting Canaan. After the death of Solomon, the ten tribes revolted from his son and successor—and from that time frequent wars existed between Judah and Israel, and there was a very considerable diversity in their worship. Unless, therefore, the books of Moses had existed antecedently to their separation, we cannot imagine how they could have been held in equal estimation by both parties. It does appear then that we have most satisfactory evidence of the existence of the first five books of the Old Testament, so early as the reign of Solomon, B. C. 1000. The objection however is still made, that the pentateuch might

have existed at that time, and yet not have been the production of Moses, but have been composed by some individual between the time of Joshua and the first kings. With regard to this statement, I would first observe that it is perfectly gratuitous—there exists for it no shadow of proof, and it should not be allowed to have the smallest weight when opposed by direct testimony. Now we have the explicit and uninterrupted testimony of the Jews in support of the genuineness of their books; and shall we not acquiesce in that testimony? We yield unhesitating credence to other nations when they testify concerning the founders of their religious or civil polity. We believe that Solon was the law-giver of the Athenians, and that the institutions of Sparta were derived from Lycurgus. Why then should not the Jews be credited, when they state that their laws and the ceremonies of their religion were promulgated by Moses. There does not appear any reason why they should not.

Moreover, the forgery of the books in question, under the circumstances of the case, would seem a thing impossible. Upon the contents of these books were founded the political and religious systems of the Jews, which were asserted to have proceeded from Moses, who claimed a divine inspiration. Now, suppose these books had appeared in any age subsequent to the one in which this lawgiver lived, could the people have been made to believe that their

institutions had proceeded from him, and had always been observed, when in fact their observance had been just introduced? The thing is impossible, and utterly incredible.

Some of the leading features of the argument for the genuineness of the Old Testament, founded upon external evidence, have now been brought under your view. We may next consider the evidence of this fact, which appears on the face of the record.

In the first place, the language, style, and manner of writing, used in the books of the Old Testament, establish their genuineness—an internal proof is thus afforded not only that these books were written by different persons, but about the time which is assigned to them. No language remains altogether stationary for many ages, and although from the simplicity of character, insulated condition, and little intercourse with their neighbors, which were characteristic of the Hebrews, the mutation in their language would not be very great, it would to some extent certainly exist. Now, upon comparing the different parts of the Bible in Hebrew, profound scholars have been convinced that they have been written in different and remote ages. But, the Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language soon after the captivity. The presumption then is, that the sacred books were all of them written before or about that period. But some of them were demon-

strably long anterior to that period, and we have therefore strong reason to conclude them genuine.

The evidence for the genuineness of the books in question has been thus particularly stated, because it is of the utmost importance that this fact be established. If our object has been attained, then we may know that the Old Testament history, as respects the principal part of it, is the narrative of those who were actors in the transactions which they describe, or who lived in or near the age in which they occurred. And we all know in how much higher estimation the testimony stands of contemporary witnesses, than of those who lived in succeeding ages.

It will now be necessary to ascertain the authenticity of these records; and for this purpose, we must consider the credibility of those by whom they were written.

That credence is due to the historians of the Old Testament, will appear from the following considerations, taken in connection with each other. In the first place, they were well acquainted with the facts which they relate. This necessarily results from the conclusions which we have established in relation to the genuineness of the Old Testament. The only difficulty which can be felt in relation to this subject, respects the book of Genesis, the history of which treats of events long anterior to the time of Moses. The question has been suggested, how did

he obtain materials for this history? To this inquiry three answers have been given,—he received them by inspiration—he consulted ancient records—or he relied upon oral tradition. In regard to the first solution, I would observe, that in this stage of our investigation it will not be proper to make any remarks on it. The second supposition has had some able advocates, who assign good reasons for their hypothesis. The third has also many advocates. Nor, admitting this last to be correct, are we to suppose that the information derived would be uncertain. Taking into consideration the longevity of the patriarchs, the tradition of the early occurrences in the world would not have to pass through a great many hands. It would stand thus, Adam, Lamech, Noah, Shem, Abraham, Isaac, Joseph, to Amram, the father of Moses. Tradition might very well be preserved uncorrupted through this channel, and the more especially since, as I shall hereafter take occasion to prove, there was given to the historian a superintending inspiration, which would secure him from error.

We have observed that the writers of the Old Testament were well acquainted with the things of which they testify; and it may now in addition be observed, that this testimony possesses the undoubted characteristics of truth. In estimating the confidence due to an historian, we are to consider whether his accounts are corroborated or contra-

dicted by other writers, and we are to look for the internal evidence which his narrative possesses of truth or falsehood. Now apply this process to the books in question, and what is the result? The sacred narrative is not contradicted by profane history, and that it is not more frequently supported, is to be attributed to the fact that the accounts of the former do not extend much beyond the period when the latter began to assume some authentic form.

And with regard to the internal marks of authenticity, the ancient Scriptures are remarkably distinguished. There is observable in their authors an air of simplicity and sincerity uniformly preserved, which could not well be assumed by impostors. Moreover, their narrative throughout is conducted with the most extreme particularity. This, as it affords innumerable opportunities of detecting falsehood, would certainly be carefully avoided by one whose story was not authentic. But to bring the subject more directly under view, let us confine our attention to the pentateuch, and consider what credit is due to Moses. On this subject, accept for consideration the following suggestions :

I. It is incredible that an impostor would have originated so holy a law as proceeded from the lawgiver of the Jews.

II. As Moses did not intentionally deceive others,

we cannot admit that he was deceived himself: he was neither an enthusiast, nor a dupe of others. In the whole narrative, he is exhibited in a very different light. Instead of presumptuously engaging in the great undertaking before him with the high confidence and overweening conduct of one carried away by his excited imagination and feelings, he evinced great reluctance toward entering on it; was frequently discouraged in its progress, and was alone enabled to persevere, by the unequivocal indications which he possessed of a divine support. But

III. He could not have imposed on the Israelites so as to induce their submission to institutions which were grounded on the facts detailed in their history. This is a consideration of very great weight. If the great facts of the exodus, and the subsequent transactions in their journeyings through the wilderness had not really taken place, it is utterly impossible that the Israelites could have respected the authority of Moses, or the authenticity of his writings. His narrative, indeed, exhibited repeated manifestations of the divine interposition on their behalf, and might thus flatter their vanity; but there was far more in this narrative of a character mortifying and degrading to them. But

IV. The credibility of Moses as an historian, is farther established by the fact that in his institutions

he paid no regard to his own interest, or that of his family. His own descendants were left in the humble station of ordinary Levites, while in his brother's family the priesthood was established, and the civil and military government was confided to a member of a different tribe.

As a last consideration I would state that some of his institutions were of such a nature, that no one who did not feel himself divinely authorized, would have ventured to impose them. As an example, take the institution of the sabbatical year; by which all cultivation of their lands was prohibited every seventh year. This measure, which was designed to inculcate the doctrine of a particular providence, would not be adopted without a strong confidence that this providence would be afforded. And this confidence could not reasonably be cherished, but in conformity with a divine promise; for it involved the fact that the production of one year would, under the supposed circumstances, always be sufficient for the maintenance of the people for two years. The imminent danger which would exist of the continual recurrence of famine, would prevent any ordinary lawgiver from establishing the institution to which we have had reference.

Upon these remarks, will be suffered to rest the first proposition, that the Old Testament is the most ancient history extant, and possesses undoubted

marks of authenticity. On another occasion, we shall consider the second proposition, that it contains representations of Deity, and exhibitions of human duty, far transcending the sublimest features of heathen philosophy.

SERMON XVII.

AUTHORITY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. ARGUMENT
FROM PROPHECY.

2 PETER i. 21.

*For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man :
but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the
Holy Ghost.*

ON a former occasion your attention was directed to some considerations on the genuineness and authenticity of the books of the Old Testament. If the argument, then proposed, should have been deemed satisfactory, there will be no difficulty in assenting to the following conclusions. The books in question contain a history of *great antiquity*. Those which were earliest written are now three centuries old, and their narrative extends backward as far as the creation. They, also, contain an *authentic* history. Excepting in

the instance of one book, they contain the accounts of those who were contemporary with the transactions detailed, which were not conveyed by oral tradition but committed to writing.

The Scriptures, moreover, furnish the only satisfactory and credible information in regard to the events which transpired in the early ages of the world, for it was long subsequent to these ages that profane history assumed any authentic form. If, then, no other claims were advanced on behalf of the writings of the Old Testament than are connected with the conclusions just stated, they should be the object of curiosity, of respect, and of diligent investigation. To these claims, however, others still higher are added. The Jewish Scriptures are the production of men, who were under the influence of *divine inspiration*. The *sublime and pure system of religion* which they unfolded has been adduced as furnishing one evidence of this fact. The *fulfilment of prophecy* is another medium of proof by which the same conclusion is supported. And upon this it is now designed to bestow some attention.

That the accurate prediction of future events is a certain criterion of divine inspiration cannot be doubted. *Conjectures* may be made with regard to things future, with which the event will often correspond. But human foresight is entirely limited to facts which bear an analogy to past transactions, and in regard to these it is far from being uniformly

correct. And it is not at all difficult to discriminate between the cases where there has been merely made a fortunate conjecture, and where God has given an insight into futurity to those whom he has appointed to reveal his will.

We may now proceed to the examination of some of the prophecies of the Old Testament. Prior to this examination, however, it will be necessary to obviate an objection. The obscurity of the ancient prophetic writings has been much insisted on, and it is alleged that this affords such a latitude in interpreting them, as will allow of their accommodation to any event. This representation is grossly incorrect. There is, indeed, in some particular predictions, a degree of obscurity existing previously to their fulfilment, but not subsequently to it. The event so perfectly corresponds with what had been foretold, as clearly to show that it, and it alone, had been intended by the prophets. The Scripture prophecies are, in this respect, most remarkably distinguished from the ambiguous responses of the heathen oracles, which were, in many instances, so framed, that in either of two opposite events, their credit would be preserved.

It will be proper to select, for our consideration, a few of that great number of prophecies which are contained in the Bible. They were continually given for a series of ages; one generation saw fulfilled what had been predicted to themselves or

their fathers, and these prophecies, with the account of their fulfilment, are contained in a succession of sacred books whose genuineness and authenticity rests on the surest grounds.

In the investigation of the subject which we have now undertaken, there are two inquiries to be answered. Were the supposed prophecies delivered prior to their alleged fulfilment? Did the event actually correspond with the previous declarations concerning it? We shall bear these particulars in mind, as we proceed in our discussion. The Old Testament prophecies may be thus classed :—

I. Those which refer to the Messiah.

II. Those which relate to the Jewish people.

III. Those which concern other nations.

With respect to those belonging to the first class, I shall not now offer any remarks; they are so numerous and important as to require a separate examination, which may at some future time be afforded to them. Out of the two remaining classes I shall select a few of the most remarkable. From the class referring to the Jewish nation, I shall select for your consideration the predictions of Moses, contained in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy. This illustrious lawgiver had completed the institutions which he had been appointed to deliver to the Israelites. His career was nearly finished, and it only remained for him to give a

final admonition to his people. To render this more impressive, an insight was given to him into their future destiny. He predicted the blessings which would attend obedience to their law ; the evils which would be consequent upon its violation. The latter were more insisted upon than the former, because it was foreseen that they would be more abundantly experienced. To the affecting representation of the calamities which would befall this singular people your attention will now be directed.

I shall not, however, dwell on any of the subordinate evils which they were destined to experience, but pass on to the period when their political existence terminated ; nor in reference to this crisis of their fate, shall I pause to consider how accurately it was predicted, and how remarkably characteristic of the Romans was the portrait of the instrument of their final and most terrible subjugation. It will be sufficient merely to quote the words of the prophecy—"The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth ; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand : a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor show favor to the young." It is not difficult to recognize in this description that people to whom the nations in succession bowed in subjection, and the circumstance of their remoteness becomes more strikingly apparent when it is con-

sidered that both Vespasian and Hadrian, the two great destroyers of the Jews, passed into Judea from a command in Britain, then deemed the extremity of the earth. The extreme and unparalleled sufferings which this devoted people endured at a time when they were besieged in all their gates are also most accurately foretold. But upon these it is not designed to insist. By limiting our view to a few specific points in the prophecy of Moses, a more distinct impression will be made upon our minds. I shall, therefore, cause to pass in review before you the following particulars in relation to the Jews. Their being plucked from their own land, their dispersion through all nations, their condition in this dispersion, and their continued existence as a distinct people.

We may compare together the prophecy and its fulfilment, and in doing this I shall avail myself of the researches of a learned writer who has left nothing to be supplied on this subject. In the 63d verse of the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, there occurs the following passage—"And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought; and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it." The conformity of this prediction with the event is undeniable. It was partially fulfilled in the Babylonish captivity,

and in the carrying away of the ten tribes by the Assyrians. Its full accomplishment took place at the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. Then were the Jews plucked from their own land; for at no distant period from the event alluded to, Adrian having suppressed a rebellion among them, published an edict forbidding them, upon pain of death, to set foot in Jerusalem or even to approach the country round about it. And this state of things has continued for seventeen centuries. Benjamin, of Tudela, a celebrated Jew of the twelfth century, reports that Jerusalem was almost entirely abandoned by the Jews; that in other places they were still fewer in number, and at a much more recent period an accurate traveller gives the following description of the Holy Land—"It is for the most part inhabited by Moors and Arabians. Turks there be few, but many Greeks and other Christians of all sects and nations, such as impute to the place an adherent holiness. Here be, also, some Jews, yet 'inherit they no part of the land, but in their own country do live as aliens.'" Sandys. We return to the prophecy—"And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other." How remarkably has this been verified. What people has ever been dispersed as they are? Where is the nation which is unknown to them or to which they are strangers? They exist in great numbers in the remotest parts

of the East, and abound in Europe, Africa, and America. This fact is so obvious, that I proceed to consider the predictions concerning their condition during their dispersion. "And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest." How strikingly does this refer to their numerous banishments from city to city and from country to country. Some of the most remarkable of these may be mentioned. In the latter end of the thirteenth century they were banished from England by Edward I., and were not permitted to return again and settle until the time of Cromwell. In the latter end of the fourteenth century they were banished from France (for the seventh time, says Megeray) by Charles VI. At the close of the fifteenth century they were banished from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella, and, according to Mariana, there were a hundred and seventy thousand families who left the kingdom. These found refuge in Portugal, from which, however, they were soon expelled. No wonder, then, if, under these circumstances, they should, in the language of the prophecy, "have a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind."

In verse 29, it is declared, "ye shall be oppressed and spoiled evermore," and who that is at all acquainted with the history of this unfortunate people, knows not that this has been remarkably the fact in respect of them. In verse 32, it is declared,

“thy sons and thy daughters shall be given unto another people.” We find the accomplishment of this prediction in the fact, that in several countries their children have been taken from them to be educated in the Popish religion. The fourth council of Toledo ordered, that they should be shut up in monasteries to be educated in the Christian faith. “And when they were banished from Portugal, the king,” says Mariana, “ordered all their children, under fourteen years, to be taken from them and baptized.

Again, in the 64th verse it is stated as a consequence of their dispersion, that they “should serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.” As the Jews have not generally been disposed to idolatry since the Babylonish captivity, it may be thought that this part of the prediction has failed. This is not the fact. They have been forced in many instances, to conform to the image worship of the church of Rome. The Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions, says Basnage, reduce them to the dilemma of either being hypocrites or being burnt; and the number of these dissemblers is very considerable. The same writer in another place remarks*—“The most surprising thing is, that this religion spreads from generation to generation, and still subsists in the

* Basnage, B. VII. C. xxi. Sec. 26.

persons of dissemblers in a remote posterity. In vain the great lords of Spain make alliances, change their names, and take ancient scutcheons, they are still known to be of Jewish race and Jews themselves. The convents of monks and nuns are full of them. Most of the canons, inquisitors, and bishops, proceed from this nation. This is enough to make the people and clergy of this country tremble.

In the meantime, Robio, who relates the fact, knew these dissemblers. He was one of them himself, and bent the knee before the sacrament. Moreover, he brings proof of his assertion in maintaining that there are in the synagogue of Amsterdam, brothers and sisters, and near relations to good families of Spain and Portugal; and even Franciscan Monks, Dominicans and Jesuits, who came to do penance and make amends for the crime they have committed in dissembling."

We return to the prophecy in verse 37th. "They shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations"—and, in verse 59, "their plagues shall be wonderful, even great plagues, and of long continuance." Both these statements have been remarkably fulfilled. Mohammedans, Pagans, and Christians, however widely differing on other subjects, agree in vilifying and persecuting this unhappy people—and in their desolate condition, they have now subsisted more than seventeen centuries.

We thus observe how remarkably the event has corresponded with the prediction, in regard to their being plucked from their own land—their dispersion through all nations, and their condition in that dispersion. The singular fact of their continued existence as a distinct people, is in exact accordance with what had been foretold. In Leviticus xxvi. 44, at the conclusion of passages similar to those which we have been considering, we find the following: “And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them.” In regard to the fact here expressed, how striking are the observations of a writer already quoted—“What nation hath suffered so much, and yet endured so long? What nation hath subsisted as a distinct people in their own country so long as they have done in their dispersion into all countries, and what a standing miracle is thus exhibited to the view of the whole world.”

Although not having any direct reference to the object had in view in this discourse, we cannot avoid here adverting to the inquiry, Why is this people so singularly preserved? Is it merely as monuments of the divine displeasure? or is it to furnish an abiding evidence of the divine legation of Moses, who has predicted all these things. Surely not. The Almighty yet has mercy in store

for them. This belief is founded upon many promises ; for instance, that contained in Deut. xxx. 1—3. “ And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day—That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee.” We confidently anticipate that the fulfilment of this promise will afford another ground of faith to other and future generations.

I would now call your attention to the conclusion resulting from the discussion in which we have been engaged.

Here then is a prediction and its accurate fulfilment. The prophecy is of undoubted antiquity—the accomplishment under our own eyes—The fact of this correspondence remains to be accounted for — “ Is human foresight — enthusiasm — conjecture — chance — political contrivance — adequate to the desired solution ?” “ If,” to use the language of a forcible writer,* “ none of these are sufficient to account for the fact, then true philosophy, as well

* Key to the Prophecies, by David Simpson.

as true religion, will ascribe it to the inspiration of the Almighty. But, if God be the author of these predictions, the book which contains them is stamped with the seal of heaven; a rich vein of evidence runs through the volume of the Old Testament: the Bible is true: infidelity is confounded forever; and we may address its patrons in the language of St. Paul, ‘Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish.’ ”

SERMON XVIII.

SUFFICIENCY AND AUTHORITY OF THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES.

2 TIMOTHY iii. 15.

The holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.

THE object for which man was created, was the subject of our consideration on a former occasion. It was then seen that the ultimate and highest end which he should purpose to himself, was the advancement of God's glory, and the possession of that happiness which is derived from his favor. But how may the divine glory be promoted by our instrumentality? How may we secure the blessedness consequent upon the divine favor? By one very simple means—conformity to the will of God. But who is the authorized interpreter of that will?



Whence are we to derive a knowledge of our duty, and of the means of happiness?

That Being to whom we owe all, and from whom we receive every thing, is alone competent to afford this instruction. But will he afford this information? Has he already given it?

He that is perfectly just, will not require conformity to an unknown rule of duty. Far less will He that is infinitely good act in this manner. By human beings, therefore, the knowledge of the nature and extent of their obligations is attainable. It is derived through a divine communication to them; and this communication is in its nature twofold. First, God speaks directly to the hearts of men; and second, He speaks to them by means of his written word. God speaks directly to the hearts of men. His declarations are intelligible, impressive, given without cessation. It is the voice of conscience to which I refer. This is the most universal mode in which the divine will is intimated to us. We are so constituted by the author of our being, that for certain actions or feelings we are self-condemned; for others, self-approved; and we are persuaded that these sentences will respectively be affirmed by Him to whom we have an account to render. In the regulation of human conduct, the principle alluded to is of vast importance. In the absence of a more sufficient rule, it imparts much necessary information. Where revelation has not

been made, or its light extinguished, the sole directory concerning good and evil, is the sense of right or wrong impressed upon our minds by the God who made us. And under all circumstances, its agency is most beneficial ; for when the daring transgressor despises the opinions of the good, and neglects the dictates of revelation, he has a monitor in his own bosom whose voice must be heard, and whose rebukes are terrible.

The Almighty, then, by the instrumentality of conscience, shows to men what is to be approved or avoided, under the circumstances in which they may be placed in life. In regard to his own character and purposes, there are also some discoveries made by means of what is termed the "light of nature." Reason, attentively observing the phenomena of the universe, and reflecting upon its own operations may ascertain many truths in religion. But conscience as a directory of duty, and reason as a guide to the knowledge of God, are far from being sufficient. The one may lose its influence by the repetition of transgression, the other is often fallacious, and always imperfect in its communications. An external revelation of God's will is, therefore, important ; one which is complete in its character ; sure in its decisions ; to which access may be had at all times, and which is uniform and consistent in its declarations. Such a revelation we believe has been given, and that it is contained

in those “ holy Scriptures which are able to make us wise unto salvation.”

It is not with religion as with many other subjects, that the knowledge which we attain must be the result of close observation, or profound thinking on our part. And it is impossible that it should be so. Objects not perceptible by the senses ; not subjects of consciousness ; not discoverable, therefore, by our reason, engage the attention and stimulate the exertions of him who wishes to do the Almighty’s will. These objects must, by some extraordinary means, be brought under the observation of men. This means, is an external revelation. Accordingly, we observe this element to enter into all the recorded dispensations of God. We observe it in the first place, when the world was in its infancy ; when creation was recent. With the parents of the human race before their apostasy, Jehovah appears to have preserved a direct intercourse. From a divine teacher they would derive a knowledge of the world’s formation—of the perfections of its author—of the duties and prospects of his creatures. When the degeneracy of the race ensued, still there were individuals favored with communications from their Maker. These discoveries, together with the knowledge orally transmitted from their fathers, constituted the patriarchal religion. The period when this became most comprehensive was the age of Abraham—

other ceremonies were added to the ancient rites—new and more definite promises given—and the dawning light of the last, and clearest, and most perfect dispensation of grace was beginning to appear. Before, however, its full splendor was revealed, there intervened an economy less perfect than itself, but admirably fitted to prepare for its approach. This was the age of Moses and the prophets. Revelation then first became written ; was thus invested with a permanent character, and adapted to afford instruction to all generations. To these writings the text had reference. It is more strikingly applicable to that word which in the latter days God has spoken by his Son.

It thus appears that the world has never been destitute of some divine communication. Of the sufficiency and exclusive authority of that contained in the New Testament, I now propose to treat.

The holy Scriptures, then, are able to make us wise unto salvation, inasmuch as they are a most comprehensive directory of faith and practice ; as they are distinguished by great excellence ; and as they are given by inspiration of God.

1. They are in the first place, a most comprehensive directory of faith and practice. There is nothing connected with our religious belief, duties or prospects, to which they do not refer. The origin of created things is related, with the time, and manner of their production. The character,

original operation, and continued interposition of the Creator are displayed. So are the primæval condition of man, and the subsequent events in his moral history. A still more interesting subject embraced in their instructions, is the future condition of intelligent beings ; for what is past, is irrevocable and immutable ; what is future, may be provided against. The nature of moral goodness—the means of attaining it—its happy consequences—the penal sanction by which its cultivation is enforced, are all comprised in the writings which we account sacred. Thus it appears that these writings comprehend every subject which can be interesting to us in a religious view. This is one recommendation of great value if certain others exist with it.

Another claim to our regard is presented on the ground of the intrinsic excellence of the records in question. There are two methods by which this may be determined. One criterion by which our Scriptures may be tried, is a reference to the decision of enlightened reason, associated with virtuous dispositions.

2. Another test is, the general and admitted tendency of its doctrines. Let the contents of sacred Scripture be compared with the dictates of reason, exempt from prejudice, and unbiassed by corruption. But are there such dictates originating solely in our own minds, independently of the knowledge given by revelation ?

The subject has been often discussed, and while some have held that the light of nature, as it is termed, is sufficient for our instruction in religion, others have deemed it a very imperfect and uncertain guide, and many have altogether disallowed its authority. That there is in the world a knowledge upon religious subjects, distinct from what is obtained from revelation, is by many considered as an incontrovertible fact. The evidence of it is found in the history of those nations to whom God has not spoken as he has done to us, but who are, nevertheless, not altogether ignorant of his character and existence. It is moreover supported by our conscience, which assures us that we should know God to exist; to be all-wise, all-powerful, had the Bible never unfolded its pages to our view. On the other hand, it is contended that the few elements of religious truth retained among heathen nations, are remains of an original, but generally forgotten revelation; and that with respect to the competency of our reason to attain the knowledge of particular truths, we may be mistaken. Conceptions previously formed under the guidance of revelation, afford us assistance in forming those conclusions which we supposed to be solely derived from our own reason. There is much force in these remarks, and it is sometimes necessary to insist upon them in opposition to the contemners of holy writ, who, after having received almost every par-

ticular of their religious knowledge from it, and from those who have enjoyed its instructions, attempt to detract from its authority, and presumptuously assert the "entire sufficiency" of human reason for instructing us in the knowledge of God's attributes and will. But while we can feel no hesitation in refusing to ratify such arrogant pretensions as those just mentioned, we cannot so readily determine the precise amount of religious information attainable by the natural powers of the human mind. It is impossible to find any human being who has been entirely left to the guidance of his own reason. In Christian lands, this is most obviously the case. From our infancy we have been taught many particulars concerning our duty, which now appear to us conformed to reason, as well as dictated by revelation; but whether without the communications of the latter, they would ever have been discovered by the former, is more than we can decide. And in this view, what is called natural religion, may be in truth, only a modification of that which is revealed; and as having no independent origin.

And so also in respect to heathen nations it may be argued that there was a period when the Almighty was known to the whole human family. When the majority of mankind fell into idolatry by forgetting the glorious nature of Him who created them, there was doubtless, something of their old knowledge retained, although much intermixed with error; and

this passing by tradition from generation to generation, came in time to be considered as truths discoverable by human reason. A remarkable confirmation of this statement is found in the fact that the earliest philosophy as well as theology known in profane antiquity, was traditional. It was not presented to mankind as elaborated by patient and profound thinking—it was received on the authority of the ancients. The earliest Greek sages sought it in Egypt, the mother of science, ordinary as well as sacred. And when their successors, deeming it unphilosophical to receive their opinions on the credit of others, sought to support them by rational investigation, instead of approximating to the truth, they departed more widely from it. And thus was the deficiency of reason, as the organ of determining religious truth, most remarkably exemplified.

But, while we hold the idea to be a preposterous one that revelation is rendered unnecessary, by the sufficiency of the light of nature—and while we are unable to determine precisely the information conveyed by the latter, one thing is certain—there are certain truths, which when presented to our minds command our cordial and unreserved assent, independently of any confirmation which may be conferred upon them by Scripture. Of ourselves we might not discover them—but when stated, we feel them to be true.

We do not then test the excellence of the

Scriptures by the conformity of their instructions with a religious and moral system resting solely upon rational demonstration, for it is exceedingly doubtful whether there be such a system—but we say, that the doctrines and precepts of Christianity, when made known, are approved by enlightened reason, associated with virtuous dispositions. The condition here mentioned is attached, because the judgments of men are in many instances, biased by their inclinations. And they who are conscious of depravity and guilt, will be disposed to cherish views in religion calculated to afford to their consciences peace, and to their minds the hope of future happiness. Allowance being made for this source of error, we appeal unhesitatingly to the natural judgment of mankind, concerning the truth and excellence of the scripture system. Its doctrines will be confirmed—its morals approved—the objections to it negatived by this authority. The fact of God's existence—the nature of his perfections—the general character of his dispensations, are so delineated that every wise and good man must yield his cordial acquiescence.

The only difficulty connected with the subject in hand, is but an apparent one. It is this—there are particular discoveries concerning the divine nature, which some suppose unreasonable and absurd—for instance the doctrine of the trinity. But, let it be observed that the scripture declarations on this

subject do not contravene any conceptions of the divine nature which is approved by human reason—something is merely superadded to these conceptions. You believe that God is eternal, wise, powerful, good—that he is one. So do we believe also—but, guided by what we are assured is a divine revelation, we believe that in the one perfect existence denominated God, there are three persons, in substance, perfection, and eternity the same, yet preserving different aspects toward us their creatures, and revealed as distinct in their operations. Does your reason afford you any evidence that this doctrine is not true? Have you so intimate a knowledge of the Almighty as to be sure that the distinctions in his nature to which we refer, have no existence? Surely not. All then which you can say is, that it is mysterious—that it is incomprehensible;—but is this the criterion of falsehood?—are those things alone true which you know and comprehend?—the supposition is an utterly absurd one.

The doctrines of the Christian revelation then, are affirmed by the natural judgment of all wise and good men.

Its precepts are also affirmed by the suggestions of an enlightened conscience. Upon this point I shall not dwell.

The excellence of the scripture morals, and their conformity with the best feelings of the human heart, no candid man will deny.

And, with regard to the objections made to the Christian system, they may be shown equally to apply to that deduced from the appearances of nature. There is an entire analogy between the dispensations of Providence and the economy of grace. And he who gives up revealed, must abandon natural religion—he must deny that God is, or assert that he is weak or imperfect.

Thus, the principle with which we set out—that the Holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation, has been proved by the fact that they are a most comprehensive rule of faith and practice, and that they possess an obvious and intrinsic excellence. This excellence has been supported by an appeal to enlightened reason, associated with good dispositions. We have yet to apply to it another test—the tendency to promote human happiness. This must however, be referred to another occasion, when we may also attempt to show, that ‘Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine—for correction—for reproof, and instruction in righteousness.’

SERMON XIX.

UTILITY OF THE SCRIPTURE HISTORIES.

1 CORINTHIANS x. 11.

*Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples :
and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the
ends of the world are come.*

THE possession of high privileges is, too often, productive rather of presumption than of a prudent care to improve them. And among the early Christians there were some, who, vain of the blessings which they enjoyed, seemed to forget that the good to be ultimately possessed depended not upon the advantages afforded to them for their religious edification, but upon the pious use of those advantages. Because they had received the right of baptism emblematic of moral purification, and partaken of the solemn ordinance of the Lord's supper in which their participation in the benefits flowing from his

death was represented ; they supposed themselves assured of the divine favor, whatever might be the irregularities of their conduct. The Apostle was desirous of correcting this erroneous apprehension. He would not have them remain ignorant that others had been alike favored with external privileges, who had nevertheless not escaped the severity of the divine judgments. The favors and immunities granted to the ancestors of the Jewish nation had not been limited to a few individuals of uncommon excellence ; they had been universally enjoyed. And those who were baptized into Moses, i. e. who, by baptism, were taken into the covenant of which he was mediator, who were fed by the manna, typical of the true bread from heaven, and who drank of that miraculous stream which flowed from the rock, who were refreshed by the covering of the cloud by day and guarded by its brightness when it nightly became a pillar of fire ; these very individuals, highly favored as they had been, were upon transgression, subjected to condign punishment. Their desire after evil things, their idolatry, their impurity, their tempting of Christ, who was that angel of God's presence, who guided them through the wilderness ; and their murmurings against his dispensations, induced, on one occasion, the destruction of three and twenty thousand ; on another the loss of many lives by the visitation of fiery serpents, and on many others

severe calamities from various sources. Since then these had partaken of the signs of Jehovah's covenant and enjoyed many religious privileges, and yet had not escaped punishment when they sinned ; it was in vain to expect, that at the period when the Apostle wrote, the possession of all the advantages afforded by the gospel, could procure for those who transgressed, exemption from God's judgments.

The particular incidents in the Jewish history to which I have referred, were in the view of the Apostle when the text was written, These are the things which happened unto them for examples to us. Not that the offending Israelites were made to act thus for this end, but that acting in such a manner as they did, and suffering such a punishment as was inflicted upon them, their experience might become a profitable subject of consideration wherever it should be known. They were, therefore, written or recorded for our admonition, for the instruction of the contemporaries of the Apostle, upon whom the ends of the world had come, who lived at the extremities of the two ages or dispensations under which the world had been placed, the ending of the Jewish, the beginning of the Christian age.

The leading idea of the passage now under view is, that the details of scriptural history were designed to promote our religious edification. It is, therefore, intended, on the present occasion, to bestow some attention in the illustration of this

principle. With unbelievers it has been common to doubt the utility or condemn the morality of some portions of the history of the Bible. Through a strange obliquity of the understanding, or a more culpable perversity of disposition, the fact of crimes being recorded, has been viewed as equivalent to their being approved or tolerated. Nothing can be more absurd than such a supposition. And while it is undeniable that the holy precepts, gracious promises, and pious examples, exhibited in the sacred Scriptures, constitute their great claims upon our regard, it is not the less true, that very much instruction may also be derived from the record which they contain of the errors of good or the crimes of wicked men. As has already been observed, the registering of a particular action is not equivalent to an approbation of it. In many instances there is a positive condemnation of such conduct as is criminal. Under such circumstances no difficulty can be felt. But there are other cases in which crimes of the more serious nature are stated without any censure annexed. One reason of this is, that the subsequent history, by exhibiting the consequences to which such conduct leads, may be viewed as implying a sufficient condemnation of it. But a more general explanation of this fact rests upon this principle, that the sacred writer, not assuming the character of a moral teacher, not even using all the rights of an historian in the most ex-

tensive sense of the term, often contents himself with giving a simple detail of facts, forbearing all comment. Yet even that detail may serve for our admonition when crimes are seen to be punished in this world, or when it is known that they shall meet retribution in another. Generally the same historian who records a crime, has occasion subsequently to note its punishment. And if, in any instance, it should be otherwise, the pious mind need experience no doubt that God rewards the just and punishes the wicked. For the recompense which is deferred even beyond the limit of the present life, shall nevertheless assuredly come, "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him."

The most plausible objection, however, which is made by the infidel, is, that individuals, celebrated in holy writ for their eminent piety, are also described, in some instances, as falling into errors and crimes of the most serious kinds. Are not such representations as these, it is asked, injurious to the cause of religion, by encouraging those who profess it, to imitate the conduct of those whose general character is approved while particular acts which they have committed have been greatly censurable? We believe that this is by no means the case. Let it be considered, in the first place, that all men, however excellent they may be, have, while in this

imperfect state, been liable to error and sin. This we know to be now the fact, and we are assured that it always has been so. That the Scriptures, therefore, should represent ancient believers as they actually were, is no impeachment of their purity, while it affords a strong proof of their authenticity. Nor are such representations less useful to us, than if they contained delineations of a perfect character. However desirable it might be to have before us, continually, faultless models, there is reason to believe that this evil would be felt. Individuals of undoubted sincerity and general excellence, might, under the consciousness of their deficiencies, fall into utter despair, if the character of the good man in the Scriptures, were, in every instance, marked by absolute perfection. But when they are assured that the infirmities which themselves experience have been common to the pious in all ages, the doubts which they might be disposed to entertain concerning their own integrity, are removed. And while this benefit is attained, there is no danger that encouragement will be given to transgression or negligence in duty. Such an event is not to be apprehended, where any thing of true piety exists; although it is to be lamented, that wicked men wrest this, as they do other portions of Scripture, to their own ruin. But men, who in the main, have been eminent for their piety, and who have, in a special manner, partaken of the divine favor,

have, in some instances, fallen into transgression of the most aggravated kind. And here your minds will be immediately turned to the king and poet and prophet of Israel, whom the Almighty had chosen to rule his people, who, by the general course of his conduct, merited the character originally bestowed upon him, of being a man after God's heart, but who, at one period, sinned more deeply, perhaps, than any one who was so highly distinguished, has ever done. Now that an individual, whose precious life had been without considerable blemish, might have so acted, and that such an one might afterwards become as illustrious for piety as he had been before his transgression, is by no means incredible. The deplorable corruption of human nature, not entirely corrected in the most holy man who has not attained the inheritance of immortality, renders a fall from so great a height to such a depth, a thing not beyond the range of possibility. Nor does the justice of God forbid the restoration, to his original estate, of one who is deeply and sincerely penitent. "An humble and contrite heart God will not despise." And if such an event might have occurred, the fact of it being recorded, furnishes no reason for impeaching the purity of the sacred writings, and is, in truth, a strong corroboration of their authenticity.

Let us in illustrating this matter, bestow some attention on the representation given to us, both of

the character of the action, and of the consequences by which it was attended. And first, with respect to the character of the action. It is represented as exceedingly odious to the Almighty. There is perhaps in no language a parable so beautiful and appropriate as that by which the prophet Nathan exhibited to the thoughtless monarch the enormity of his offence. Infatuated still by the passion which had so fatally led him astray, the royal offender feels not the application of the parable to himself, but is inflamed with a just indignation against the rich man, who, notwithstanding the abundance of his own possessions, could deprive his poor neighbor of his only, and his greatly cherished good. But, when the Prophet, armed with the authority of Jehovah, and fearless of the wrath of man, dared to admonish the powerful transgressor that for him the parable was intended, conviction is immediately produced in his mind, which was followed by sincere contrition, and humble confession.

We have thus seen that the Almighty is not represented as viewing with any allowance the crime of one so long and so highly favored by him. Nor was it without its bitter consequences. Through his penitence the punishment of his guilt was, to a certain extent, remitted. He did not die immediately, according to the ordinance of the Jewish law in reference to such offences as that

which he had committed. His transgression was also forgiven so far as the eternal consequences of it were concerned. But it became the source of deep and lasting affliction to him. After a reference to the great favor which God had shown to him, who had now proved himself so utterly unworthy of it, the Prophet pronounced the divine sentence—"The sword shall never depart from thy house," and, "Behold I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house." Those who are at all acquainted with the sacred history, will perceive how fully this sentence took effect; and in considering his numerous domestic troubles and temporary banishment from his throne, will not be tempted to envy the power and distinction which were associated with such evils.

These remarks, on one of the most interesting characters exhibited in holy writ, have been offered, because his melancholy apostasy has been made the occasion of reproach against revealed religion; and because it was necessary to show that the Scriptures in recording the errors of even good men, have not sanctioned them; and that the record of them is intended for the admonition of succeeding ages.

It will not consist with the limits of the present exercise, to take any thing like a general view of the various instruction which may be derived from

the record of the divine dispensations which is contained in the Bible. There are one or two general truths uniformly inculcated, to which we may make a passing reference.

A most important principle established by the whole tenor of the scriptural history is, "that sin is an object of the divine abhorrence, and will invariably, unless repented of, meet its just recompense." It is only necessary to remind you of the consequences which are represented as ensuing upon man's first disobedience; of the destruction of the world in the days of Noah; of the sufferings of the Israelites in the wilderness; of the succeeding calamities of the Jewish people; of the overthrow and ruin of surrounding nations in consequence of their crimes. These, with other events in which individuals were alone concerned, afford the most striking displays of the divine justice, and are well calculated to inspire us with the fear of God, whose holiness is unspotted, and whose judgment upon transgressors is terrible. But not only are the details of sacred history fitted to produce in us awe of the Almighty's power and justice; they furnish to those who are obedient to his commandments, the strongest reason for exercising trust in God. One instance may suffice in the room of many. And what more illustrious example may we cite than that of the patriarch Abraham. We may observe him, at the divine

command, renouncing home and kindred, sojourning in a strange land ; expecting adversity, but never despairing of the divine goodness. And how fully were his faith and obedience rewarded. Earthly prosperity was afforded to him ; he became the father of nations ; he was the progenitor of Messiah, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed. What encouragement do such examples afford to persevering obedience, and unwavering dependence on the divine promises. These instances of rewarded piety are recorded for our admonition, as well as those in which sin has met its punishment. Let us, then, endeavor to make all Scripture profitable to us ; while we reverently attend to the divine precepts, and gladly embrace the divine promises. Let us avail ourselves of the experience of others in ordering our own conduct aright. The evils which have been fatal to others, let us avoid ; of the good which they may have done, let us be emulous. Let us be instructed that one instance of transgression only leads to other and more serious ones ; and that he who would successfully resist his corrupt propensities, must do so before long indulgence has rendered them uncontrollable. In fine, let us propose to ourselves the most excellent models ; imitating the pious, where their conduct has been praiseworthy, and avoiding the errors into which they have fallen : warned by their example,

we may avoid many things which obstruct our salvation ; encouraged by their ultimate success, we shall be secured against desponding, and thus become followers of those, who, by faith and patience, inherit the promises.

SERMON XX.

ON PHILOSOPHIZING IN RELIGION.

COLOSSIANS ii. 8.

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

IN order to the attainment of a correct knowledge of the principles of Christianity, it is important to attend to the mode in which they are delivered to us. Whether they be authoritatively promulgated as the objects of our belief, or whether they be presented as subjects of rational inquiry, and allowed to rest on their intrinsic evidence, is a question of great importance. Upon the determination of this, will very much depend the method of investigation which we pursue, as well as the results at which we shall arrive. For there are two modes in which

some degree of religious knowledge may be obtained. The works of nature, and the course of events in the world, together with those fundamental laws of human belief, the influence of which we all experience, evince the being of God, and afford some discoveries of his perfections. With these materials, reason may construct a system of belief. But from the imperfection of these materials, and the limited powers of the instrument which is exercised upon them, there will exist great deficiencies in the religious knowledge obtained. There will be many particulars which will entirely elude our investigation, while there are others which we apprehend very erroneously. To enlarge our knowledge, and correct our misapprehensions on the important subject of religion, is the province of revelation. In its very nature, it involves the idea of supreme and ultimate authority in regard to the subjects of which it treats. For had human reason been adequate to our religious instruction, the Almighty had never spoken to us by his prophets and by his Son. When, therefore, he makes certain disclosures with regard to his own perfections and our duties, these are not exhibited to us as what we may admit or reject, according as our judgment approves or condemns them. They proceed from Him in whom the fullness of knowledge dwells, and whose word is a sufficient ground of most implicit reliance. And we are utterly amazed at the folly and presumption

of men, who, with the admitted fact of a divine revelation, venture to reject some of its discoveries as false, or to modify some of its principles so as to accord with their preconceived opinions. Numerous corruptions of Christianity have arisen from this disposition to bring the declarations of Jehovah before the tribunal of human reason, that they may be affirmed or negated. And until this arrogant spirit is subdued, we are not fitted for the reception of divine truth. Let us not, however, be misunderstood. It is not designed to inculcate a slavish subjection to authority ; it is not meant that we should embrace opinions unsupported by good evidence. Upon the principle which has been laid down, our religious views rest on the surest ground ; we have the declaration of that illustrious Being who, as he is the object of all religious worship, and the subject of all religious opinion, is also the source of all certain religious knowledge. It is the prerogative of reason to determine on the fact of a divine revelation, and to ascertain, on the principles of a just interpretation, what are its dictates ; but beyond this, it is not permitted to go. And there is the greatest propriety in the apostolic caution, " Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

It shall be our object, first to ascertain the meaning

of the terms occurring in this passage, and then to illustrate the idea which they convey.

The expression "spoil you," is literally "make a prey of you," "carry you away captive," so as to deprive you of the liberty which as Christians you enjoy, and subject you again to the bondage of ignorance and corruption. The instrument to be used for their injury, was "philosophy and vain deceit." This is an Hebrew mode of expression, equivalent to "a vain and deceitful philosophy." It refers to the speculations of the Greek sages and Jewish rabbies. That it was not confined to the views of the former, is apparent from the testimony of Philo Judæus, and of Josephus. Both of these writers use the term philosophy in reference to the Mosaic institutions, with the speculations grounded on them. The former author speaks of "those who embrace the philosophy of Moses;" and the latter observes, "there are three systems of philosophy among the Jews," referring to the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. This philosophy, to which St. Paul refers, is described as vain and deceitful. The systems of the Greek sages exhibited a most deplorable deficiency as respects the knowledge of God; and nothing can be more empty than the glosses which the Jewish doctors put upon the system of truth which had been divinely revealed to them.

The principles of the philosophy here condemned,

are distinguished as being according to the "tradition of men," as resting upon their unauthorized assertion—"as being according to the rudiments of the world," i. e., grounded upon the limited discoveries of the old dispensation, or the imperfect and erroneous views of unenlightened reason—and not after Christ—not conformed to the perfect knowledge which he has given of the divine character, and our duty and prospects. Thus much in explication of the terms of the passage before us. The idea which they convey is, that serious and fatal corruptions may be introduced into Christianity by an admixture of its principles with those of philosophy—and this is the principle which is to be illustrated on the present occasion.

The apostle is not to be regarded as condemning a just philosophy, which is conformed to truth. Between this and genuine Christianity there is no inconsistency. His reference is to those erroneous speculations which are honored with a title which they do not deserve. And it shall be my present object to show, that these have always, and do still exert a most unfavorable influence on the religious belief of men. There were doubtless some corruptions in faith and practice introduced by this means among the first Christians. This may be inferred from the caution given in the text. And to these corruptions there is explicit reference in a succeeding part of the same chapter. In the 16th

verse there is this admonition, in reference to a neglecting of the body—"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink." And again, in the 18th verse, "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels." There are here two superstitious observances alluded to: the practising of bodily austerities, and the worship of angels. With regard to the former, we have to observe, that it was derived from the Essenes, a Jewish sect strongly resembling the Pythagoreans among the Greeks. Now, although temperance in the use of the bounties of Providence, and a due subjection of the body to the influence of the soul, are highly commendable, yet we may exceed the bounds of propriety. And, when our abstinences and mortifications are thus excessive, our conduct is not only unreasonable in itself, but opposed to the designs of Providence. The evil is moreover, still greater when these bodily austerities are made the ground of a hope of the divine favor, and are substituted in the room of that which can alone recommend us to God.

The other superstitious observance mentioned by the Apostle, is "the worship of angels." That this evil arose from the speculations with regard to these beings, which were indulged in by both Jewish doctors and Grecian sages, cannot be controverted. Philo, in speaking of these beings observes, "they are like the eyes and ears of some great king,

beholding and hearing all things. These the philosophers call demons, but the Holy Scriptures call them angels, and most properly, for they carry the Father's commands to the children, and the children's wants to the Father. Not that he needs such intelligence who beforehand knows all things, but because it is more expedient for us mortals to make use of such mediators, that we may more admire and reverence the Supreme Governor." Very similar to this is the language of Plato. "Every demon is a middle being between God and mortal men." "God is not approached immediately by man, but all the commerce and intercourse between God and men is performed by the mediation of demons."

It was in conformity with these views that the worship of angels commenced—and here was a remarkable instance of the corrupting influence of false philosophy, of the evil consequences of departing from the purity of doctrine taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles.

We might now go on and derive a farther illustration of this truth, by considering the numerous errors which arose in the primitive church from the influence of the oriental philosophy.—And, in contemplating the various shocking opinions which constituted the Gnostic heresy in its several modifications, we should be abundantly satisfied with regard to the necessity which exists of deriving

our religious sentiments from the writings of those alone who were under the guidance of an infallible teacher.

It is not however, necessary to trace the evil against which the Apostle warns us, through all the exhibitions which have been made of it. It may be a more profitable employment to consider the errors in religion which arise from the habits of philosophical speculation, characteristic of the age in which we live.

The unfavorable influence which has been thus exerted upon genuine Christianity, has been in its operation two-fold—there has arisen a certain modification of its doctrines—and there has been produced a spirit adverse to its reception in general. It may here again be remarked, that truth in all its forms is consistent—that it cannot be one thing in philosophy and another in religion—and that the intellectual and moral science which is conformed to the nature of things, will not be opposed to the principles of a theology which God has revealed.

And yet, it has been too common to term him a philosopher who thinks with presumption or skepticism on the subject of religion. Under the specious pretext of free inquiry and of following truth wherever it may lead, opinions have been embraced, grateful to the pride or indulgent to the corruptions of men. The Scriptures have been resorted to with an intention of wresting them into a

conformity with preconceived opinions, or they have been contemptuously rejected, or they have been regarded with an indifference, which it is almost impossible to convert into any feeling of interest. The first and last mentioned modes of proceeding are those which are ordinarily adopted by the errorists of the present day. There are not many now who oppose Christianity with virulence. And, it is with a view to that form of religious belief which arrogates to itself the exclusive title of "rational" that we address to you the admonition, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

The system alluded to deserves to be classed among those corruptions of the faith against which the words of inspiration have warned us. It is most emphatically not "according to Christ"—it is grounded on the "tradition of men," and conformed to the "rudiments of the world." That it does not harmonize with the doctrine of Jesus and his Apostles is evident from one fact—the want of respect toward their writings exhibited by these philosophical Christians. This is so well known, and there have been such explicit avowals of it, that there exists no necessity of spending any time in demonstrating the fact. So completely has this state of things been superinduced, that the advocate of the pure faith of the gospel has not merely to

prove the fact of a divine revelation, and then triumphantly to cite its declarations as that from which there exists no appeal—he has to encounter another class of opponents, who, while admitting that Christianity is a system revealed from heaven, entertain most degrading views of the qualifications of those who were appointed to disclose it. The question has been—were the writers of the New Testament inspired, and are their declarations conclusive, in regard to what is to be believed or practised; or shall we regard them as honest, though fallible teachers, whose conclusions possess no authority other than what is derived from the strength of the reasoning on which they are founded? There are those who adopt the latter solution of this question, and who, therefore, while fully admitting the facts of the gospel narrative, claim the right of approving or condemning the doctrinal sentiments contained in the sacred writings. This is the only method by which their peculiar tenets can be supported, for the attempts made to prove them consistent with the opinions of the Apostles, have been totally unavailing. This is not a time when the insufficient grounds on which this hypothesis rests, can be exposed fully. And yet, the consideration of one general characteristic of the writings of the New Testament, seems sufficiently strong to overthrow it. The characteristic alluded to is this. The apostles do not ordinarily state their views in the

way of reasoning—they are delivered as authoritative declarations, which claim the submission of our minds to them, not on account of the conviction which attends rational demonstration, but on account of a belief in the testimony of those to whose veracity God has given full confirmation. And, although there can be nothing derogatory to us in this mode of receiving our religious knowledge—and although such a vast proportion of it is necessarily a matter of faith, yet there is advanced by many, the absurd and arrogant pretension, that their opinions must always exclusively rest on the evidence of reason. They accordingly form a system after the “tradition of men” and the rudiments of the world. This phraseology accurately expresses their religious knowledge, both in its source, and with regard to its extent. Its source is not God, in whom all the fullness of wisdom dwells—but exists in the uncertain reasonings of men, who, refusing to submit their minds to the authority of revelation, with overweening vanity advocate their own dogmas—and as their knowledge is derived from an insufficient source, so is it in its nature exceedingly imperfect. And, so far as it possesses the character of truth, it consists merely of those elementary principles of religion which are diffused in the world, which are the remains of an original revelation to the first men, or which have been attained to by the exercise of our own understanding.

It is then folly to substitute these beggarly elements in the room of the full and accurate information contained in holy Scripture—it is worse than folly, for there is involved in this conduct a criminal disregard to the teachings of eternal wisdom—and we earnestly exhort you to beware how any one thus carries you captive, inducing you to embrace opinions which are not “after Christ.”

But we have observed, that not only has a certain modification of religious opinion arisen, from the influence of the particular mode of philosophizing in which many have indulged, but that there has also been produced a feeling exceedingly unfavorable to the reception of Christianity in general—a feeling of total indifference in regard to it. A stronger obstacle than this to embracing the truth, cannot well be imagined. The most virulent opposer of our faith experiences an interest in the controversy—he earnestly proposes his objections, and if they can be shown to be insufficient, we hope that conviction may be produced in his mind. But, how can we anticipate this result with regard to him who thinks so little of religion as not even to form an objection to it—who deems it of so little consequence whether Christianity be true or false, as to be entirely indifferent whether the sentiments of others are conformed to his own or not.

Beware then, lest this feeling so unfavorable to all that is true in principle and good in practice, obtain

an admission into your hearts—remember that he who opposes the truth is not so far removed from the acknowledgment of it, as he who is utterly indifferent in relation to it. And, while you are strongly impressed with the vast importance of correctly understanding the divine will, be careful to resort for information to the oracles of God, where alone truth may be found without any admixture of error ; which contains discoveries indispensable to our happiness, that could never have been made by the soundest philosophy, and much less by that which is justly described as empty and deceitful.

SERMON XXI.

THE DIVINE AUTHORITY OF THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH.

REVELATION i. 10.*I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day.*

IN choosing this passage for our present consideration, it is not intended to direct your attention to the character and history of the writer, or to the very remarkable visions which were afforded to him while under the influence of the Spirit of prophecy. It is chosen as the groundwork of the observations which are to be made, simply as conveying the information, that in the time of the Apostles there was a day held in peculiar regard, and designated as the Lord's day. Having it in view to establish the authority of the Christian Sabbath, and designing principally to rest the argument on the language and usages of inspired men

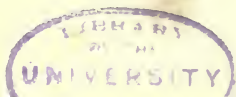
under the dispensation of the gospel, no more appropriate passage of holy writ could have been selected than the one which has been read to you. A considerable time has elapsed since this subject was on a former occasion brought under your view. It is necessary, however, that one so important should be again and again referred to. Yet it is our object at present, to give only a general statement of the argument then proposed, and to dwell principally upon some auxiliary considerations. In enforcing the precept, "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," it was urged that this precept being given to our first parents, was not to be viewed as of limited or temporary, but as of universal and permanent authority. In reply to the objection that the passage occurring in Genesis, was inserted by way of anticipation and in reference to the institution of the Sabbath in the wilderness, it was insisted that ours was by far the most obvious interpretation of that passage. It was, moreover, urged that the sacred historian's omission to mention the observance of the Sabbath during the patriarchal ages, was not conclusive against the fact of such observance, inasmuch as a similar omission marks the record of many ages subsequent to the undoubted establishment of the institution in question. In farther proof of the universal and permanent obligation to keep holy the Sabbath day, it was remarked, that the injunction to do so constituted a

particular part of the decalogue, of that moral code which was given to the Israelites, and which was designed to retain its authority when their political and ceremonial ordinances were to vanish away. To render the reasoning referred to applicable to the first day of the week which we religiously observe, a discrimination took place between what was of moral obligation and what was of positive institution in the fourth commandment. It was stated that the separation of a fixed portion of time for the worship of God was of moral obligation—the precise day so separated was of positive institution, and might consequently be varied ; and it was attempted to be shown, that a change from the seventh to the first day of the week rested on the authority of him who was Lord of the Sabbath day. This consideration, which was at that time viewed as a subsidiary one, will, on the present occasion, be principally rested upon ; and the duty of keeping holy a Sabbath day be enforced from the Scriptures of the New Testament, and from the reason of the thing.

In entering upon this discussion, it is admitted that neither our Lord nor his Apostles have left any precepts upon the subject. But in the absence of such precepts, may not some other indication of the divine will be afforded ? There may, certainly. And it is believed that this indication exists in the practice of those inspired men to whom the Saviour

committed the office of proclaiming to all nations the faith of the gospel. It is, then, a well established fact, that at the very time of the first propagation of Christianity, a particular day was had in special respect by the Apostles, and that this was the first day of the week. Several manifestations of the risen Saviour to his disciples were made on this day. In John xx. 19, it is said, "Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst of them." In the 26th verse of the same chapter we read that, "after eight days," i. e. on the first day of the week following, "again his disciples were within." In the 20th chap. of the Acts there is a record of a similar custom existing in a Christian church quite remote from Jerusalem. "And we came to them at Troas in five days where we abode seven days : and upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." Again St. Paul writes to the Corinthians, "Concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, so do ye : upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." All these passages seem conclusive as to the fact that there was, in apostolical times, a particular day devoted to religious services.

The one last cited appears to be exceedingly unequivocal. It does not merely speak of a charitable appropriation to be made at one time, but at stated intervals upon similar seasons, and those seasons always the first day of the week. Add to all these instances the designation of *Lord's day*, occurring in the text, and our minds may be satisfied. And if it be objected that there is no evidence that St. John meant the first day of the week, we reply that there is no conceivable reason why any other day should be so described, while the appellation might very properly be bestowed upon that upon which the religious services of the first Christians were admitted to have been always performed. Taking into view, then, what we know to have been the usage of the church in its purest age, when it is apparent that there could not have been any unauthorized practice introduced, we may conclude that the observance of the Lord's day rested upon some precept of the Saviour, conveyed through the Apostles, although such precepts be not now remaining. That the observance of the Jewish Sabbath gradually ceased, and that the custom was silently introduced of separating for religious purposes the first day of the week, is an historical fact in reference to the Christian community; and that a change was effected in this particular manner, is to be referred to the divine condescension to human infirmity, which is with difficulty induced to



abandon ancient and long cherished usages. The inquiry, why the day on which the Christian Sabbath is now observed, was selected rather than any other, may deserve a passing notice. That it was the day of our Saviour's resurrection is the reason always assigned, and it is believed justly. It is true that we do not find this reason expressly stated in Scripture, but it seems to rest upon necessary implication. The resurrection of Jesus Christ, the most extraordinary event recorded in the New Testament, and the one which incontestably establishes the authority of our religion, took place on the first day of the week. We find that this day immediately became an object of special regard among Christians. Viewing these two facts in connection, it does not appear necessary that we should in so many words be told that the Christian Sabbath was established in commemoration of the resurrection of the Saviour.

A well known writer, whose services in the support of revealed religion entitle him to very great respect, after taking the view of the subject which has now been presented to you, has nevertheless admitted that the considerations alleged go no farther than to establish the obligation publicly to worship God at stated intervals, without determining the fact whether the day upon which that worship falls should be wholly or only partially sanctified to religious purposes.

In this conclusion, we cannot concur. In stating the grounds of our dissent, we shall, for the time, admit that the precept of the decalogue is not binding upon Christians, yet comparing it with an institution undoubtedly belonging to the gospel, we believe that the arguments from analogy will establish the principle that not a part, but the whole of a day should be entirely employed in devotional offices and acts of piety. If the day which we regard were substantially the Jewish Sabbath, with the exception of a variation in respect to the time of its occurrence, there could exist no doubt with respect to the propriety of a similar observance in both instances. Although it is believed that such is truly the case, yet, for the present, this principle will not be insisted on. We may then only state, that the institution of the Lord's day is a similar one to the sabbatical institution existing under the Jewish economy. With regard to the analogy observable between them, there appears no reasonable doubt. Both are alike seasons for religious worship—both occur after the same interval, and both rest upon divine authority—the one supported by scriptural precept, the other enforced by scriptural usage. Now where these points of conformity exist, it is reasonable to suppose that the resemblance is entire, excepting in those instances where there is express evidence to the contrary. We are not, for example, to believe that similar penalties

should attend the violation of the Christian, as did the violation of the Jewish Sabbath. In the politico-religious system, of which the latter constituted a part, the Almighty, to the prerogatives of Deity added the attributes of a temporal sovereign. Earthly rewards and punishments enforced obedience to the laws then promulgated. But in reference to ourselves, who are placed under the general administration of Providence, transgressions which simply refer to the Almighty, must meet their recompense in another world. Even then if the precept given to the Hebrews be not in strictness of speech applicable to ourselves, it seems reasonable that the respect paid to the Lord's day should, in its general characteristics, resemble that which they paid to their day of sacred rest.

But in addition to the consideration which we have been urging, there is another which should very considerably influence our opinions and practice. It is not well to blend together sacred and secular employments. It is not denied that the spirit of devotion and its more common exercises should be in a manner incorporated with our ordinary avocations. But it is meant that the more solemn exercises of religion should have assigned to them some period in which they may be exclusively attended to. The public worship of God, and an attendance on the ministry of the gospel, when the most awful truths are delivered—truths

too, essential to our salvation, should be preceded by some preparation, and attended by recollection and meditation. It cannot be advantageous to pass suddenly from the cares and business of life, to the deliberate consideration of our eternal interests. It is important that the mind should attain a state of composure before it is fitted to receive all the benefit which may be derived from an attendance on the ministry of salvation. In order to this, it is not sufficient that a few hours should be taken from a day of bustle and perplexity. The tranquillity of the Sabbath morn, with the reflections appropriate to it, should prepare for the solemnities of the house of God. And when these are terminated, it is important that the truths delivered—the duties enjoined—the promises unfolded, should be again recalled to our recollection, lest by a sudden return to our worldly avocations those impressions may be effaced which might forcibly and permanently influence our destiny.

Having made these general remarks, it is not necessary to dwell on the degree and kind of respect which should be paid to this sacred season. It will at once be understood that there should be a suspension of the ordinary business of life; whether that business consist of corporeal labor, or only require intellectual exertion. The hands may as well be used in our worldly employments, as our thoughts totally occupied with them. The one is

as great a violation of the Lord's day, and as great an obstruction to our religious improvement, as the other.

In the next place, the suspension of labor should not make way for vicious indulgences, or even for amusements which, at other times, are entirely innocent. This day is not one to be devoted to the pursuit of pleasure, neither are worldly gratifications in any way to interfere with an attention to higher objects—the worship of God, and the cultivation of religious sentiments in our hearts. It is not necessary that the Sabbath should be shrouded in gloom ; but it should be a season of seriousness, of thoughtfulness, of special attention to the offices of piety. It would require much time to enumerate all that we should do, or omit to do. It is better to give a general rule, and leave with your consciences the application of it. Let it then be remembered, that it is a day appropriated to religious purposes. Six days are allowed for the promotion of our temporal interests ; one is to be devoted to the advancement of our eternal well-being. So far, then, as human infirmity will permit ; so far as our own necessities and the duties of benevolence toward others do not interfere, we should render every engagement into which at such times we enter, subservient to the security of our own salvation.

It only remains that some observations be made on the importance and necessity of the sabbatical

institution. It is a dictate of reason, as well as of revelation, that God should be worshipped publicly, as well as revered in our bosoms. It is indispensable that some season be appropriated to this use ; and it is very important that this season be uniformly observed, and occur at fixed and known intervals. Were it otherwise, suitable preparatory arrangements could not be made, and much confusion and interference would take place between one man's business and another's devotions. As it is, however, the aspect in which the Sabbath is presented is an exceedingly interesting one ; it is a day of quiet, of peace, of general worship. And how necessary is such an establishment, almost to the very existence of religion in the world ! Not that the relation between the Creator and the creature is not eternal and immutable ; not that the dictates of reason and conscience will not always enforce the subserviency of the latter to the former : but so absorbing is worldly business ; so fascinating is worldly pleasure ; and so blind and impetuous are human passions, that unless there were something to call our attention occasionally to higher objects, there is great reason to believe that these objects would be utterly and fatally neglected. Let us, then, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. It is an institution wise, beneficent, profitable to us. Let us endeavor to avail ourselves to

the utmost of its advantages ; let us value and improve the earthly rest which is given to us, and we may thus be prepared for that more glorious and heavenly rest which remaineth for the people of God.

SERMON XXII.

IMPORTANCE OF EARLY PIETY.

Preached on the Sabbath preceding the administration of the Lord's supper.

ECCLESIASTES xii. 1.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.

AMONG those who ordinarily appear in this assembly, none more strongly interest our feelings, or appear to have higher claims to the attention of Christian ministers, than they of youthful age. There is, in many instances, a loveliness about them which wins our affections—a simplicity and openness of character which commands our confidence, and withal, a liability to err from thoughtlessness which excites our pity. It is therefore a painful spectacle to behold them increasing *not* in the pure wisdom which is from above, but in the knowledge of evil ;—*not* attaining greater purity of

character, but becoming more corrupted ;—*not* considering the destination which God has assigned to them, but living solely for pleasure ;—*not* preparing by the attainment of true piety for everlasting felicity, but treasuring up for themselves awful condemnation.

But our regret springs not solely from a view of the ruin in which they are involving themselves. We regard them as destined to exert a powerful influence on the next age. They will either by the experience of religion, become qualified to uphold the interests of truth and piety when their fathers have gone to their rest—they will afford to another generation a religious example and pious admonition, or, by a continuance in irreligion, they will dishonor God, oppose the prevalence of Christian feelings and principles, and diffuse widely the contagion of thoughtlessness, infidelity, or vice.

We therefore, with great attention, consider the indications of character afforded by the rising generation. We feel a strong desire to be instrumental in forming them to piety ; and in addition to the general counsels which refer alike to all, we would occasionally address to them some special considerations. For this, there exists a necessity. We have the example of the inspired preacher ; and his solemn admonition shall be enforced upon you at this time, “ Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come

not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

I would observe in the first place, that in reference to youth, this admonition is peculiarly important. The reasons which render it so, are suggested by the royal preacher in a passage which goes before, and is intimately connected with the text. I shall cite this in a version differing somewhat in expression from the received one. "Rejoice young man in thy youth, and let thy heart do thee good in the prime of thy days, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes : but be aware that on account of all this, God will bring thee into judgment."

There are circumstances connected with the season of youth, which, it would seem, tend to induce the cultivation of piety. Unpracticed in the evil ways of the world—unformed in transgression, and of strong sensibilities, it is to be expected that they would be very susceptible of religious impressions. There are indeed advantages possessed by us at this period ; but there are other influences operating, which are of a different character. One of the most dangerous misapprehensions of the young, in which they are exceedingly prone to indulge, is that their concern is not with death, but with life—with the pageantries and pleasures of this world, and not with the serious concerns connected with another state of existence. They

have moreover a strong relish for every kind of enjoyment, which induces a reluctance to submit to the restraints of religion. Thus are they prone to rejoice in the activity and vigor of body, and the buoyancy of spirits incident to youth; "their hearts do them good;" they inwardly bless themselves with the hope of length of days and abundant enjoyment; "they walk in the ways of their hearts and in the sight of their eyes," obeying the strong impulse to pleasure;—they indulge in extreme licentiousness of manners, or in the contempt or neglect of religious duty, or in an entire devotion to those gratifications which unfit for the serious and all important duties of life. Such is the result of our own observation, which accords with the representations of the preacher in the context. To this unlimited indulgence in thoughtlessness, worldly pleasure, and every criminal excess, using a species of grave irony, he exhorts the young; but immediately annexes the solemn caution, "but be thou aware that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Ever bear in your minds this awful truth, and then, if you can, give a loose to your passions and gratify every desire. And with perfect security might he give this indulgence with its accompanying condition. For to have a vivid apprehension of a judgment surely approaching and to persevere in transgression is impossible. Well, then, might the inspired writer go on to say, "Remember, there-

fore, thy Creator." For thus should the text be read as an inference from something previously suggested.

I. I shall now proceed to inquire what is implied in "remembering our Creator," and

II. To show why it is peculiarly incumbent on us to attend to this duty at the time mentioned in the passage under view.

I. In explication of the injunction, very little is necessary. It is, however, to be understood, that the Preacher does not refer to the cherishing in our minds a general idea of God's existence and relation to us, but to a serious regard to the considerations connected with these facts. In the first place, we are to remember, God is a being deserving our highest regard and entire obedience. He is the greatest, the best, the wisest of all existences; from him, indeed, they are all derived, and we ought to admire, and reverence, and praise him. He is, moreover, our Creator, who is continually engaged in upholding and blessing us, and can we withhold from him our love, gratitude, and obedience?

But we are, in the second place, to remember God as not merely deserving, but as requiring, this supreme devotion, and as enforcing his requisition by the most powerful sanctions.

His glory he will not give to another. He requires us to love him with all our hearts. His

indignation will be poured out upon those who call not on his name. Those who do not acknowledge him and obey not his gospel, will experience tribulation and anguish. For he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness. He will bring every secret thing into judgment.

Taking these solemn considerations into view, it must be regarded as excessive folly—it is destroying our own happiness to neglect our duties to God. We must therefore be convinced of the necessity of possessing true piety.

The exhortation of the text then is, remember your Creator, in order that you may love and obey him ; and seek your happiness in his favor.

II. I shall now proceed to inquire why it is so incumbent on us to regard this admonition at the time specified.

There are two periods of human life referred to in the passage we are considering. There is the season of youth, and there is another period which is designated as “evil days” and as “years in which we have no pleasure.” These are remarkably opposed to each other, and are distinguished as furnishing very different facilities for the performance of religious duty.

Youth is the period when mere existence is happiness—when the feelings are easily interested, and pleasure may be derived from innumerable sources—when, comparatively speaking, habits are yet un-

formed, and when propensities to evil may be resisted with far less difficulty than will be experienced afterwards. In old age, on the other hand, life has a tediousness about it—the relish for enjoyment is greatly diminished—habits become a second nature—and he, in regard to whom the influence of custom co-operates with natural depravity, is in a state in which, humanly speaking, reformation is not to be expected. We have, in the chapter from which the text is taken, a beautiful allegorical representation of the infirmities of age, which finally issue in death. Impaired sight, obstructed hearing, diminished vigor of limbs, a form bent by the weight of years, decayed sensibility, and a mind experiencing, to a melancholy extent, the influence of a wasting body. These are incident to an advanced period of human life; and, while they should be monitions of our approaching end, they too often indispose, as well as disqualify us for a diligent and successful preparation for this solemn event. Therefore before this period arrives, when happiness is greatly diminished, and the powers both of body and mind are rapidly failing, “Remember your Creator.”

To enforce this admonition, I would state some of the advantages attendant on the early possession of piety.

1. Security is obtained against any contingency of life. Few will deny that some preparation is

necessary in order to a happy entrance upon the world to come. Judgment is not heedlessly to be encountered. Yet judgment is immediately consequent upon death, and death may occur at any moment. Take then the instance of one who is not prepared to meet his God, and in what imminent danger does he continually live! Let his fond imagination be admitted to be true, that it is in any instance safe to defer to a bed of sickness or death the great concern of salvation. Yet how uncertain is it that he shall possess even this poor opportunity. An unexpected end, a disease affecting the reason, vain hope cherished to the last, producing an insensibility to the approaching danger, may prevent that earnest cry which might perhaps even at the eleventh hour indicate a sincere conversion to God.

You, then, my friends, who are still unprepared for eternity, occupy a station awfully perilous. The divine mandate may be issued to-day, and to-morrow where will you be? I tremble to think of it, and my tongue will not declare it.

It is with a reference to these things, that I have observed that the early possession of piety will secure us against all hazard. The earlier we become reconciled to God, the less risk we incur of destruction. Secure of his favor, we are ready to depart from life whenever he shall command us. We shall not be afraid of the pestilence that

walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. In life we confide in the divine protection, in death we rely upon his mercy and hope for an inheritance in his kingdom.

2. I would note as another advantage of remembering and serving our Creator in youth, the exemption from many painful but unavailing regrets in future age. To you who are Christians, but who have become such at an advanced age, I may appeal in regard to the existence of these regrets. Let it be admitted that ere you had become reconciled to God, you preserved a strict morality—that you violated no man's rights, and injured no man's happiness—and that you were temperate in all things. Still do you not now look back with shame and sorrow on many years spent in forgetfulness of God and neglect of his worship? And if you have not been highly favored in escaping the snares incident to youth, and the vices to which mature age is exposed, the emotions of sorrow with which the retrospection of life is taken, will be much aggravated. An awful amount of guilt is incurred, which will be remembered with pain even while the hope of forgiveness is cherished. Embracing religion as early in life as may be, we shall have abundant cause of penitence and humiliation. This cause will be increased with every passing year, or month, or even day. And will you not put an end to this accumulation of guilt—will you not diminish the sorrow

which is reserved for a future hour, and obviate not *one*, but *many* of the pangs of remorse which you are hereafter to experience, if the present course of life is persevered in.

3. Another advantage attendant on early remembering our Creator, is that a purer piety will be felt, and more perfect rectitude possessed, than would be obtained by one whose life was far spent ere he had become the subject of religious feeling. Far be it from us to limit the grace of God by saying that the aged transgressor may not be brought to experience, in a high degree, the affections, and well to maintain the deportment of the Christian. But it is the dictate of reason which Scripture supports and our observation confirms, that to those who have been long accustomed to do evil, the performance of good is a difficult undertaking. Relapses into former errors often take place in the beginning of their Christian life—old passions are with great difficulty eradicated, and when he who has early become the subject of piety is rejoicing in hope, and adorning the profession of the gospel, they are perplexed with doubt, and perhaps are often failing in duty. Doubtless there are many instances in which these observations do not apply ; but they will be felt as true by most to whom they are referred.

Let me then again urge the admonition, “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,

while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." By this means, you will secure yourselves against all evil—you will save yourselves from many bitter and unavailing regrets, and you will attain greater purity of Christian feeling, and more elevation of Christian character. Shall not the representations which have been made produce some effect upon you? Are not your judgments convinced, and should not your hearts be impressed? Hold fast this conviction and cherish this impression, and make an immediate determination to perform your duties to God. If you act otherwise, what will be the consequence? You may direct all the faculties of the soul to the acquisition of an ample portion in this life, while God is not at all remembered—you may spend the prime of your days in worldly pleasure—you may run to every excess of riot, and desire encouragement to perseverance in this course of conduct, from the impunity which the Almighty seems to allow you. Yet forget not—for all these things you shall be brought into judgment. Youth shall pass away, and mature, soon issue in advanced and declining age. Then your joys will be diminished, and a deficiency of present happiness will not be supplied by the hope of any future blessedness on earth. You will at such a season require some consolation, and where is it to be found but in the feelings and

expectations produced by religion? If, however, you are willing to meet a cheerless old age, enlivened by no hopes, and embittered by much remorse, still are you prepared to encounter the scenes in which it will issue? For when our clay tabernacle has tumbled into ruin, then shall the dust return to dust, and the spirit return to God, to receive a merited recompense. By the terrors of that day and hour, I adjure you to remember your Creator, and seek his favor. Is it because you are young that you will not regard this injunction? To you, an interest in Jesus Christ and the approbation of your God are as necessary as they will be at any future period. And is not religion as lovely and consolatory in youth as in old age? Are you afraid of the reproach or ridicule of the thoughtless or profane? But why should not the young be wise and considerate? Why should not they be pure in heart, blameless in conduct, and influenced by the noblest principles of which man is susceptible? It is a crime of awful magnitude to make such persons the objects of foolish jest, or contemptuous sarcasm; and they whose greatest happiness it is thus attempted to destroy, should rise superior to such base and malignant attacks. However others may choose to rush headlong to destruction, do not you, my young friends, suffer them to drag you downward with them.

I would now conclude by stating that on the

ensuing Sabbath, the sacrament of the Lord's supper will be dispensed. It is the rite by means of which a profession is made of faith and hope in Jesus Christ. Those of you my brethren who have often engaged in similar celebrations, know what gratification and improvement is to be expected, and what preparation is requisite. It is not known whether there be any who design for the first time to profess subjection to the laws of the Redeemer ; it is hoped that there may be such. If any of you are so convinced of your sins that you feel the necessity of seeking salvation ; if you wish to live in the service of God and prepare for his kingdom, do not allow the approaching season to pass without improvement. Honor the Saviour by professing his name ; seek strength and consolation through that medium by which they are often communicated. Turn not aside from the gracious invitation which is given to you. Endeavor with right dispositions to meet Jesus Christ at his table on earth, and you may hope to enjoy his communion in heaven.

May God grant to us all this felicity, and to his name be the glory.

SERMON XXIII.

CHRIST OUR PASSOVER.

Preached at the meeting of Presbytery, at Black River, April, 1833.

1 CORINTHIANS v. 7.

For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

It has been common in all ages and countries, to institute rites, commemorative of remarkable transactions. This usage has existed in regard to things sacred as well as civil. It has been common to all religions whether true or false. It serves to call to the remembrance of men, events which are calculated powerfully to interest the feelings, or which have exerted a striking influence upon their happiness.

Among the various observances which distinguished the ancient church of God, none was more remarkable in itself, attended with more grateful recollections, or adapted to produce a deeper im-

pression upon the heart, than was the passover. According to the original institution of this rite, every family of Israel were required on the tenth day of the first month of their sacred year, which corresponds to part of our months of March and April, to select a kid or lamb in its first year, entirely without blemish. This was to be slain on the evening of the fourteenth day of the month—its blood was to be sprinkled on the posts of their doors—its body roasted whole, eaten with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Each family was to partake of this repast as in haste, with their loins girded to confine the loose flowing garments which they wore, and with their staves in their hand as prepared for a journey. A child was directed to inquire of the head of the family, “what mean ye by this service?” The answer to be given was, “It is the sacrifice of the Lord’s passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel, in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses.”

There is no one at all conversant with the Old Testament history, who does not remember the severe bondage of the Hebrews in a foreign land, and their singular deliverance from it. Induced by a remarkable providence to abandon their original habitation, the family of Jacob had in a series of years, increased in Egypt to a powerful nation. They had prospered under the fostering care of a

monarch, whose first minister was one of themselves. This patronage had been long continued, until the services of Joseph were forgotten and the number of his people had become the occasion of alarm to a jealous government. Then their oppressions commenced, and continued until the Almighty had compassion upon the people, whom he had chosen to be peculiarly his own. A succession of stupendous miracles were wrought to induce Pharaoh to allow their departure from his kingdom. Still he continued obdurate and inflexible, and the last and effectual judgment of Jehovah was inflicted. In one night, and gloomy and awful must have been that night, there was a great cry throughout the land of Egypt. Every habitation was filled with mourning, for its pride and consolation were destroyed—its first born was laid low.

Not so with the Israelites. The blood of the prescribed victim was sprinkled on their doors. It was a pledge of safety. The destroying angel passed over. And while sorrow weighed heavily on the soul of every Egyptian, the royal permission found the Hebrews ready to depart—their loins girded—their shoes on—their staves in their hands—and their repast ended.

It was in commemoration of this happy deliverance that the Israelites were required to celebrate the passover, through all their generations. But, in this ordinance there was not only a memorial of past

transactions, but a prefiguring of events to come. It was not only commemorative, but typical. This fact is implied in the text, and is elsewhere asserted. St. Paul terms "Christ, our passover." The Baptist hailed him as the Lamb of God. His blood, in reference to that of the paschal sacrifice, is termed the blood of sprinkling.

The term passover, is applied in general to the institution which has been described, it also denotes the time when it was celebrated, and it refers to the lamb which was slain. In the last acceptance it is to be taken in the passage under view. Between Jesus Christ and the lamb of the passover, there are certain points of correspondence. These have been variously enumerated. I shall at present only insist upon a single one.

The blood of the paschal lamb, sprinkled upon the doors of the Israelites on the night in which the first-born of Egypt perished, was a token and means of preservation, which, being recognized by the destroying angel, they were passed over. The blood shed by Jesus Christ, being applied to the souls of those who believe on him, they escape the stroke of justice which will involve in one common ruin the unbelieving world. The one sacrifice was the token of deliverance from temporal death—the other, the effectual instrument of redemption from eternal destruction.

It is on account of this and other correspon-

dences which might be mentioned, that Jesus Christ is termed "our passover." We may now bestow some attention on the fact that Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. I shall not on the present occasion, enter upon the consideration of the nature of sacrifices in general, nor prove that the death of our Saviour was truly and properly such. Our feelings at this time do not call for controversy, but for reflections which may impart fervency to our gratitude and love, and add vigor to our resolutions of holy obedience. We may therefore inquire—

I. What is implied in the statement of the text?

II. What influence it should have upon us?

I. In the statement that Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, there is involved the fact, "that we were in grievous bondage, and exposed to direful calamities." Our bondage was not to man, nor did it bind to severe and unrewarded labor—but it was not the less degrading. Corruption reigned in our hearts, and we labored, as we thought, for happiness, but in reality for something opposite to it, for the only wages of sin is death. The calamities also to which we were exposed were most awful. It was not the loss of those who were dearest to us—it was not bodily suffering, even when ending in dissolution—it was the loss of our souls—the exclusion from happiness forever—the subjection to hopeless, because interminable wretchedness.

In the statement of the text, moreover, there is

expressed the delightful truth, that Christians have been redeemed from bondage, and rescued from the most imminent danger. Christ is sacrificed for us. The guilt which was attached to us has been accounted his. He has suffered when we should have done so. Upon him has the curse alighted—and what are the consequences? We who believe upon him, are justified. We have peace with God. We do not with terror anticipate his judgments. He is reconciled to us, and has sent his Spirit down into our hearts, by whom they are purified and filled with consolation.

The truth then which St. Paul recalls to the remembrance of the Corinthians, and of which I would now remind you, is that having been wretched, we are now happy—that having been wicked, we have now hope that we are in some good degree sanctified—and that these blessings have been procured by Jesus Christ, through the sacrifice of himself. What influence should this truth have upon us? We should cherish a grateful remembrance of the love of Him who gave himself for our salvation. We should be careful that this love be suitably requited.

The present season is one which is well fitted to produce such a state of mind. We have before us the Lord's passover—a celebration by which we have forcibly exhibited the death of Him who hath brought to us redemption.

The original passover has long ceased to be observed as a sacrificial rite by those, who, through a melancholy infatuation, reject Him whom it prefigured. They deem it unlawful to sacrifice out of Jerusalem—and they therefore banish from their paschal celebrations all that is unequivocally of this character. But, Christians have a sacred feast corresponding to that which commemorated the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. It represents Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, without blemish, holy, harmless and undefiled, as slain for us. The sacrifice was accomplished at the very time when the paschal lamb was ordinarily killed. For, contrary to what has been received by many, it is probable that our Lord did not eat the last Jewish passover—that the supper, which with so many solemn circumstances he ate with his disciples, was on the night previous to that celebration—and that at the hour when he dismissed his spirit, the typical victim bled before the Jewish altar.

As then the ancient people of God by the passover preserved the remembrance of their remarkable deliverance from Egyptian servitude, so Christians, by an attendance on the solemn celebration before us, commemorate that higher redemption which they have experienced, from the bondage of sin, and the awful consequences of guilt.

We have seen what is involved in the statement of the text, and have in general observed that it

should operate as a powerful motive to the grateful recollection of the mercy of Jesus Christ. But, there is a special connection in which it is introduced by the Apostle, which deserves our attention at this time. "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

The occasion of this admonition, was the scandal which was attached to the Corinthian church, by their retaining in their communion a gross offender. "Know you not," he exclaims, "that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Evil, tolerated in a community is contagious, and one vicious member may corrupt all—and then follows the exhortation to purge out the old leaven. These expressions may to some require explanation.

Leaven is in Scripture emblematic of corruption, and for this reason, it was strictly enjoined upon the Israelites to remove from their dwellings, on the evening preceding the passover, even the smallest portion of this offensive substance. As the Christian passover was at hand, St. Paul enjoins it upon those to whom he wrote, to observe a similar precaution—to carefully separate from them that, of which leaven was emblematic.

By the old leaven, we may understand, the sin of impurity, for which the Corinthians had been notorious.

“Malice” refers to evil dispositions existing in the heart.

“Wickedness,” to the outward conduct flowing from it.

Sincerity refers to openness of character, and the reality of our kind feelings to others.

Truth characterizes the nature of the worship which we are to offer to God.

The general thought expressed in the passage is, that the Lord’s supper should be attended on with due preparation. That we should endeavor to separate from us every thing that is offensive to God. That, with purity, and simplicity, and fervency of spirit, we should attend upon our sacred feast.

Allow me then, brethren, at this solemn season, to urge upon you the apostolic exhortation.

It is hoped that those of you who design to participate in the holy ordinance before us, have been careful to put away from you the old leaven. Far be it from us to deter from eating the Lord’s passover, the humble and desponding Christian, who needs encouragement. Yet duty dictates the admonition, do not come forward while conscious that iniquity is habitually indulged in. Perfection we do not expect. But, a sincere desire to do the will of

God, evinced in all our conduct, is a feeling which we ought to observe in our hearts, ere we cherish the hope that we are Christians.

We trust, that of this feeling you are conscious, my brethren—that, although you may fall far short of what you ought to do, your failure is not in your apprehensions a matter of indifference—you deeply deplore it—your continual prayer to God is, that you may be wholly sanctified. It is the fervent aspiration of your soul—Give to me more of thy grace, oh Lord! Lift thou upon me the light of thy countenance!

Having therefore made suitable preparation, let us eat our passover with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. This occasion, of all others, calls for the high and pure exercise of Christian feeling. The event which we commemorate is one of great and eternal interest. We shall have Jesus Christ evidently set forth as crucified before us. The fearful conflict has been waged, and victory achieved. The pains of death have been endured, and our Lord has ascended on high, leading captivity captive—and the memorials of all this exist in the celebration upon which we are entering. Let the vanities of the world be forgotten, or remembered only to be despised—they are the enemies of our souls, and for them the blessings of eternity are oftentimes forfeited. Let all enmity toward our fellow creatures, die away; for, shall we not for-

give, when God's forgiveness is the delightful theme of our meditation? And, from hearts deeply penetrated by gratitude, let pure worship be rendered to our God and Redeemer.

And, who shall now join in obeying the last command of Jesus Christ? We do not expect to see those come forward who, insensible to their danger, feel not their need of salvation. Unhappy are they, and we know them to be so; and fain would we address an imploring voice, and yield to them an assisting hand, to guide them in the way of peace. But the hour has not yet come for them to be arrested in the course which leads downwards to destruction; and will that hour ever arrive? We may hope for it, and earnestly would we cling to this hope in regard to every one of you, even him of whom there is the greatest reason to despair. But our hopes may be disappointed. The gospel may be preached from Sabbath to Sabbath; this sacrament may be administered from season to season; God's providential dispensations may warn, and his Spirit admonish of duty, and yet you may die impenitent and unreconciled, and go down to sorrow. May God avert these evils, and although we shall not now meet you at the table of the Lord, yet may you do so at another and no distant period. At this time we expect to join with those who, resting on Jesus Christ for their salvation, and cherishing the love of God in their hearts, are willing, in the face

of the world, to make a profession of their faith, and love, and purposes of obedience. For them, this table is now spread. They are affectionately invited to come forward, that while communing with each other, they may show forth the Lord's death, until he come to judge the world, to be admired in his saints, and glorified in them that believe.

S E R M O N X X I V .

"IT IS FINISHED."

A Communion Sermon.

 JOHN xix. 30.

He said, It is finished ! and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

WE propose this day to commemorate an event striking in itself, solemn in its import, and leading to the most momentous consequences. We are to transport ourselves backward into a period many centuries distant. We will imagine ourselves placed in circumstances widely differing from those in which we now are. Judea, the land enlightened by prophecy and revelation, distinguished by peculiar marks of the divine favor, and trodden by the footsteps of the Son of God, shall present itself to our view. We shall enter into Jerusalem, the holy city, and amid the numberless objects which meet

our eyes, we will direct our attention to Him who came to seek and save that which was lost. His divine majesty, perfect holiness, and disinterested and unparalleled benevolence, will strike our minds. We will consider the last scenes of his life, and entering the chamber where, with his disciples, he had prepared to eat the passover, we shall observe him enjoining upon them a rite which was to be observed in all succeeding ages in commemoration of his death. We will then pass on to the awful consummation of the Messiah's sufferings, and while we behold him suspended in agony, and ready to dismiss his spirit, we shall hear from his lips the emphatic announcement, “It is finished.”

I. The will of God was then accomplished ; the great designs of the Almighty were executed. This is the first light in which the Saviour's exclamation is to be regarded.

What God brings to pass in time, was the object of his eternal purpose. The whole frame of created nature in all its parts and throughout all its revolutions, was in the view of the Creator, ere time began. The human race was ordained to exist ; their fall was foreseen and permitted ; their restoration was made to depend upon a determinate process. In conformity with the counsels of eternal wisdom, the Word of God, who was in the beginning ; who made the worlds ; who was the brightness of the Father's glory, and express image

of his person, became incarnate. It was ordained that he should be humbled for a season ; that although innocent, he should suffer ; that although far above men and angels, he should be controlled by human authority ; that he should endure death in a violent manner ; that his sufferings should be reckoned in lieu of those merited by human kind ; that the sins of the world should be laid on him ; that he should bear them away, and thus become the author of eternal life to those who believe on him. These were the counsels of peace which from everlasting existed in the divine mind concerning the redemption of man ; and at the hour when Jesus gave up his spirit they were accomplished.

II. But the great object toward which all prior dispensations had pointed, and to which they were subservient, was now effected ; and this is the second light in which we are to regard the Saviour's last declaration.

Two distinct divine dispensations had subsisted in the world previously to that in which Christ was manifested ; the patriarchal and Jewish. The former comprised within it the whole race of man ; the latter was restricted to a single people. In the former, the appointed Deliverer was exhibited to the faith of the devout, through the medium of prophetic declarations and symbolical actions. By the one, they were enabled to look into futurity

and contemplate the sufferings of Christ and the glory which should follow. Through the other, they had exhibited immediately to their view, by a lively representation, the same awful and interesting event. And in the offering of sacrifices which existed from the beginning, there was recognized a symbolical transfer of the guilt of the offerer, to the unoffending victim ; and there was reference made to One who should become a real and efficacious substitute ; who should forever put away sin from those who believed on him, by the sacrifice of himself.

Under the economy of Moses, the same general characteristics are observable, and to these, others were added ; but all were alike designed to shadow out, to express obscurely the advent—the character—the actions of the Author of our salvation. And when Jesus had attained the limit of his sufferings, when he was about to descend into that tomb from which he emerged gloriously and triumphantly—then were numerous prophecies fulfilled—then were all the types accomplished—then did the shadow give way to the substance, and the full revelation of Jesus Christ was made.

III. The humiliation moreover, of the Saviour, was past, and his sufferings had ended ; and it is thus we may understand the declaration—"It is finished." Let us then consider him in his humiliation—let us present to our minds a vivid

representation of his sufferings; and the exercise will be appropriate to the present occasion, and will conduce to our general improvement.

I would then recall to your remembrance the evils and privations to which He became subjected, who was Lord of all. I would not dwell on the humiliating circumstances of his birth—nor the obscurity in which a portion of his life was spent—nor on the reproaches which were subsequently cast upon him, during the earlier part of his ministry—but advancing toward the close, I would contemplate him during that eventful night when he was delivered into the hands of his enemies.

It is however proper, to the consideration of the Saviour's sufferings, to premise the observation, that in his humanity alone he could be afflicted—as respects his divine nature, he was evidently impassive. Nor does this consideration derogate at all from the efficacy of his death, or place it on an equality with that of any other human being. The intimate union of the eternal word with the man Christ Jesus, involved in a certain sense, a mutual communication of properties. The actions or affections of each are attributed to the other—one nature rendered him susceptible of suffering—the other conferred upon that suffering an infinite merit.

We shall now endeavor to fix our attention upon those all interesting events which occupied the last days of Jesus Christ while on earth. We shall pass

from the institution of that solemn feast which we have now before us, and accompany the Son of man into the garden to which he was accustomed to resort with his disciples. He withdraws himself from them, taking with him the three most highly favored. “Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death ; tarry ye here and watch with me. And he went a little farther and fell on his face and prayed, saying, Oh ! my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ; nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt. And he cometh to his disciples and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch one hour ? He went away again the second time and prayed, saying, Oh ! my Father, if this cup may not pass away except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again. And he left them and went away praying the third time. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and the sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground.” My brethren, what an awful scene is this ; what an intensity and peculiarity of suffering marks it. On most other occasions, bodily pain was endured by the Saviour, while the soul was serene and happy under the consciousness that he was doing the will of his Father who had sent him. But now his soul seems to be affected with agony indescribable. We do not attempt to define the nature or source of that suf-

fering which produces a distress so acute and almost insupportable. It was not of an ordinary character. It did not arise from the apprehension of approaching death, however ignominious or dreadful. A good man, about to suffer death wrongfully, could meet it with tranquillity, were he only possessed of an ordinary measure of fortitude. Our Saviour knew, moreover, that he would arise from the dead on the third day from his interment. He could not, therefore, contemplate death with that feeling of horror described by the evangelist. Our apprehensions are confused on this subject; it is enveloped in mystery, for God has not chosen to enlighten us. But we are authorized to believe, that now Jesus had begun to suffer, the just for the unjust; that now there was a fearful conflict going on by which our redemption was achieved. We may suppose that to the mind of the holy and exalted sufferer, there was present an apprehension of the awful punishment due to the sins of the whole world; that in view of the malignity of transgression and its tremendous effect on the happiness of millions, his soul was penetrated with sorrow unutterable; sorrow, whose dreadful nature was indicated by that repeated prayer which denoted such intense interest. But the hour of trial is past; Jesus advances to those who came, guided by that false disciple, to carry him to unrighteous judgment and ignominious suffering. “Judas, betrayest thou the

Son of man with a kiss?” is the only reply made to the hollow salutation of the traitor. To those who came to apprehend him he only observes, ‘Do ye come with swords and clubs as in pursuit of a robber? While I was daily with you in the temple ye did not attempt to arrest me. But this is your hour and the power of darkness.’ He forbids any measures of defence on the part of his disciples, but gave sufficient evidence of his power to defend himself, for he had no sooner said to his enemies, ‘I am he,’ than they, going backwards, fell to the ground. To the ardent disciple who endeavors to preserve him from violence, he observes, ‘shall I not drink the cup which the Father gives me?’

Let us now pass to the house of the high priest, where all the chief priests, and scribes, and elders, were assembled. Jesus is brought before them, and what dignity, what mildness, what unrepining patience are apparent in all his conduct. To the question of the high priest concerning his doctrine, he answers, ‘I spake openly in the world, I even taught in the synagogue and in the temple whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing.’ An officer, offended at his irreverence toward the high priest, strikes him. He answers, “If I have spoken evil, bear witness of that evil, but if well, why smitest thou?” The attempt is eagerly made to procure evidence of his guilt, but in vain. False witnesses at length appear, but their

conflicting testimony falls short of the desired object. Silent in regard to the trivial accusation made against him, he is adjured to make known whether he is the Christ, the Son of the blessed God. He assents to this claim, and adds, "Hereafter ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of God and coming in the clouds of heaven." The high priest rending his clothes, exclaims, "he hath spoken blasphemy, what farther need have we of witnesses?" And they all condemn him as deserving of death. And now the holy and just one is exposed to cruel mockery and insult. But the power of inflicting death not resting with the Jewish sanhedrim, he is carried before the tribunal of the Roman governor. And here we observe the malignity and falsehood of the Jews when they said, "we found this man perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ, a king." We observe, also, on the part of Jesus, a dignified refusal to answer to those charges which were made without reason and resulted from a determination to destroy him at all events. And when, at length, he replies to Pilate, he repels all the groundless inferences from his doctrines by asserting, "my kingdom is not of this world." And here, also, we perceive the frequent and explicit avowal on the part of the governor, "I find no fault in this man." And now the glorious Redeemer is subjected to still

deeper degradation. He is sent to Herod and remanded again to Pilate ; he is scourged and mocked. He is invested with the ensigns of royalty in derision of his claims. A robber and murderer is preferred to him ; and while a heathen judge is impressed with his innocence, and desirous to release him, the cry of his infatuated countrymen was, “crucify him, crucify him,” and “his blood be upon us and upon our children.” He is led away to suffering, associated with vile malefactors he is fixed upon the cross ; insult is added to the pangs of crucifixion. He is tauntingly required, if he be the Son of God, to come down from the cross. It is remarked scornfully, he saved others, himself he cannot save. Under these circumstances the divine compassion of Him who died to save us is most affectingly exhibited. No feeling of impatience ; no emotion of displeasure ; no wish to punish occupies his bosom. The prayer he utters is, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” His sufferings continue and increase ; a supernatural darkness covers the land of Judea ; the veil of the temple is rent ; the earth trembles ; rocks are torn asunder ; and the Redeemer knowing that all things were now accomplished, that his humiliation was about to end, that the cup of his calamity was exhausted, exclaims, “It is finished, and bowing his head, dismisses his spirit.”

And now the atonement is perfected—provision is made for the forgiveness of the sins of men—the throne of divine mercy is accessible—millions of souls are redeemed from guilt and wretchedness—the fear of death is taken away—and through this gloomy passage is the entrance to everlasting blessedness. My brethren, what a glorious consummation is this! How animating to us should be the contemplation of it—how deserving of our grateful commemoration! Jesus Christ has finished the work of our redemption. He has made satisfaction to the divine justice. By him, we who believe shall be justified from all things. And at how dear a rate has he purchased for us an exemption from condemnation. Though rich, for our sakes he became poor. Although in the form of God, and deeming it no robbery to be equal with God, he appeared in the form of a servant. He was despised and rejected of men, and it pleased the Lord to bruise him. Yet was he wounded not for his own, but for our iniquities. But the season of darkness has past. He possesses again the glory which he had with the Father before all worlds. He has also opened a way for us into the most holy place by his blood; he that was dead is alive and shall live forever more with all sufficient power to save. To-day we are to attend on the commemoration of his sufferings; our hearts will be filled with sorrow;

but it is a sorrow which shall be turned into joy ; for our minds may pass from the Saviour's humiliation to his exaltation ; we may meditate on the inestimable blessings consequent upon his atonement, and we may rejoice in the hope of beholding his face in the kingdom of light and joy above.

SERMON XXV.

A FUNERAL DISCOURSE.

Occasioned by the death of Thomas Taylor, Jun., Columbia, 1825.

PSALM cii. 24—27.

I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days : thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth ; and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure : yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment ; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed : but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

THE eternity of the Creator, when contrasted with the transitory and brief duration assigned to the works of his hands, furnishes an affecting subject of contemplation. The infinity of the one renders the insignificance of the other unspeakably more striking. And man, an intelligent part of God's workmanship, is so constituted as to apprehend and feel his immeasurable inferiority. When

we consider the Almighty as having existed forever, as having existed at the remotest period, of which we can possibly form a conception, as not growing old by the lapse of innumerable ages, and as necessarily continuing in all his glory and perfection through endless generations, — we cannot avoid exclaiming, our days are but an handbreadth; our age is as nothing before him. Short, however, as is the term of human life, few attain its utmost limits; many perish on the threshold of existence; others are arrested in various stages of their progress, and some are left to perish from the exhaustion of a worn out constitution. It is a gloomy picture which is thus given. It is, however, conformed to truth. It must be always present to our remembrance; it is often presented to our actual view. Many hearts now bleed on account of one snatched from them in the bloom and vigor of youth. Since our last assembling together, death has appeared in an appalling form in this vicinity. One who was sometimes present in this congregation, with whom some of you were in the habit of an almost daily association, has been cut down, suddenly, in the midst of his days.

While thus contemplating what may be the doom of ourselves, it is natural for us to adopt the prayer of the Psalmist—“O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations.”

In the course of the observations now to be offered to you, I shall consider the reasons why the doom contemplated in the prayer, is exceedingly afflictive to those who experience it, and why it is peculiarly distressing to those who contemplate it.

I shall inquire, why the being cut off in the midst of his days is often a mournful destiny to those who are called to encounter it.

1. It is so, in the first place, because the hopes and expectations of life are not realized ; because the work of life is all unaccomplished. Every man delineates, in his own imagination, the earthly course which he is to run. It is characterized by hopes of enjoyment and purposes of action.

The sanguine temperament of youth loves to dwell on visions of future happiness ; its vigor and restless activity impel to great and numerous undertakings, which its strong and often vain confidence doubts not may be surely and readily accomplished. When, therefore, we have done, or fruitlessly attempted to do, all that we originally intended, when we have reaped the joys which we anticipated, then, we are not, indeed, in every instance, satisfied. We may not be willing to die ; but, there exists not those reasons for regretting that our days are cut short, there are not those motives to wish a prolongation of life, which we can imagine to exist under other circumstances. And such circumstances do distinguish the condition which we are

describing, when, concerning an individual, it is ordained by the Almighty, that the pleasures of life shall not be proven, that its toils shall not be undergone, nor the temporal reward of those toils attained. But in the second place, it is exceedingly appalling to us to be cut off in the beginning or the midst of our days, because there often exists at that period a total want of preparation for that future state into which death shall introduce us. Let me not be understood as here asserting, that with advanced age there is always an accession of religious wisdom. That all who are permitted to attain length of days are matured for celestial happiness. We have seen the hoary head to be a crown of glory, because it was found in the way of righteousness; but we have observed it to be attended with reproach, and to become the occasion of sorrow to the good, when associated with thoughtlessness, irreligion, or vice. Still, attention to the concerns of another world is that which we more confidently expect in advanced than in early life. Seriousness seems to be the natural attribute of the latter, as thoughtlessness of the former state. Acquaintance with a world of sorrow, experience of the vanity of human hopes on this side of the grave, some degree of satiety in reference to worldly good, prepare the mind to adopt the sentiments and to cherish the hopes of religion. This discipline, however, the young man has not undergone. He is left to the

guidance of buoyant feelings, delusive anticipations, and apprehensions concerning the serious duties of life altogether erroneous. The monitions of heavenly wisdom are unattended to, from the presumption, that at his time of life they are unnecessary. He who is enamoured with the pleasures of the world yet fresh and almost untasted, cares not for the purer and higher, although graver enjoyments which religion presents to his acceptance. He who acts under the persuasion that the long continuance of life is certain, feels not the necessity of providing for evils which shall ensue upon its termination. Thus it is that the necessity of dying occurs at a period when it is unthought of or unprovided for; and while the young man is rejoicing in his youth, and blessing himself in his heart, he is suddenly summoned to the tribunal of judgment. Therefore, will he exclaim in the bitterness of his heart, "Oh my God, take me not away in the midst of my days."

But I would again observe, that such a destiny as we are contemplating is productive of melancholy feelings, even in those who have no peculiar interest in it. It is thus, because there is an apparent frustration of the work of nature's author. One seems to be born, to live and to die. He has not done what man is commonly empowered to do. He has not fulfilled the destiny ordinarily assigned to humanity.

With this reflection is associated one of the most mournful and embarrassing investigations in which our minds can be engaged. God is eternal. His power is illimitable. All parts of his creation are continually under his view and control. Yet men are perishing in multitudes, without cessation, often prematurely. In some, sensation merely begins, and, to our view, is extinguished. In others, there are the dawnings of intellect, and darkness ensues. Yet again, mind is effecting a bold development of its powers, when its connection with the body is dissolved. Wherefore is it thus? One thing we may be assured of. Troubles do not arise from the ground. The afflictions of life are not fortuitous; death is the Almighty's minister; all physical evils exist with his concurrence and are employed for his purposes. But while God is sovereign, and good or evil alike is proceeding from his hand, yet does he ever act in wisdom, righteousness, and goodness, however imperfectly we may apprehend the reasons of his dispensations.

In reference to these reasons, the inquiry resolves itself into two branches—the first respects the general necessity of death; the second, its occurrence under particular circumstances.

1. The general necessity of death is the consequence of the introduction of moral evil into the works of God. Without transgression, would our natures have been subject to dissolution in the

painful, awful manner in which we now observe it to take place? Certainly not. For it is the dictate of God's revelation, that "death entered into the world by sin." The one is in a physical as well as moral sense, the cause of the other. The former is not only the penalty but the consequence of the latter in the way of nature. For vicious indulgences subject to disease and its fatal effects, and the conduct enjoined by religious wisdom is that which most conduces to long life. The general principle, then, is true, that men die because they are sinners. It is the divine will that our moral degeneracy should be so punished, and upon every human being this penalty alights. Yet this necessity of dying to which we are all subject, originates in the benevolence as well as in the justice of the Almighty. God does not intend us to live here always; yet has he not determined, that the loss of temporal life shall be to us the loss of all things. He destines us for a higher and nobler existence, provided we use the means which he has graciously provided for our attaining to it. Death is not of necessity the extinction of our hopes, the termination of our joys, the passage to gloom and wretchedness. It may afford to hope its full fruition; it may give an unknown intensity and elevation to our happiness. The hour in which our very being seems to be put into peril, is but the prelude to immortality.

It is therefore ordained, that man, after having finished his career on earth, should appear on a higher stage of existence ;—that having here chosen happiness or misery, in the obedience or disobedience to which they are severally attached, he should enter upon the enjoyment of the one or the endurance of the other.

But, why is it in regard to some, that the career of life is so soon run—that the period of trial and preparation for eternity, is so suddenly and prematurely terminated. There are various reasons which, in reference to this fact, may be supposed to operate. Some of these have respect to the dying individuals themselves, others to the world in general, from which they are taken, or to individuals more nearly connected with them. The young may be removed from the evil to come. Early piety may be spared a conflict with the temptations and evils of life. A course of thoughtlessness and irreligion may be interrupted, and a preparation for happiness induced, or the entrance into eternity be made with an inferior amount of guilt than would have been the consequence of a prolongation of life.

These considerations respect the individuals themselves, to whom an extended enjoyment of human life is denied. Upon others their example may be made to exert a powerful and salutary influence. It will serve to show that life is uncertain as well

as brief—that he whose plans are predicated on the presumption of attaining the utmost limit of human existence on this side the grave, may be deceived cruelly and fatally. In proportion as dissolution seems out of the course of nature, will be the force of the impression made upon survivors. An evil unlooked for is most appalling. And when disease, rapidly and fatally terminating, occurs in the case of one whose expectations of a long life appear natural and reasonable, our attention is arrested—our feelings excited—we cherish at least a momentary conviction that the fate we are contemplating, will surely, and may shortly be our own.

Such is the monition given us by the example of every human being departing from this world—but, we become familiarized to these scenes, in the mode of their ordinary occurrence, and it is only when there is something peculiar and striking in them, that they exert any permanent influence upon our minds. Such a scene has recently been witnessed in this community. This it was which has occasioned the remarks which have been presented to you, and which I would now apply to your religious improvement. I have already suggested, that the instance of mortality referred to, was marked by no ordinary circumstances. It was not an aged man whom we have lately seen descend into the grave, in whom the powers of life had been long and gradually exhausting, and to whom

dissolution should have been the object of hourly expectation. His was no fragile form, which seemed inadequate to the exertions, and incompetent to sustain the ordinary ills of life. He had not endured a wasting and protracted disease, which afforded daily intimations of its sure and fatal issue. He was cut off in the bloom and vigor of youth. He had been nursed in the lap of prosperity—he was the subject of solicitude to a numerous connection—he was the object of affection to many associates—and of all this he was deserving. But, with the most flattering expectations, with anticipations of long life as reasonable as could be cherished by any human being, he was cut off—he perished suddenly. And why do we now revert to this mournful dispensation. It is that the living may derive benefit. The example as well as the tongues of dying men, bespeak attention. And even now, a voice seems to issue from the tomb, declaring that not the firmness of manhood in its prime—not the greatest earthly prosperity—not the affection of a parent, exclaiming in agony, would to God I had died for thee, my son—not the love, and esteem, and prayers of numerous friends, could avert the inevitable hour, or save him who was destined to an early grave.

Oh how awful! how striking is the lesson which is thus afforded to us! In life we are in the midst of death—vanity is inscribed upon all earthly pos-

sessions—the most fearful calamities may be every moment impending, while we are totally ignorant of their approach.

The language then of the late awful visitation of Providence is—Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the stroke of death shall come. Let me therefore, most earnestly admonish and adjure you to prepare diligently to meet your God. The same necessity is laid upon us all—‘And after death the judgment.’

How much more wise and holy should we be, could the impressions which are sometimes made upon us, be rendered permanent.

Now therefore, that you can in some measure estimate the precarious tenure of life—the insecurity of its possessions, and the necessity of the consolations and provisions of religion—make your determinations in regard to these all important subjects.

The favor of Almighty God is more than wealth—more than distinction—more than all worldly enjoyment—more than life itself. For life is fleeting, and its possessions perish in an hour. The time then, my friends, is short. God may quickly call you to his judgment seat—and remember, that without holiness no man shall behold his face in peace.

Most earnestly would I press this subject upon the attention of the young. Such are prone to

imagine that a preparation for eternity is not a duty which devolves upon them. But, ah! how delusive is their confidence! Does not the mournful occurrence to which we have referred, demonstrate it? Does it not affectingly prove that the liability to death belongs to every period of life. Let me, then, beseech you to remember now your Creator in the days of your youth. Consider that an awful judgment is approaching. Reflect how suddenly it may come. And endeavor to prepare for a peaceful death, and a happy immortality.

SERMON XXVI.

A FUNERAL DISCOURSE.

Preached December, 1825, in the House of Representatives, on the occasion of the death of
Messrs. James and Campble.

ECCLESIASTES ix. 5, 6.

For the living know that they shall die : but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward ; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished ; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

THE states of life and death present themselves to the imagination in strong contrast, and the passage from the one to the other, is, of all the trials which we are called to encounter, beyond comparison, the most appalling. Evils not extending to the dissolution of the mysterious tie connecting soul and body, require by no means the same fortitude in order to a resolute endurance of

them. There is no unknown condition upon which we are called to enter. The suffering before us, although severe, is distinctly conceived by the mind. It is not of that undefined character which pertains to every thing beyond the grave ; a character which renders an anticipated calamity the more terrible, on account of the opportunity which is thus afforded for the imagination to exert its powerful influence. But the troubles incident to life, are to be entered upon immediately ; there is no land of darkness to be gone through ; no apparent extinction of our being first to take place. Mankind are spectators of our conduct, and of their sympathies and applauses we are assured, while nobly sustaining the pressure of temporal ill. But in the article of death, ordinary consolations fail ; common supports are ineffectual. We are doomed to sustain that of which we have had no experience. We exchange conditions the most opposite imaginable. We are called to relinquish life for death. Let us for a moment dwell upon the contrast.

What, then, is life ? It is to behold all the wondrous productions of nature's Architect ; to gaze on the firmament bright with its suns and stars ; to contemplate the earth smiling in beauty beneath our feet ; to be refreshed by the pure breath of heaven, and to enjoy the numberless blessings which a beneficent Providence has scattered around us. But life is not merely converse with inanimate

nature, with an experience of the enjoyments connected with it ; there is also implied an intimate association with intelligent beings of our own species ; in whose joys we sympathize, and from an intercourse with whom we derive the most heartfelt pleasure. There are all the charities of home, all the joys of friendship, all the pure gratifications derived from the acquisition and communication of knowledge, to shed a radiance over the path which we traverse through this world. During the present stage of our existence there is, moreover, to be observed, an earnest devotion to the toils of business, as well as an ardent pursuit of pleasure. A generous concern for the welfare of the human race, fills the bosom of the philanthropist. The soul of the patriot glows with a noble zeal for the advancement of his country's prosperity. Those who are connected together by the ties of friendship or kindred, are more specially interested to promote each other's happiness ; and the operation of these various feelings renders the world a theatre upon which are exhibited sentiments pure and magnanimous ; actions, praiseworthy and ennobling to human nature. But life is not merely a state joyous through the experience of present happiness, illuminated with the hope of higher blessings yet in reserve, and dignified by the practice of virtue ; it is often darkened by misfortune, and degraded by crime.

In considering the more odious exemplifications of human character, we perceive men influenced by hatred and envy, marring the tranquillity and happiness of society, pursuing their selfish purposes, and looking to their own aggrandizement. Yet even in this view of the subject, taking life in its good or its ill, it is a state of activity, of sensibility, and of consciousness; of noble or ignoble feeling; of virtuous or vicious conduct; of high happiness or painful disquietude. Now mark the change which is effected. The transition is made from life to death. The bustle has ceased. To the eye of an observer, activity is gone; sense slumbers; consciousness is extinct; happiness is lost. There remains but the outward form of that which thought, and felt, and acted; and, oh! how changed! There is a fearful stillness; the brow and cheek are pallid; the eye is glazed and motionless. You may address it, it answers not; your bosom may be bursting with agonizing sorrow, it is agitated with no responsive emotion. Even the nearest friends wish removed from their view, an object so fitted to inspire sorrow for what is gone by, and dread of what is yet to come. He who has passed beyond the boundary of human life, has no more concern in all that is done under the sun. "His children come to honor, and he knoweth it not; they sink into decay, and he perceiveth it not of them." Mutations, sad or joyful, take place in the little circle

in which he mingled ; the great concerns of the world move on, and he has neither agency in them, nor knowledge concerning them. In this view it does appear that the dead know not any thing ; that their love, and hatred, and envy, are now perished. And so far as respects this world, the principle is incontrovertibly true ; and it is with this reference, we must understand the statement of the inspired writer. But extending our views beyond the darkness which gathers around the tomb, we are assured there is a state in which those who now seem utterly dead, shall exist still—shall know much, and shall experience much.

Were a direct revelation from heaven concerning a future state denied to us, the doctrine of our immortality would yet be supported by arguments neither few in number, nor inconsiderable in value. To some of these I shall make a passing reference.

I. We may ground our first argument for the soul's immortality, upon the fact that it is immaterial ; pure spirit, as contradistinguished from body. We are fully apprised that there are those who confound the attributes of mind and matter, and who imagine that these substances are not essentially different in their nature. It is also understood how much learning and ingenuity have been exercised upon this topic. Yet it is well known that the profoundest intellectual philosophers have always contended that the distinction in question is

obvious and immutable. And we shall not, therefore, be guilty of presumption in asserting that the adverse opinion is unsupported by any just principles of philosophizing. It does not consist with our present object, to enter upon a full discussion of this subject ; and it does appear that the statement of a single fact is alone necessary.

Neither mind nor matter are substances directly perceived by the senses. They are known by the intervention of their properties, and however prevalent may be the opposite notion, the one is quite as mysterious as the other.

Matter is something which is extended, divisible, impenetrable, inert. Mind is something which thinks, wills, desires ; which loves or hates, which is joyful or sad. Now it must be clear to every man, that there is no analogy whatever between these different classes of properties. It is therefore utterly unreasonable to assert that two things are identical, when all that is known concerning them is of so opposite a character. The soul, then, is not material ; consequently a simple, indivisible substance. If so, the strong presumption is, that it is immortal. And why ?

It does not appear that one particle of God's material creation perishes, amid the endless succession of changes which are continually passing under view. Take the instance of the human body. At the period of death, its organization is destroyed ;

the particles of which it is composed are separated ; the complicated machinery is destroyed, but not one element ceases to be. Nothing, then, in the material world perishes ; it is subject to endless mutations, but it still exists. It is therefore contrary to the whole analogy of nature, that the soul should cease to be. Were its attributes the result of material organization, the destruction of that would involve the loss of those attributes. But the soul being a simple substance, is incapable of dissolution. No accident can terminate its existence. The direct volition of the creating Power is necessary to its destruction. Instead, therefore, of arguing that because in death the body perishes, so must the soul likewise ; it is far more correct to infer, that since not one particle of man's inferior part sinks into non-existence, the soul also shall survive, and think, and act, and have experience of happiness or misery, when this glorious frame of nature shall have passed away.

Again, this conclusion becomes exceedingly probable, when we consider the actual progress of men toward intellectual and moral perfection, and the unlimited capacities for improvement which distinguish them. Let us bring under our view the instance of a man who in mature life has fulfilled the promise given by the early development of his powers—who is successively traversing new regions of knowledge—whose mental activity is untiring,

and the results of it most honorable to human nature. Let us add, that with genius and erudition are associated religion and virtue. With these endowments, he attains to elevated happiness himself, and becomes a powerful agent in promoting the general good. But after years of unwearied application and indefatigable labor—when he is apparently just fitted for great usefulness—when there is no limit to his advancement yet presented to view, he is cut off from the land of the living! And can we believe that in death all is lost? Are the noble energies of mind subdued? Is the warm current of feeling frozen up? Is the patriot, the philosopher—above all, the virtuous and pious man, become in no respect different from the clod of earth upon which we tread? If there be not an hereafter, such is the mournful termination in which issue all the labors, all the aspirations of men. And this is to be observed not in one or a few instances. Multitudes of minds exist merely that they may begin to evolve their powers—that they may enter with ardor on the career of excellence—that they may successively make attainments which only serve to introduce to other and higher ones, and then perish in the morning or noonday of life. What conclusion are we to derive from this fact? Certainly one most favorable to the principle which we are establishing. For, believing that the Almighty is infinitely wise, and that he has formed

nothing in vain, we must also believe that the present life is only the beginning—a very small portion of that endless existence which is assigned to us. And it may be added, that a sure pledge of this fact is furnished by the warm aspirations after immortality felt by the virtuous, and the dread of it which is experienced by the wicked. Let it not be said that these feelings are the product of superstition. They are and have been universally experienced ;—they are irresistibly impressed upon human nature ;—they are excited by the Divinity which speaks within us.

The considerations which have been briefly referred to, might, in the absence of clearer evidence, be sufficient to induce such a conviction of the reality of a future state, as might become a rational principle of action. But God has not left us to the defective instruction to be derived from the light of nature. He has revealed the truths essential to our virtue and happiness ; and among these, is the doctrine of a future life and a coming retribution. With the sure and ample testimony of Jehovah's word, our principle, that notwithstanding an apparent cessation of being, the dead know much and experience much, must be admitted without hesitation. But concerning the particulars of that knowledge or experience, we have no adequate information. The gospel allows an obscurity to rest over it, because the Almighty designed not to

gratify our curiosity, but to furnish us with motives to action, and encouragements to duty. And in the latter view, the revelation of one great and general principle is amply sufficient. It is this, "We shall exist hereafter in happiness or misery, accordingly as we have in this life acted in subservience or opposition to the divine will."

Viewing death, therefore, not as the era of extinguished but of renovated being, as the precursor of events deeply influencing our destiny, we are prepared to feel how momentous is the reflection contained in the text, "The living know that they must die." Can any one doubt of this fact? Your fathers, where are they? What has become of nations and whole generations who have perished from the earth? Where are James and Campble? They are not before you in the vigor of life as at the period of your former assembling together. You do not even behold the sad relics of what they were. The dark and quiet grave has become their habitation. The lapse of one year has left you in possession of life and happiness; it has fixed their destiny. They have no more portion forever in all that is done under the sun. It is well, gentlemen, that you do not permit their descent to the tomb to pass unobserved. Respect for those who have long co-operated with you in the discharge of your important duties;—affection toward those whom you have loved as friends,—and a due atten-

tion to the Almighty's visitation, all concur in enforcing the propriety of paying fit honors to the dead, while the living may be taught their duty, and be admonished that the hour of their trial is also approaching. Yet the minister of Jesus Christ does not feel it incumbent upon him to pronounce an eulogy upon your respected and departed brothers, however deserved it might be, or however correspondent with the feelings of every bosom in this assembly. The dead are not benefited by our praises. Kindred and friends require no one to instruct them concerning the greatness of their loss, and you who have been less closely connected with those of whom we speak, are far better acquainted with their worth than he who now addresses you. You have already given an assurance of your respect for their memory, and regret on account of their loss, and it is more important that I should endeavor to make this visitation of divine Providence, an instrument of good to you, by reminding you, that to all of you the inevitable hour is approaching ; that death is impending over you, and that an awful judgment shall surely succeed.

Let me, in concluding, dwell a moment on this all-important consideration. The time is coming when you will feel it to be such. The most joyous spirit among you will be sad when dissolution approaches. Ambitions fire shall be extinct, pride will be abased, talents and learning avail you

nothing, and eloquence be dumb. Your connection with this world shall cease; its business or its pleasure concerns you not. It can furnish to you neither occasion of anxiety nor matter of consolation. The favor of the Almighty will then be felt to be the only and the sovereign good, for you will pass before the judgment-seat of Christ, and your unchangeable portion be pure happiness or unmitigated wretchedness. How may you provide against this crisis of your destiny? How shall you be enabled to lift up your head with joy and hope amid the wreck of nature?

I am not to say to you, that these objects will be attained by being wise legislators, honest men, worthy citizens, amiable in all social and domestic relations. This is not enough. I am a believer in the gospel revelation, and I address you as believers also. I am persuaded that your character, and obligations, and actual condition are such as are therein described. I must, therefore, regard you as subject to a melancholy corruption of nature, and as having, in consequence of your transgressions, fallen under the Almighty's displeasure. I cannot, therefore, hope that you will die in peace and be happy forever, otherwise than by using the prescribed means of salvation, by access to God through the appointed Mediator.

Cherish, then, I beseech you, an abiding conviction, that the career of life is run under the inspec-

tion of infinite wisdom and holiness. Obey every impulse to duty, whether it respects the welfare of your fellow men, the honor of the great Being who formed you, or your own eternal salvation. Avail yourselves of the opportunities furnished to you by the Almighty's forbearance and grace. Let the redemption provided by his Son be the ground of your hope, the purifying influences of his Spirit the object of your prayers. And then, what though life be precarious, death inevitable and dreadful, and judgment not to be avoided—you are secure under all circumstances. This world will fade upon your view, but you will pass into one infinitely more glorious ; a short but gloomy night shall dawn into a bright and eternal day ; and for the temporary loss of earthly friends, you will receive abundant compensation in the exhaustless happiness springing from the favor of God, eternal, all-sufficient, all-merciful.

SERMON XXVII.

A FUNERAL DISCOURSE.

MATTHEW xvi. 24.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

INSTANCES often occur in the evangelical history, where the apprehensions of the disciples were exceedingly erroneous, and where, in consequence, their conduct was marked by much impropriety. A striking exemplification of this observation is given in the context. When their master announced to them his approaching sufferings and death, the communication was not received with sad and silent submission. Peter, with his characteristic impetuosity, full of love to the person and zeal for the cause of his Lord, yet utterly forgetful of the def-

erence due to him—ventured to indulge in strong remonstrances. “Be it far from thee, Lord, this shall not be unto thee.” It was after rebuking this ill-advised interference, and referring to the principle in which it had its origin, that Jesus Christ addressed his disciples in the language of the text.

The object at present had in view, is to illustrate this passage in its primary reference, and then to consider it as applicable to ourselves. There are two things involved in the text. In the

1st place—What is implied in being a disciple of Christ?

2d—The encouragement to assume that character, notwithstanding the difficulties which may present themselves in the way.

I. Our Lord’s reference here is to permanent discipleship. “If any man will come after me”—not merely for a time seek my society, through curiosity; but attach himself altogether to my person and cause—“let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.”

1. Let him be prepared in many instances to act in opposition to his natural desires—to renounce his old prejudices—to abandon all hope of worldly distinction. To such sacrifices were they called, who in the early ages of Christianity, became professors or apostles of our holy religion. The love of ease and a disposition to pleasure, are natural to man—but, how could they be indulged amid the

storm of persecution, and while the world was yet unconverted. During the earthly ministry of their Master, danger was not so imminent as it afterward became. But the accomplishment of his sufferings was the beginning of their trials. They underwent labors—sustained privations—and encountered evils most appalling to flesh and blood. They thus at once denied themselves, took up their cross, and imitated their Master in the active usefulness of their lives, and in their extreme devotion to the service of the gospel.

And, in attending on duties so arduous, did they labor in vain? In their distress, had they no consolation? Was it unmingled, unmitigated evil, which they endured? By no means. Although the course which they accomplished was marked by toils innumerable—although its passage was through gloom—and its termination was frequently in premature and violent death—they were happy—they had reason to glory, even in tribulation—futuraity contained in its bosom abundant compensation for all their distresses. A day of retribution was coming. The Son of Man should appear in the glory of the Father, with his angels, and reward every man according to his works. And then, whosoever shall in the present world have saved his life, in violation of religious duty, and in opposition to conscience, shall lose it eternally. But, whosoever shall have incurred death for the sake of

Christ, shall be rewarded with an eternal existence in happiness.

The general instruction then, to be derived from this passage is—That it is our duty to make a profession of faith in Christ, and to act consistently with that profession—and that there are the most forcible motives to induce a performance of this duty.

It is our duty to make a sincere profession of religion. Yet it is an arduous duty. Our corruption throws many obstacles in the way of our entrance on a life of piety—and still continues to embarrass us in our progress, when the first difficulties are surmounted. Cherished pleasures, incompatible with the service of God, must be relinquished—evil passions, however long indulged, must be subdued—exercises for which the natural heart has no relish, must be engaged in—and, instead of living in thoughtlessness or impiety, we must in spirit worship our heavenly Father—we must meditate on his precepts and embrace his promises. We must receive the Redeemer in all his offices—regarding his instructions, and obeying his precepts, while we repose in the most unlimited manner on his atonement.

Now, to such beings as we are, prone to be lovers of pleasure more than of God—swayed by depravity—and averse from the exercises of devotion and the duties of religion—the undertaking to which

we are called is a formidable one in itself—and, viewed in connection with the natural inclinations of our hearts, would be deemed impracticable. And for this reason it is that the influences of the Holy Spirit are necessary for the renewal of our souls, in order that those who have been the servants of sin, should become the servants of righteousness—those who have been alienated from God, should sincerely love him—those who have been neglectors of the gospel salvation, should cordially embrace it.

But, in the progress of conversion, or during the continuance of those feelings which seem to promise this result, after the judgment is convinced that the path of piety is the only path of safety, and when the heart no longer cherishes an opposition to it, still there are difficulties felt in making the final decision—in actually passing out of the world, and becoming separated from its evils; its forgetfulness of God; its ensnaring and dangerous pleasures; its inattention to the things which are unseen. The mind vacillates in uncertainty; the sense of duty impels to action—but our purpose is infirm, and clogged by the unsanctified affections which still exist in our bosoms, and every difficulty which stands in our way, is magnified into most unreasonable importance.

What then are the circumstances which induce this hesitation in adopting the course of conduct which duty and interest alike enjoin? We have

not to face the evils, nor to encounter the trials, which the primitive Christians endured—much less those which were the portion of the apostles of our religion. Neither our own early imbibed prejudices, nor the sentiments of the world, nor the constituted authorities, are now in opposition to Christianity in general. A profession of it, subjects us to no disabilities—nor involves us in any corporeal suffering.

But, amid these favorable circumstances, it is still true, that the course of the world is widely diverse from that which must be pursued by the Christian—and in passing from the former into the latter, we have to make some sacrifices, which although intrinsically nothing, are nevertheless, in our view somewhat appalling. A great and sudden change of conduct must in every instance, be the result of a vigorous effort—and when this can be made with the entire concurrence of the judgment and affections—yet, the being placed before the world in an attitude entirely new, is to many considerably embarrassing. Add to this, that former associates stare upon us—that we may become objects of thoughtless ridicule, or of malicious sarcasm. And why is it so? Is not wisdom—is not true dignity—is not every thing that is amiable, combined in the Christian character. It is strange that many who neither attempt to deny the truth of scripture declarations, nor the obligation of scripture duties, endeavor notwithstanding, to place in a ridiculous

light those who are determined to act consistently with the dictates of duty—and, as in their intercourse with the vicious, some become ashamed of the reputation of virtue—so among the thoughtless, others become afraid of the imputation of serious piety. But as in reference to the fiery persecution which they were called to undergo, our Lord admonished his hearers to fear not those who can destroy the body, and after that have nothing which they can do; but to fear Him who could destroy both soul and body in hell—so I would now admonish you all not to let any temporal considerations whatever, interfere with the performance of a duty of the last importance. Be willing to make any sacrifice of your ease, of your worldly reputation, of your strongest inclinations, thankful that God has not called you to a severer trial. It is only necessary that you be reminded that your eternal interests are at stake.

Salvation only belongs to the Christian. Will any proof of this be needed? The very record that reveals a heaven to come, limits its enjoyment to the humble and obedient believer. But who is such an one, unless it be he who follows Christ—who assumes a gospel profession.

There may be some whose feelings are pious, and who have obtained hope in God, that are yet without the pale of the visible church. But if they long continue thus, their conduct is very unwise and

exceedingly criminal. It is very unwise, because they exclude themselves from the consolation, and strength and encouragement which may be derived from a participation with believers in the peculiar ordinances of the gospel. It is highly criminal, because our Redeemer requires an open recognition of his authority, and reason prompts to the conclusion, that if we love the cause of God, we would not withhold from it even the feeble support which might be derived from such avowed advocates as ourselves.

A sincere profession of the gospel, therefore, with a life in consistency with it, presents the only course which can be safely traversed through life. It is the inheritance of eternal life which we seek. Is there any thing which can be brought into comparison with it? There is not. "For what would it profit a man, were he to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Surely I need not dwell on this momentous consideration. The loss of the soul is the loss of happiness through ages which cannot be numbered, and which shall never end; and this is the awful penalty incurred by those who prefer the transient gratifications of sin to the Almighty's favor. And how astonishing that there should be such a preference. For what is time to eternity? the joys or sorrows of the one to the blessedness or wretchedness of the other?

With this good and this evil in prospect, you are

now called upon to make your deliberate and solemn election. The question in respect to you is not whether you will choose misery now, in order to secure felicity hereafter; no such severe alternative is presented to you. The conduct to which you are called, requires no such painful sacrifice on your part. In saving your souls, you may still possess all that is valuable in life. Choose, therefore, in this most important concern—choose life, and quickly, or you may not be permitted to do it at all.

We are accustomed often to warn you of the precarious tenure of life; but while our admonitions fall on your ears, they do not affect your hearts. Yet at this time they may, for we have had immediately under our view an awful and melancholy exemplification of the truth that “all flesh is as grass;” and we may be prepared to feel how wise is that caution, “Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” It is but a short time since we last assembled in this house of God. There was one who then engaged with us in our solemn worship; who, to all appearance, was as much assured of the continuance of life as any one of us; and who knew not that she was for the last time listening to the words of eternal life. Here we beheld her; and on the third day we were called to visit the house of mourning. The instrument of the Almighty had performed its office. The soul had fled from its earthly habitation; and

among a numerous family, there was lamentation, and weeping, and wo, at the desolation of their happiness.

Brethren, has not the Almighty in this dispensation, addressed to each one of us a warning voice? Shall we still remain insensible? Amid all the monitions of approaching danger, shall the day of the Lord yet surprise us? What has been, may occur again; and some one of us may as suddenly be called to the Almighty's presence, as was our departed friend. And who shall that one be? It is to us unknown; and amid this awful uncertainty it becomes each one of us to act as if himself were the individual whose doom is fixed. And it is true that the inevitable hour is rapidly approaching us all. We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ; and who may abide in the day of his coming? Those only who become interested in the salvation now offered through the redemption of Jesus; who deny themselves, and take up their cross and follow him.

Let such be our conduct, my friends; and should sorrows come, they will not find us unprovided for them; the prospect of death, though awful, shall not fill us with despair; and on the day of judgment we shall hear our Lord's approving voice, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

SERMON XXVIII.

A SERMON FOR THE NEW YEAR.

Preached January 1, 1825.

HEBREWS xi. 13.

And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

THE terms in which the ancient patriarchs spoke of the present life are remarkable. They did not regard this earth as their home. They considered their existence in the world that now is, as a pilgrimage, a sojourning in a foreign land, where progress was continually making towards their final home. They were not satisfied with an earthly inheritance. They looked forward to a better because a heavenly country. As an evidence of the existence of this sentiment, take the answer of the patriarch Jacob to the king of Egypt—"The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and

thirty years ; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage." To this we may add the declaration of Israel's king and prophet—" We are strangers before thee and sojourners as were all our fathers, our days on the earth are as a shadow and there is none abiding."

To show that there is great propriety in the representation would not be a difficult task. In the first place reflect on the short continuance of human life, when contrasted with that duration which shall constitute the whole term of our existence. Men have lived for centuries, and their days have now become limited to the general measure of fourscore years. But in the former case, as in the latter, their lives are as an handbreadth when compared with the ages on ages, during which the inhabitants of another world shall exist. Let us take the case of an individual who died in the earlier period of the world ; let us estimate the years which have passed since that event ; let us pass through many intervening centuries to the period when the present state of things shall no longer exist ; let us extend our views as far as possible into that eternity which is to come, and let us imagine the inquiry addressed to such an one. In what light, while taking a retrospect of your existence, do you regard that portion of it which was spent on earth, and what im-

portance do you attach to it? He would answer, as a term of probation in which eternal life was either to be lost or won,—it is an era awfully interesting—never to be forgotten. But as respects its duration and in regard to the degree of concern which should be felt in relation to its events, it no more presses upon his remembrance, than a night of agreeable or disagreeable accommodation on a journey exists in the recollection of the traveller who has long since reached his wished-for home. And it is in this manner that human life shall hereafter exist in the memory of us all; it is thus we should now regard it.

Moreover, the fact that we are “strangers and pilgrims on the earth,” will farther appear from the total want of permanency characteristic of our possessions and of our joys. However desirable may be the circumstances under which we are placed—however disposed we may be to indulge in repose, and to be satisfied with our present portion—this is not permitted to us. No one knows when the warning to depart shall be given—when life’s almost untasted feast shall be hastily abandoned. We are perpetually hurried onward to the accomplishment of our destiny. The joys of yesterday may not return to-day or to-morrow. From infancy we pass to manhood—to old age—to the darkness and silence of the tomb. And the issue of all in regard to the pious man, is an entrance on a world which

shall not pass away—on the enjoyment of happiness which shall not fail—on a state of being where shall exist in full perfection all the endearing attributes of home. There, sorrow shall not come; painful vicissitude will be unknown. There is therefore something exceedingly striking and appropriate in the designation of life as a journey. It is so in reality; and while passing through it we are on a pilgrimage, the accomplishment of which will be attended by the most delightful or calamitous results to us, accordingly as we are received into the kingdom of heaven, or have our portion assigned to us among those who have not obeyed the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

From this view of the subject, many interesting and important reflections arise. We do not now prosecute them. We have in view a specific object, and we shall attain this by attending to the following inference from the statement which has been made. “It is wise at certain stages of our career, and after particular intervals of time, to call ourselves to an account—to take a retrospect of the past—to look into futurity, and to mark out for ourselves such a course of conduct as may be consistent with duty, and conduce to our own well-being.”

The finished revolution of one year and the commencement of another, invite our minds to meditations which may be appropriate to the season.

Life is a journey, to the termination of which, at an earlier or later period, we must all look. One stage of that journey is now accomplished. We are entering upon another. Let us pause to review the occurrences of the past. The retrospect will in most instances be productive of mingled emotions. There are things which we can remember with joy, and there are those which we recollect with sorrow. Mercies have been received and privileges enjoyed; schemes of happiness baffled, and hopes withered. Yet from them all, may wisdom derive matter for instruction, and motives to gratitude. The same Almighty hand which formed us, has guided us through the dangers of the past—life and its enjoyments have been preserved to us, and amid the numerous examples which have been given of the fragility of human existence, it has not been our lot to furnish any one of these. To us it has been assigned to continue the career of life, and to pluck the various pleasures which, on all sides, woo our acceptance. Whether derived from sense, from taste, from intellect, from the pure affections of our nature, numberless enjoyments have irradiated our path, and perhaps no calamity has visited us which has produced a gloom in our minds more abiding than the hour which gave it birth. If, in respect to his dispensations toward you the Almighty has crowned the year with his goodness, your obligation to cherish gratitude and love toward him is

too obvious to require mention. Considered in itself, your lot has been most happy; contrasted with the portion of others, it has been a singularly blessed one. For to the great mass of mankind, a mingled cup is presented, and he who rejoices in one hour may mourn in the next. And to this statement it may be that the experience of many of you has been conformed. In looking back on the path which you have hitherto pursued, there are many verdant and blooming spots where you would have been pleased to loiter for many a day, and which now, in remembrance, are refreshing to the soul—but these have occurred at intervals more or less extended; between them are presented to memory's eye arid wastes and rugged and toilsome passes through which you have hurried with disgust or in which you have been beset with difficulties and involved in gloom, perplexity, and anguish.

The year, which has gone by, may furnish you with some of these painful recollections. Schemes for the attainment of happiness may have been originated, matured, and blighted within this short period. With painful effort of thought you may have projected your enterprises, with assiduous labor prosecuted them, and to the full confidence of success has succeeded the bitterness of disappointment. Dearly-prized comforts and fondly-cherished hopes have also flown. The time is not far gone when there were human beings to whom our

hearts have been joined in the closest affection, whom we have regarded as benefactors, cherished as the partakers of our every joy and sorrow, or looked to with the joy and fondness arising from the reflection, that in them we were in a certain sense, destined to live again. They were ! but where are they now ? “ All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of it as the flower of grass.” But although affliction is painful in the experience of it, and bitter in its recollection, yet there is, oftentimes, a blessing connected with it. The strokes of the Almighty often soften and purify the heart, and they are also designed for our admonition.

But what is our object in referring to the sorrows which we have experienced ? Is it again to lay bare the wounds which have been imperfectly healed ? is it to renew the sufferings which the soothing influence of time has moderated ? It is not. It is to teach you an important lesson which cannot be too often reiterated — That we are not to take up our rest in this world. All our experience shows the futility of the attempt. The inconveniences, sorrows, bereavements of this state, are all designed to wean us from life, and to render the awful conclusion of it less the object of dread.

But there is a view which may be taken of time that is past, which is far more important than that which refers to the quantity of enjoyment or suffering which has distinguished it. There is the

remembrance of duties performed or neglected, of a system of means in operation for our spiritual improvement, which has been efficacious or otherwise. Professors of the religion of Jesus Christ, what is the testimony of your consciences in regard to this matter. According to your faith, the kingdom of heaven is the abode to which you are tending ; there should your hearts be, for there is your greatest treasure. But what are the evidences of your advancement toward this glorious and happy destination. They are "a patient continuance in well-doing;" "a growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ your Saviour." Have you exhibited these evidences? The ordinances of the sanctuary have been attended on from Sabbath to Sabbath; day after day the divine messages of grace have been addressed to you; you have been admonished of your duty and encouraged to its performance. From the enjoyment of these privileges, progress in religion is to be anticipated. Do you now, therefore, possess more of the spirit of Christ, do you more carefully walk in his footsteps, are you more distinguished by that holiness, the attainment of which is the great object of the divine dispensations toward you; or are you stationary in your spiritual course; or have you receded from the advances which once you had made. These questions are of great importance, and according to the answer which may be given, you should rejoice or lament, for another

year has flown and you have approached so much nearer the term of your probationary state. But of you who are still inattentive to religious duty, I would ask, whither are you tending, and what is the progress which you have made? Every year which you have hitherto lived, you have been departing wider and wider from the path of duty and happiness; and this deviation will most assuredly issue in irretrievable wretchedness. It is time now to endeavor to retrace your steps—it is proper that you lament over your ruined happiness—that you deplore your past errors and endeavor to amend them, and that you now select as your highest and dearest object, that which is most worthy the attention of one who is destined to live forever.

The present season is, however, not merely one in which the past may be reviewed with profit; it is one at which we naturally look into futurity, form anticipations in regard to its events, and project plans for the regulation of life. The first reflection in view of the future which strikes our minds, relates to the great uncertainty which characterizes it. What are the events which lie concealed in its bosom, we know not. The observation is a very trite one, but it is of great importance. It deserves at all times to be present with our minds. Of all those who have now met together in the house of God, how many will réassemble at the expiration of another year? In regard to those to whom it shall

be permitted to do so, through what vicissitudes may they not pass ! In regard to others to whom this is denied, what is their condition ? They will be concealed from our view. What may be their portion—how delightful or how awful, who can tell !

Another reflection which arises from this view of the uncertainty of things future, is “that it is the attribute of wisdom to mark out and pursue that course of conduct which will provide for our security under all circumstances.” The continuance in a neglect of the great duties of religion, is not such a course. The procedure may be a safe one under certain supposed circumstances. It may be so if life be extended, and other seasons for repentance be afforded. It is awfully dangerous in the event of death taking place, and judgment being entered upon. And to presume upon that as certain, which is the most uncertain of all things, is the most extreme folly.

But a close attention to our spiritual welfare, to the salvation of our souls, will prepare us for any event. With the possession of true religion, come life or death, we are happy. Be it a matter of indifference when this clay tabernacle shall become utterly ruined. Rather be its dissolution the object of hope ; for this mortal shall then put on immortality—the habitations of earth shall be exchanged for an “house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.”

Let us now, therefore, propose it to ourselves as our first and highest object, to secure a safe issue to the journey of life. This will be done by obtaining reconciliation with that glorious Being whom we have deeply offended—by becoming interested in that all-sufficient Redeemer who has gone to prepare in his Father's house habitations for those who love him and await his final appearance, and by acquiring that holiness, without which no man shall see God in peace. And let us then, in subordination to this ultimate object, while our lives are spared on earth, be occupied with plans for our improvement, intellectual as well as moral; for the promotion of our happiness—for the advancement of that of our fellow creatures. He is most worthy of regard, who cultivates his faculties to the highest degree of which his nature is susceptible, and who employs them in diffusing happiness around him; and he who acts thus, purchases for himself the highest and purest enjoyments. Let therefore the purposes of good which are conceived or strengthened in your minds, mark this as an era to which your thoughts may at a future day recur with pleasure, and which shall sustain a prominent station in the retrospect of life which shall be taken by the spirits of the just made perfect. A few more revolving years shall pass, and this earth will know you no more forever. Other successive revolutions will bring on the consummation of all things

spoken of by the prophets. Then will Jehovah's purposes be accomplished—the visible heavens will depart as a scroll when it is rolled together—the earth will be removed from its place and consumed—a new heaven and new earth shall be revealed, illuminated by the divine glory, and inhabited by the myriads of souls which have been redeemed. May the God of mercy grant to us all an everlasting inheritance in his kingdom.

SERMON XXIX.

ON NEGLECT OF RELIGION.

ACTS xvii. 32.

And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked : and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.

THE great Apostle of the Gentiles had, from an incidental occurrence, taken occasion to address the people of Athens upon a subject important in itself and interesting to all men. He had observed with grief their idolatrous practices, and remarking an altar inscribed “to the unknown God,” he was powerfully excited to proclaim to them the existence of Him, who, indeed, appeared to be unknown to them both in his own character, and in the nature of the worship which he required.

The duties which they owed to the Almighty, grounded on the fact of their deriving from him

life and breath and all things, were urged upon their attention. These were enforced by the consideration of the more perfect revelation which God had at that time given of himself, commanding all men every where to repent, and declaring that he would judge the world in righteousness, of which he had given assurance to all men in that he had raised up Christ from the dead. The result which attended this preaching of the Apostle was by no means of an encouraging character. "For when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, but others said, we will hear thee again of this matter." And is not this the reception which the preaching of the gospel meets with in every age? For while some attend, with reverence and concern, to the declaration of God's will and the exhibition of the way of salvation, there are others who care not for these things, and thus scoff at them; or who, not wishing to regard them at this time, postpone the consideration of them to a distant period.

The design of the present address, is to suggest to each of these classes such reflections as appear calculated to produce a conviction of the impropriety and danger of the conduct which they adopt. And, in the first place, I would address myself to those, who, entirely insensible to the evils attendant on their natural condition, have no idea of the necessity of repentance. If it be said, that in the multi-

tude of those, who, in lands professedly Christian, attend on the ministry of the gospel, there are few thus totally regardless of religion ; if this be alleged, let the following considerations be attended to. If we observe persons rarely attending on the ordinances of God's house ; if we perceive them when occasionally there, destitute of reverence, and having thoughtlessness depicted on their countenances and expressed in all their deportment, what shall be said of such persons ?—that they have even a common respect for religion or any sense of its importance ? Certainly not. Moreover, if such persons attend on the worship of God merely to spend a portion of time which hangs heavily on their hands, shall we say that they have any conception of the real design of this worship, any apprehension that they can derive benefit from it ? Or if we perceive that their sole object in attending the ministry of the word, is to be delighted with the brilliance of eloquence, or with subtilty of disquisition, or with the ostentation of science, and that where these do not exist, or exist in a moderate degree, the simple truths of the gospel have no attraction—can we refrain from pronouncing concerning such that they are far, very far, from possessing that conviction of the certainty and importance of divine truth, which will dispose to its cordial reception ?

Upon such I would fain produce a conviction of

guilt and an apprehension of danger. And, in the first place, they are entreated to reflect on the goodness shown to them by that God whose worship they neglect, or whose institutions they contemn. As their Creator, all reverence and devotedness are due to him. But beyond this, has he ever left them without a witness of his goodness? Does not his bounty flow to them in a rich and inexhaustible stream? The very things which occupy their exclusive attention, and for which the soul is put in jeopardy, are an evidence of the goodness of Him "who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." To love the creature in subordination to the Creator, is not forbidden; to pursue temporal good consistently with the performance of higher duties, is altogether praiseworthy—and to enjoy with temperance and gratitude the blessings of Providence, is an acceptable tribute to Him who made us.

But, when God is not thus regarded; when men not merely forget him, but profane his sacred ordinances; is not their guilt to be accounted awful? Shall they not expect terrible recompense from his hands.

The human race is deeply criminal, and yet God exercises forbearance—they are still ungrateful, and he has, notwithstanding, provided redemption for them—he hath "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life."

In view of these things, and with the gospel sounding in their ears, let the thoughtless or unbelieving beware how they act. It is said by an inspired man—"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation." And again, "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 counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing." If such be the guilt attendant on this course of conduct, is there any one who can deliberately persevere in it? Wretched sinner, will you court your destruction? Have you an arm like God, and can you contend against the Almighty? Has he denounced against the despisers of his authority, that they shall lie down in sorrow; and having threatened, will not judgment follow?

With awful apprehensions will guilty mortals be filled in that day when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. And under these apprehensions, they will have no ground of encouragement. For God has declared to such as they are, "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—when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction as a whirlwind."

As surely as God has spoken to men, these representations are correct; but, since there are some who do not admit the authority of revelation, it will be of advantage to them to be admonished of their duty in respect to this matter.

It is then a principle which I presume will not be questioned, that there is no impossibility of God's revealing himself to men. With this observation premised, it is stated that there is a system of religion claiming a divine origin, which has prevailed to a great extent for many ages; to which a great number of the most learned and candid men have cordially assented, and which professes to be supported by evidence of such a nature as is open to the examination of all. It may also be remarked that this system has contributed much to improve the social condition of man, as well as to promote his individual virtue and happiness. Of these facts there can exist no reasonable doubt—they are admitted by the most candid opposers of the gospel, and are apparent from the tenor of history and our own observation.

It is not at this time designed to touch at all upon the evidences of Christianity—it is only requested that the statements just made be remembered. The inquiry is now proposed—What is the duty of those who yet unimpressed with the authority of revealed religion, profess a desire of becoming acquainted with the truth? The fact that

there is a system of faith professing to be divine, which in its influence is most benignant, certainly affords a presumption that God has revealed himself. Does not then the most forcible obligation rest upon all men to examine the proof urged in favor of this system? And should not this examination be conducted with candor, with a diligence commensurate with the importance of the subject, and with great seriousness of mind. So far from condemning it unheard, should not the mind be exceedingly opened to reasonable conviction, and disposed to allow all due influence to the arguments adduced? If all this be done, and without effect, men may be justified in disbelieving the gospel.

But is this conduct characteristic of the unbeliever? Does he not condemn and proceed to the confutation of the Scriptures, without having ever attended to their contents, or the evidence upon which they rest? It is a noble and invaluable testimony in favor of our holy religion, that in many instances, an attentive examination and an accurate acquaintance with the sacred writings, have been instrumental in convincing those who had been strongly prejudiced against them. I could name illustrious individuals, upon whom an intimate knowledge of the sacred Scriptures had this happy influence. I could adduce instances, where the first resort to the attentive study of the Bible was with a view to its confutation; and I could point to the

effects which flowed from this study, in able and eloquent defences of Christianity, by those who cherished the faith which they once designed to destroy. Such is the majesty and influence of truth, and so important is a thorough knowledge and candid examination of the contents of divine revelation.

It is therefore most seriously urged upon those who may yet be unbelievers, that they do patiently, and with a sincere desire of arriving at the truth, examine into the evidence upon which the Scriptures found their claim to inspiration. In the course of this investigation let them consider the momentous nature of the pretensions to be substantiated or disallowed, and proceed with becoming deliberation, to the formation of their judgment.

It is also a reflection which should be ever borne in mind, that the truth of the gospel is not merely a matter of speculation. The evidence presented may be abundantly sufficient to convince the judgment, and yet the man may remain an unbeliever. The reason of which is that there exists in the human heart an aversion to the truths which God has revealed—there is something in the nature of man, and in the relation which he sustains to his Creator, which indisposes him to acknowledge the fact, that a revelation has been made. Such an one will reason thus: ‘If God has indeed declared his will, then am I inexcusable in not obeying it;—

if the Scriptures contain divine truth, then am I sunk in sin; and without repentance, faith, and holiness, must perish.' These are disagreeable truths, and you cannot bear them—you do not wish to be disturbed in your repose, nor that the complacency with which you view yourselves and conduct, should be destroyed. You will not therefore trouble yourselves with an investigation which will be productive of such painful and humbling feelings. But the authority of the Bible is the same whether you believe or disbelieve it, and God has certainly appointed a day in which he will judge all men, although you may have persuaded yourselves of the contrary. If you are not convinced now, you must be hereafter—but this will be unavailing; for in the world which shall be, “no device, nor work, nor knowledge, nor wisdom,” can suffice for the salvation of those who have in this world continued impenitent to their end.

The observations which have been made respect one of the two classes of hearers which come under our observation, and which correspond with those mentioned in the text. I shall on another occasion, take up the case of those who with undecided minds, reply to the gospel admonition, ‘We will hear thee again of this matter.’ This reply indicates some conviction of the importance of divine truth—and we may suppose, that those who give it, design at

some future time, to attend to the great concern of their salvation.

But, perhaps there are some of you who have never gone thus far—all our admonitions have been disregarded. You have never felt that you were in imminent danger of destruction—and you have never thought of being any thing else than you now are. Whether this carelessness has arisen from a deliberate disbelief of the gospel, or the mere neglect of its instructions, the effect is the same, and you are involved alike in guilt and danger. You are earnestly besought to consider these things. If the Bible has been disbelieved, or if it has been neglected, let it be thus no longer—attend to its warnings and instruction, and you will be convinced of guilt, and learn its remedy. No longer neglect therefore, the great salvation which has been provided. Do not render yourselves vessels of wrath, more and more fitted for destruction. But let the glorious fact that Jesus, after having died for our sins, arose from the dead, induce you to believe on him, and encourage you to trust in him, that you may also arise from the grave to the inheritance of everlasting life.

SERMON XXX.

ON NEGLECT OF RELIGION.

ACTS xvii. 32.

And others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.

ON a former occasion, while considering the reception which St. Paul's preaching met with at Athens, we were led to address some reflections to those who either treated the gospel with scorn, or utter neglect. It was at that time promised that the conduct of those who were undecided in regard to religious duty, should be made the subject of future examination. With this engagement I now proceed to comply, while I address those who, in some degree convinced of the necessity of repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ, do, nevertheless, decline attending to these duties at present; whose reply to the warnings and exhor-

tations of the gospel ministry is, "We will hear thee again of this matter." Let not such persons suppose that their respect for religion; their conviction of its importance, and their resolution to attend to it at some future period, will avail them any thing, while they are impenitent, and unbelieving. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," is the declaration of Jesus Christ, and is of alarming import to all who are "without God in the world." It is believed that a large majority of irreligious men cherish the intention of seeking the favor of God at some future period; at the hour of death, at all events, if not sooner. I shall, therefore, make some observations on the guilt of such procrastination, and on the danger which attends it.

It is an evident truth, that in proportion to the knowledge which we possess of our duty, is the criminality of neglecting to perform it; and the Scriptures declare that the servant who knew his Lord's will and did it not, should be beaten with many stripes. Their guilt, then, is obviously great, who, knowing themselves to be transgressors, and convinced of the duty of repentance, still continue in the commission of sin, and determine to enjoy its pleasures as long as possible without hazarding the loss of their souls; against this consequence, they hope to provide by a late repentance. But the guilt which arises from the neglect of a known and acknowledged duty, becomes more aggravated,

in consequence of its being a gross abuse of the divine goodness. Does God prolong your lives, crown them with the richest mercies, and delay inflicting the punishment due to you, in order that you may continue in rebellion, and make use of the blessings which you receive from him to gratify your sinful desires? Or does he present to your view an exalted Saviour sustaining the curse in our room? Does he set before you the hope of abundant forgiveness, only to encourage you to "continue in sin that grace may abound?" Oh, no! and of every abuse of God's goodness, this is the most criminal, the most shocking to him who is at all sensible of the obligations to gratitude and love which are created by the inexpressible kindness of the divine dispensations toward us.

2. The means of grace, also, which are designed to call us off from vanity and sin, and to reconcile us to God, are abused by the conduct here condemned. If men are indeed obnoxious to the sentence of divine justice; if in themselves they are incompetent to procure the divine favor, surely any intimation of a method of salvation should be embraced with joy. The gospel contains not merely an intimation, but a full discovery of the way of salvation. The privilege of possessing the gospel is certainly a great one, and it produces a correspondent obligation to attend to its warnings, and obey its requisitions. "Not the hearers of the

law are justified before God, but the doers." And it is not enough for men to attend even with a degree of respect to the ministrations of the word of truth and salvation ; it must have its proper influence upon their hearts, and upon their lives, or the gospel will become to them an occasion of increased condemnation. And let not any suppose, that because their lives are decent, or even adorned with many actions which have a natural goodness in them, that they have no concern in these things, and that God is not displeased with them. Let them remember the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Of the former it is not said that he had acquired his wealth by iniquitous practices, " that he had robbed the widow or devoured the orphan's portion ;" it is not stated that he was guilty of any outward enormity ; he was not covetous, a glutton, a drunkard, or lascivious ; he had even, it may be, done some charitable actions. He is merely charged with unthankfulness to God for his mercies ; with neglect of religion, and with having his heart supremely fixed upon the things of this life : and yet this man " lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torments." Let the self-complacent moral man attend to this scene, for in it he may read an important lesson. And let it also be borne in mind, that in the representation which our Lord has given us of the day of judgment, men are not charged with the positive crimes which they have com-



mitted, but with their neglect of duty, "I was sick, and ye visited me not."

These considerations respect the guilt attendant on delaying the great work of conversion. I would now insist on the danger. And I would in the first place infer this from the fact of the "inveteracy of habits long pursued." In proportion to the number of times any action is performed, will be the ease of its performance, and the difficulty of refraining from it. "Choose that manner of life which is best, and custom will render it agreeable," is a well known and very forcible observation. In conformity with this it may be remarked, that if a bad choice have been made, the longer it is persevered in, the more impossible will be an alteration of conduct; and this result will be the more inevitable, because to the force of habit, in this instance, is added the strong influence of human depravity. I refer at this time, to laws existing in the human constitution, evident to all men from their own consciousness and observation. Every day, therefore, the sinner remains in an unconverted state, every time he repeats his acts of impiety, his salvation is rendered more difficult. His corrupt desires are increased, his propensity to sin becomes more irresistible, his aversion to holiness more incurable. A single glance over the face of society will present many illustrations of this statement. Why is it that the gamester, from playing merely

for amusement, will become so attached to his criminal employment that indulging in it, he will sacrifice fortune, character, peace of mind, and involve many others in the same hopeless misery? Why is it that the drunkard proceeds from sobriety to occasional intemperance, and finally to a state of degradation below the brutes which perish? And how next to impossible is the reformation of such persons, do we not all know? Whence arises this? Is it not from the force of habit produced by a continuance in the practice of these vices? And the habit of transgressing in general, has the same influence in increasing the alienations of the heart from God, and in fastening more closely upon the soul, the fetters of sin. To you who are yet in bondage to corruption, this is an alarming consideration. If your aversion to religious duty, and love of pleasure, be now so great that you cannot think of seeking the favor of God or doing his will, how much greater will these obstacles be at any time hereafter? Do not, therefore, deceive yourselves with the thought that your continuing in transgression will not render your reconciliation with God more and more difficult.

3. There is another observation which forcibly illustrates the danger attendant on a delay of conversion. It is, that while habit strengthens all active principles, it weakens all passive impressions. For instance, the more frequently motives to holiness

are presented to the mind without any good effect, the less will their influence finally be. This should furnish to you a powerful inducement to "seek the Lord while he may be found;" for those solemn denunciations of the divine displeasure, which now perhaps, affect the minds of the most careless among you, will soon, by frequent repetition, lose their influence with those who were once deeply terrified with them. And all the variety of inducements which we present to lead you to repentance, which now appear so strong as almost to persuade you to be a Christian, will in time cease to produce any effect upon your heart.

I now proceed to derive an argument in favor of an immediate attention to religion, from the nature of conversion itself. Conversion is the passage from what we term a state of nature, to one of grace. The characteristics of the one state are, a subjection to sin and exposure to the judgment of God. The characteristics of the other are, a prevalence of holy dispositions and the possession of the divine favor.

The change which is thus produced is the result of a divine influence upon the human heart—and this influence is usually associated with the use of certain appointed means of grace. Since then, there are means of grace, we should attend upon them immediately. The Scriptures say—"To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

And if we obey not the solemn command of God ; if we do indeed harden our hearts against the warnings and invitations of the gospel ; if we in fine grieve the Holy Spirit—can we hope that his heavenly influence will hereafter be afforded to us ?

But, in the last place, from the uncertainty of life, I would argue against postponing our attention to religious duty. “ When Paul reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled and answered—Go thy way at this time, at a convenient season I will call for thee.” In all probability, this convenient season never arrived. And from the example of this man, others should derive instruction. And when they are disposed to quiet their present convictions, and reply to our admonitions, that they will consider their duty at a convenient season—do they reflect on the precarious tenure of their lives ? Do they remember that the appalling sound may very shortly meet their ears, “ thy soul is required at thy hands.” Indeed, my thoughtless hearers, you know not the day nor the hour when an eternal world shall open upon your view—when all your earthly joys shall forsake you, and you be subjected to a weight of wo, to which an innumerable succession of ages shall afford no mitigation nor bring any prospect of relief. You profess to believe the Scriptures, and in them it is declared that “ the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all those who forget God.” You confess that

you are under this curse, and that your lives are vanishing away, and that you know not the day nor the hour, when with regard to you, time shall be no longer.

How then can you rest in this situation? How can you smile and delight yourself with the pleasures of this life, when you are on the brink of a yawning gulf, ready to drop in and be eternally lost? How may we account for such conduct? It is to be feared, that together with an intention of future repentance, many deceive themselves fatally with wrong conceptions of the mercy of God. But, has it not been declared, that “except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” That the wicked “shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.” And shall not the word of God be credited? Will it be said that this is inconsistent with the divine goodness. Has not God exhibited his goodness in the gift of his Son? Has he not long borne with you? Has he not invited you to come to him, that you may have life, and warned you of the consequences of continuing in sin? And after having despised all this goodness, is it strange that you should meet with awful recompense? Perhaps but a little while may pass, ere death shall arrest the most careless of all who are now present. And while the body rests in the narrow house—where is the soul that never dies? It is unchangeably fixed—if not in

God's presence, it must be in those dark mansions where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you, we pray you in Christ's stead—Be ye reconciled to God. Let not another moment of your lives pass without resolving to forsake your sins—without earnest supplication at a throne of grace, for pardon and acceptance, and for the Spirit of grace to sanctify your hearts. Until this takes place, there is no promise of peace for you. May God incline you to flee from the impending vengeance, and grant you redemption through Christ's blood—that your consolation may be pure, abundant, and never failing.

SERMON XXXI.

THE IMPORT AND USE OF INFANT BAPTISM.

MARK X. 13, 14, 16.

And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

THERE are few incidents in the evangelical history more affecting than the one mentioned in the text. The Saviour of men is presented to our view as full of kindness and condescension to the humblest and most helpless of his creatures. His compassion toward the suffering, had induced him, on many occasions, to heal their diseases. In consequence of this beneficent exercise of his power,

multitudes, of all classes, resorted to him for relief. Amid this general solicitude with respect to a restoration from bodily disease, there were some who experienced a concern with regard to blessings of a superior character. They sought to obtain from him instruction concerning heavenly things; they wished to secure his favor, upon which was dependent a good, more important than life, more valuable than health, more precious than any happiness which the world can bestow. Nor did their solicitude respect their own well being alone; it extended to the case of others who were more or less intimately connected with them. The text brings under our view, certain individuals who were doubtless parents, who brought their infant children to Jesus Christ that he might bless them; natural affection would prompt them to seek the happiness of their offspring, and they would seek it more earnestly in proportion to the value of the blessings to be secured for them.

In directing your attention to this particular passage of Scripture, I have designed to show, that serious parents are disposed to procure for their children a participation in the spiritual good which they seek for themselves, and that our merciful Redeemer has given us abundant encouragement to do so. The analogy between the cases related in the text, and the instance of parents now presenting their children to God in the ordinance of

baptism, is a very obvious one. It is not designed to rest the authority of infant baptism upon this analogy. Yet, when the propriety of this usage is established by other considerations, our minds may be still farther satisfied by a reference to the conduct and language of the great Head of the church in the instance now under view.

Your attention was directed, a considerable time since, to some observations on the general character of the ordinance of baptism, and to an inquiry into the propriety of its use in the case of infant subjects. The discussion was then principally of a controversial nature. It is not now our purpose to resume that discussion, but to suggest some considerations of a practical kind, on the import and use of infant baptism. From these, some inferences may be made concerning the duties respectively devolving on those who are participants in this rite. After having stated the grounds upon which we rest our belief of the divine authority of infant baptism, we are not unfrequently met with this objection—Admitting that the usage in question is an authorized one, what are the benefits connected with it, which should induce an adoption of it? In the instance of those subjects who have arrived at an age when reason is in full exercise and accountability begins, there appears to be a propriety in attending to this divine ordinance. Upon a profession of faith and repentance they are admitted to

baptism, and from that hour they are numbered with the disciples of Jesus Christ ; they are viewed as pledged to his service ; they cherish a hope of that deliverance from the influence and guilt of sin which this ordinance figuratively expresses. But is it not true that the baptism of infants is equally significant and equally beneficial with that of adults ? Assuredly so. And we may consider the subject in reference both to parents and to children. With respect to the former, the usage which we are now considering involves an expression of their devotedness to God. The same views which lead to a conviction of our own obligation to the Almighty, excite a similar feeling in reference to our offspring. If our existence has been given to us in order to the advancement of his glory, so has theirs also. And as they are in the first instance, incompetent to recognize their obligation, we do it on their behalf. But in the second place, besides this recognition of the authority of our Creator and Redeemer, there is, under the circumstances which we are considering, a commending of our children to God's mercy and grace. The outward washing with water, is emblematic of that moral purification which consists in the removal of our guilt and the renovation of our nature ; and these are the blessings which we devoutly implore on behalf of those for whose happiness we are scarcely less solicitous than for our own.

And in dedicating their children to God, parents do not simply obey the blended impulse of piety and natural affection, they are viewed as pledged to the performance of certain duties ; duties not wholly, or even principally arising out of this act, but as respects their obligation very much strengthened by it. They are engaged to promote the piety and eternal happiness of those, who, by them, have been consecrated to the Almighty's service, and to do this to the full extent of their ability. Such is the import of baptism, in reference to the parents who dedicate. With respect to the unconscious subjects of the ordinance, the benefits enjoyed are real and valuable. Being thus commended to the blessing of God, and having the prayers of faith offered up on their behalf, there is reason to hope that they may hereafter become the subjects of divine grace. And there are additional grounds upon which to rest this expectation, existing in the fact, that the advantages of religious instruction are in a great degree secured to them. And this is a momentous consideration. Viewing human beings at their entrance on life as ignorant, the necessity of instruction is most obvious ; regarding them as the subject of moral government, it is manifest that information concerning their duty is most important. And taking into consideration the numberless snares which beset their path, the various seductions to which they are exposed, and the deplorable ten-

dencies to evil existing in their constitution, we are prepared to appreciate the value of Christian knowledge and principles, early communicated to the youthful mind.

There is, indeed, a wide difference in the condition of the young, viewed in reference to this subject. The children of truly pious parents possess advantages which are utterly denied to others. They enjoy the benefits of Christian example. Parental tenderness, associated with a sense of duty to God, furnishes a pledge that they will be early instructed in the way of salvation. They will be warned of the dangers which beset their path; they will learn that sinful pleasures, although productive of momentary gratification, in the end lead to misery; that while they are to be enjoyed but for a season, the evils consequent on them abide forever. They will be taught to fear the Lord in their youth, to supplicate his forgiveness for the evils they have already committed, and to walk in wisdom's ways, that they may finally attain to its exceeding great reward. Surely there is much greater reason to expect that these will become the subjects of grace and the inheritors of the kingdom of God, than that such will be the fact in reference to those, who, in the examples of their parents, have found every inducement to irreligion, and who have received no instructions which may counteract this evil influence.

We would, however, by no means convey the idea that the communication of the Almighty's grace is restricted to the posterity of those who fear his name. We believe that it is, ordinarily, thus dispensed, but not uniformly. The children of pious parents often derive no ultimate benefit from their early privileges, but forfeit, by their misconduct, the blessings which awaited their acceptance; while those who have been reared without religious instruction and under the influence of evil example, are sometimes brought to the knowledge of the truth, become the subject of religious feeling, and attain the happiness which others with superior advantages fall short of. These, however, do not constitute the general rule, but form exceptions to it. And they serve to show us that salvation is not the consequence of human exertions solely, but the result of the good pleasure of God.

We perceive then the securing of religious instruction to children is a great benefit conferred upon them; and if a subjection to the ordinance of baptism have any influence in producing this result, we have a very sufficient reason furnished why it should be administered. Now of this fact we have no doubt. The most devout and affectionate parents have their concern for the salvation of their offspring increased by the solemn act of dedication in which they engage. And in the instance of those who would be less apt to feel deeply on this subject, the

engagements into which they have entered, become a continual inducement to train up their children in the way in which they should go. We are satisfied that an appeal to the results of experience will confirm these statements.

So much has been deemed necessary in reference to the import and use of the rite of infant baptism. Upon these observations may be grounded some considerations addressed to parents who have presented their children to God in this his ordinance, and to those baptized individuals who have attained to mature age without having made a profession of religion.

I would first address the parents whose children have been subjected to the ordinance of which we are speaking. You are aware that having performed this act of dedication, your duties are not all fulfilled. Your solicitude for your children's spiritual welfare is not to cease. Nor are you to intermit your exertions in promoting that end. You have indeed only taken the first step. You have made engagements from which you cannot be absolved without a long attention to the religious education and moral discipline of your children. You are to instruct them concerning their obligation to God who has made them, and the Saviour who has redeemed them. They must be taught by you to feel and lament the tendencies to evil existing in their nature. And while the great guilt and terrible consequences of

sin are unfolded to their view, you must make them acquainted with the mode in which, according to the gospel provisions, salvation is attainable; and earnestly admonish them of the indispensable necessity of their becoming interested in that salvation, and living in conformity to the divine will.

In order to this, the Holy Scriptures should be early placed in the hands of our children; they should be taught to place a high value on the communication of his will which God has made to us; they should be assisted in comprehending its declarations. With its narrative of God's dispensations to men—with its precepts, and threatenings, and promises, they should become early and intimately acquainted. It was said in commendation of an individual and of his parents, that from his childhood he had known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto salvation. And Christian parents now should endeavor to produce a similar result in reference to their children.

But besides the method of instruction which consists in an early attention to the Bible itself, there is another which consists in an attention to those expositions of Christian truth and duty which are termed catechisms. These, when well constructed, afford a brief, intelligible, and methodical exposition of Christian principles. They have been adapted to the comprehension of children of different ages; and we should proceed in order from those which

are most simple to those which require higher intelligence in order to the proper understanding of them.

And while on the subject of youthful instruction in religion, a word of commendation may be given to the Sabbath school, whose sole object it is to promote this instruction. This institution deserves all praise, is calculated to produce many beneficial effects, and has actually done much good. Parents are sometimes not very competent to instruct their children ;—more frequently, they are too little disposed to it. And these are the reasons why it is peculiarly important that Sunday schools should exist. But this is not their sole merit. They are of great use to those children who are well instructed at home, by exciting more lively attention, and more strongly interesting their feelings. Add to this, those who communicate instruction to others, are induced to increase their own knowledge, and have piety oftentimes produced in their own bosoms while endeavoring to impart religious information to others.

But to return from this digression, we observe that parents, in addition to the instruction of their children, should be careful to present to their view an example of piety and righteousness. The imitative principle in our nature is a powerful one ; the child will, therefore, more readily follow the example than the precept of his parent. You may tell

him that religion should be the chief concern of his life ; but if he observes that you are negligent of its duties, and unmindful of its interests, he also will be negligent and unmindful. You may admonish him, and even teach him to pray ; yet if you are inattentive to this duty, it is in vain to expect that your instructions will have any influence.

In conclusion, I would admonish you to cherish always a sense of the weight of your obligations, and of the quantity of happiness which is at stake ; and your instructions will be frequent and earnest, and your pains unwearied.

I would, however, yet address a few observations to those, who, baptized in infancy, have grown up without becoming possessed of religion. Your privileges have been peculiar, and your obligations correspond with them. You have been brought up in the bosom of the church ; parental affection has offered up many supplications on your behalf ; and parental care has long been engaged in labors to promote your salvation. You have, year after year, been brought to the house of God ; you have known the divine will ; and the promises of grace have been repeatedly made to you. It is a melancholy spectacle to see such still thoughtless ; it is dreadful too, if they should become profligate in principle and wicked in practice. It is not enough that you are moral and amiable ; piety to God must influence your hearts, or your parents have labored in vain, and your

souls must be lost. The rejection of the offered mercy of the gospel by any human being, is a great aggravation of his guilt. It is peculiarly the case in the instance of those who have been early dedicated to God, and who have enjoyed all the advantages of Christian instruction even from childhood. Let me beseech you, my young friends, to consider these things. The gratification of the warmest wishes of a pious parent, the honor of religion, the glory of the Almighty, the prosperity of the church, your own everlasting welfare, all require you to seek and attain forgiveness and grace, and to live in the service of your God and Redeemer. Do not resist the united force of these considerations. Remember your Creator in the days of your youth; pray for his mercy and grace, and submit yourselves to all his commandments. Take fast hold of instruction; let her not go; keep her, for she is thy life; she will secure for you honor and prosperity on earth, and endless happiness in heaven.

SERMON XXXII.

THE WEDDING GARMENT.

MATTHEW xxii. 12, 13.

And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to his servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

THE system of instruction by parables, adopted by our Lord Jesus Christ, was exceedingly impressive, and calculated to do much good. Under various representations, grounded upon the common transactions of life, he imparted much spiritual knowledge. The parable which you have just heard, has many interesting correspondences in the economy by which sinners are invited and brought into the kingdom of God. The marriage feast provided by the king for his son, is designed to

represent the spiritual blessings, which in consequence of the incarnation of Jesus, are offered to mankind—the servants sent out to bid the guests, are the ministers of the blessed gospel.

There are many important facts referred to in this parable, upon which we cannot dwell. The reception which this message met with, and the various excuses offered for non-attendance, might furnish us with much matter of solemn and improving meditation. It is not however, intended to examine the parable in all its details. There are only one or two leading points upon which I shall make a few plain remarks. The consequences attendant on the want of a wedding garment, will be considered.

In illustration of the literal meaning of the parable, we have to observe, that among the eastern nations, anciently, it was the custom to provide for their guests splendid apparel, which they were required to put on during the feasting in which they were engaged. The neglect to do this was deemed a great indignity offered to him who had given the feast. Hence the severe treatment inflicted on him who was found without a wedding garment—he was bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness. This is termed outer darkness, as contrasted with the brilliantly illuminated apartment in which the festivities were performed—the darkness without, seemed much more deep when compared with the light within—and from the privation of enjoyment,

and the intensity of cold, there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The spiritual signification of the marriage feast which has been provided, has already been suggested. It refers to the privileges of a religious nature, which under the gospel dispensation, are offered to men. What then is the garment with which we must be clothed, in order to the enjoyment of this spiritual feast? It is holiness of heart and conduct which renders us fit partakers of the ordinances of Christ. If we possess it, when the great King shall come, we shall be approved in his sight. If we are without it, the consequences will be awful. To you, brethren in Christ, I wish to exhibit a distinct view of this solemn subject, that you may be induced to examine with earnest care, whether you have on this wedding garment. In the parable before us there are these weighty truths inculcated :

I. God will finally come to judge whether you are meet for the enjoyment of his kingdom, and will perceive in many a fearful deficiency.

II. Those who cannot stand his scrutiny can render no excuse.

III. They will be punished severely.

I. God, the great king, who has provided the blessings of the gospel, will finally inspect the condition of the visible church. For a time saints and sinners bear the same name, and mingle together in the participation of the same ordinances.

To human observation there is in their characters no difference, or if there be, it does not lead to their exclusion from the society of the faithful. The wheat and tares grow together until the harvest—the grain and chaff lie on the threshing floor until the appointed period for their separation—the guests sit together at the marriage feast, however differently attired, until the appearance of the provider of the feast. The time expressed by these different terms is the day of judgment. Then will the question be addressed to him who has borne the name of Christian, without having experienced the sanctification of the Spirit, Why hast thou not on a wedding garment? To many this inquiry will be proposed, for there are many who are members of the church below, who are not fitted to mingle in the communion of saints above. And it will be with them as it was with the guest in the parable, who appeared in an unauthorized manner—they will be speechless—utterly destitute of any thing to allege in extenuation of their guilt. Their appearance in the presence of God, without the robe of righteousness, is not a matter of necessity—holiness is attainable by them, for God has graciously promised to produce it by his Spirit, in the hearts of those who humbly seek his favor. There are many ordinances of divine appointment which are designed to strengthen our faith, nourish our hope, animate our love, and lead to holiness of life. If these be dili-

gently attended on, with trust in God, we shall obtain conformity to his will. When therefore, at the general audience of the quick and dead, unholy professors of religion pass under the inspection of the Judge, and have the alarming question addressed them, How camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? they will be covered with confusion, and they must submit without remedy to the sentence to be inflicted on them. This will be a most terrible one—they will be shut out from the light and glory of heaven—they will dwell in the blackness of darkness and sorrow forever. Let us first consider the privation of happiness which they will experience.

We need not here consider the spiritual enjoyment which the truly pious experience in the communion of God now, and which is the earnest of the blessedness which is their everlasting portion. To those who need the alarming admonition to be enforced, we might address this consideration in vain, for of spiritual pleasures they have no conception. They may, nevertheless, feel that in the presence and favor of God, there must be happiness; and that to be banished from him, must be a fearful evil. It is, however, the positive evil to be endured which will have upon him the most alarming influence. And this comprises all that to human nature is most dreadful. We do not understand the precise nature, nor do we know all the particulars of this calamity.

It is in Scripture expressed by many sensible images, and although these are not to be interpreted strictly, they certainly intimate that bodily affliction as well as mental distress shall combine to form the sorrow which is the mournful destiny of the unrighteous. Think, therefore, of the awfulness of this destiny, and feel how much are to be dreaded the consequences of not having on a wedding garment.

I beseech you now, brethren professing faith in Christ, solemnly to consider this matter. Let your hopes and prospects undergo an investigation. Imagine that the great Master of assemblies were now come, that in the examination of those who partake of the gospel privileges his eye were successively to rest on each of you, that the investigation should take place whether you are clothed with that righteousness which becomes your profession. You should solemnly inquire what would be the result of this investigation. Were the scene one of reality and not one of imagination, you would make this inquiry with intense anxiety and overwhelming interest, for you would know that results of inexpressible importance were dependent on it. This shall hereafter be a scene of reality, and how soon, is known only to Him in whose hand your breath is; and it will then be too late to provide against the consequences of not having on the spiritual apparel which fits us for sitting down at the marriage

supper of the Lamb. Examine yourselves now, and whatever may be your deficiencies, earnestly endeavor to have them supplied, that you may not be dismayed at the presence of the Sovereign of the universe.

And does not the solemn subject which we have been considering, furnish some reflections of importance to those who are out of the pale of the visible church? It also conveys to them a solemn lesson—they too are destitute of holiness—they will be speechless in the presence of their Judge—they will be cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Are you prepared to encounter these awful evils? Be assured that they are inevitable, if you continue in your present condition. By the terrors, therefore, which will attend your Lord's appearing, by the happiness which will attend his favor, or the wo which will be inflicted by his displeasure, you are adjured to make effectual provision against the day of final account. Enter on your work to-day—*to-morrow may be in another world.*

SERMON XXXIII.

THE SINNER URGED TO A CHOICE.

DEUTERONOMY XXX. 19.

I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live.

IT was not investing with undue dignity and importance a trivial transaction, when the Jewish lawgiver made the solemn invocation with which the text commences. The season was a most interesting one, and there were circumstances which rendered an appeal to the judgment of the universe, impressive and necessary. In his providence toward the Israelites, the Almighty had determined to give a remarkable display of his perfections. But while subserviency to his will on their part would be productive of the happiest results, a contrary course of conduct would lead to a fearful amount of evil.

A numerous people would be subjected to calamities unparalleled in the annals of the human race. But this was not all ; the temporal judgments with which their transgressions would be visited, were but the precursors of others far more dreadful to be exhibited upon the theatre of eternity. Where the dispensations of Jehovah involved consequences so awful, it was proper that his righteousness should be fully vindicated. It was for this reason that heaven and earth, and other parts of the universe as well as the globe which we occupy, were called to witness that life and death were set before this highly favored nation, that they had been exhorted to choose the former, and that their misery, should it ensue, would be wholly chargeable upon their own misconduct. After the expiration of many ages, we make a similar invocation and address a like admonition. Our peculiar concern is not indeed with your destiny in this life. Our mission refers to your immortality and the interests connected with it. We call you to record this day, both heaven and earth, that life and death have been, and are still set before you, and you are earnestly besought to choose the former and avoid the latter. Life and death are set before you. This is the fact which will be first illustrated.

Two terminations of their earthly career widely different from each other, await individuals of the human race, and to these terminations correspond

the paths which they severally pursue through life. "To those, who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honor, and immortality, eternal life" will be allotted. "But unto them who do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, will be assigned indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish." Thus are "the wages of sin, death; while the gift of God, through Jesus Christ, to those who are penitent and obedient, is eternal happiness." Such are the declarations of the Scriptures, the oracles of God, which are sufficiently and exclusively adequate to give us instruction concerning futurity. The Almighty has, in these books, revealed his will, that we might conform ourselves to it. He has enforced obedience by presenting to us the hope of happiness and the fear of misery.

Death is exhibited to our view as the consequence of sin. The evil which we are required to avoid is displayed in all its forms. It cannot, therefore, win our confidence by assuming the garb of virtue, and there is thus no danger of incurring guilt while we conceive ourselves to be acting innocently. We shall experience no difficulty in ascertaining what conduct is inconsistent with the holiness of God, and will be visited with his displeasure. The penalty denounced upon transgression is not so trifling as to afford license for its perpetration. For the loss of all enjoyment, and the ever during subjection to suffering, present a prospect sufficiently appalling.

Life is also set before us, and in this term is comprised all that can excite our most earnest desires. Pure, abiding, exalted happiness is associated with an obedience to the divine will, uniform and never failing. But since the way of happiness is not to be entered upon through this avenue, in consequence of our numerous transgressions, another way has been opened to us. The favor of God is extended to those, however guilty they may have been, who seek reconciliation through the atonement of Jesus, and who, in dependence upon divine assistance, carefully obey the divine precepts. These are statements which will be confirmed by a reference to the pages of revelation. Their uniform tenor is, that the Almighty will severely punish those who transgress his laws and reject his grace ; that he will extend mercy to those who seek it through the appointed medium and in the prescribed manner. The conclusion is, that sufficient information is given to us concerning our duty, and in regard to the consequences of performing or neglecting it. This is, indeed, only addressed to our faith, but it is grounded upon evidence which will justify the most complete reliance. But our Creator confirms the testimony of his word by his voice speaking within our own bosoms, we do not act criminally without experiencing the rebuke of conscience, nor do we act well without an inward feeling of joy and satisfaction. Were there, then,

no external revelation of the will of God, still, mankind could not sin ignorantly. Still must they know, that the Almighty approves one line of conduct rather than another. It is, therefore, undeniable that men are sufficiently warned of the evils toward which they are advancing; that there is communicated to them a knowledge of the means of happiness abundantly sufficient. Those, then, who perish, do not perish in ignorance. I now proceed to observe, that the destruction of the sinner is attributable to himself alone, since, with life and death set before him, he chooses the latter. It may be imagined that this statement does not consist with the doctrines of human inability, and of the necessity of a divine influence to renew the heart. We have heard this objection urged in reply to the admonition to repent and be converted; a desire to obtain salvation has been expressed, and the failure in attaining it has been ascribed to the impotence and not to the depravity of man. It has, therefore, been the practice with some teachers, to obviate this difficulty and take away the sinner's excuse by asserting his independent competency to work out his own salvation. It is not, however, necessary that we abandon one part of divine truth in order to sustain another. The dependence of man upon divine grace may be admitted, and yet it may be made to appear that he is guilty in neglecting to comply with the demands of the gospel. I

shall reserve for a future occasion a full discussion of this subject, and shall at this time merely state the nature of that inability which we predicate of unrenewed men.

It is not, then, a physical inability arising from a defect of natural power ; it is moral, arising from depraved affections, and indisposition to good. When therefore we say that the sinner cannot repent and perform acceptable obedience without the assistance of divine grace, we do not mean that he is destitute of the natural capacity for the exercise of these functions. Our assertion respects the strong tendency to evil and aversion to good, which produce a bondage of the will. He does not love God, and cannot therefore worship or serve him. He does love sin, and has not a heart to relinquish its enjoyments.

It is thus evident that the inability which we ascribe to the unregenerate, is criminal. It is not our misfortune, but goes far to constitute our guilt. It is moreover apparent that such an inability as this does not preclude the use of exhortations to good. Being seated in the will, it is proper that motives be addressed in order to its removal. The exhibition of these motives is the instrument which the Almighty uses and renders effectual in the production of this end. We therefore warn and teach every man as if salvation were entirely in their own

grasp ; because in fact the only obstacle to his attaining it exists in his own depraved dispositions.

These remarks serve to show that the divine goodness and justice remained unimpeached by the final destruction of the impenitent sinner. The practice of sin is persisted in, although every warning is given, and every motive presented to induce a change of life. We are therefore our own destroyers.

But it is not enough for those who declare the will of God among you to know that neither their own fidelity, nor the righteousness of the divine dispensations can be arraigned. The evil which they deeply deplore still exists—immortal beings are hastening to their awful doom ; and to arrest them in this career, shall be the object of their strong solicitude and earnest exertion. And this day, while life and death, blessing and cursing are set before you, I would exhort to choose the former, that you may live forever. But is it possible that we require persuasion to induce us to prefer good to evil ? To act otherwise seems to be to act contrary to the fundamental law of our nature. This anomaly does exist however. And where the greatest happiness and the greatest misery are set in view, multitudes in effect choose the latter. I say in effect, for at the time, they do not suppose themselves to be acting thus unreasonably. For evil in the connection in which the mind perceives it,

appears good, and good seems evil. This statement requires illustration. Evil seems good ; for dreadful as is the termination of the sinner's course, in its beginning it is productive of delight. Unrestrained indulgence in sensual pleasure will for a while be considered the only means of happiness. That gay thoughtlessness which involves a forgetfulness of God and the all important duties of religion, may for the present be felt to be a delightful frame of mind. The possession of the good things of this life, by whatsoever means obtained, may in regard to the enjoyment which it brings, be thought the "one thing needful." Yet with all this imaginary good, is linked, by an indissoluble bond, the dread retribution of a future state. And it is by dwelling on the contemplation of the former and excluding the latter from their view, that men are induced to act in a manner so widely inconsistent with true wisdom. Good moreover appears to them evil. To subject the being to the control of reason and religion—to bestow a thoughtful attention to the realities of a future state—to obey the will of God when that will requires us to sacrifice our inclinations and perform arduous duties, are things not agreeable to our depraved natures. Nor are men sufficiently attentive in order to confirm their wavering resolution, to take into view the happy consequences of such a line of conduct—consequences

which although not now discernible, yet will certainly be experienced in another world.

Here, then, is the great error of irreligious men. They confound the characters of good and evil, and led away in pursuit of what they imagine to be the former, they are, ere they are aware of it, involved in irremediable wretchedness. I entreat you, therefore, to be careful that you understand this matter aright. Endeavor to distinguish what will truly conduce to your happiness. Do not imagine that what now seems to you desirable, is so in reality. Take a comprehensive view of your existence in its whole extent. On one hand place the sinful joys of this life, and connect them with the gloom, and agony, and despair of the spirits who dwell in darkness. On the other hand, associate the few privations demanded by religion with the pure joys which attend its possession, and add the high happiness possessed by the souls of the just in their state of perfection. Here, then, are emphatically life and death set before you. Make therefore your selection between them. Choose you must. A necessity is laid on you. Good and evil are before you—the one must be enjoyed, or the other endured—there is no medium between them. Those whom the Almighty does not admit to his presence hereafter, will not have that mingled experience of enjoyment and suffering which they now have.

They shall lie down in sorrow, and the last ray of hope shall be extinguished forever.

While your attention is directed to this solemn winding up of the transactions of time, you will feel no hesitation in exclaiming, ‘May mine be the death of the righteous, and may my latter end be like his.’ But with the death of the righteous, is inseparably joined his life. The happiness of the former, is the result of the holiness of the latter.

I would, therefore, first, admonish you that in order to the attainment of life, you must choose the means of it. “Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” Obtain an interest in the redemption of Christ, and live in obedience to the divine commandments. This obedience will evince the sincerity of your faith and love, and will be to yourselves and to the world an evidence of your preparation for the last great change which shall pass upon you.

But it is all important that the choice be made immediately. Can you give any reason for delaying it? Will any good result from postponing an attention to the interest of your souls? You cannot give any reason. There is not any benefit, unless you frankly avow that a life of thoughtlessness, folly and sin, is far more delightful to you than one distinguished by the service of the Almighty; and that the former you pursue from inclination, but the

latter you will not adopt until there appears for it an absolute necessity. This necessity you do not now perceive. You are young. You are in vigorous health. The career of life is stretched out before you to an undefined extent. Numberless future enjoyments solicit your regard. You say to your soul, "Soul, take thine ease ; thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; eat, drink, and be merry." Presuming therefore upon a long life, you put far from you the thought of eternity with its tremendous realities. You determine to be religious when for the enjoyment of life you are no longer fitted. To cherish these views and determinations, is to make the very goodness of God an inducement to continue in rebellion against him. And how awful the guilt is which attends such conduct, it is not necessary to show. In regard to the aggravation of your guilt, it is not now designed to make any remarks. It is the danger of acting in this manner, of which I wish to convince you.

You postpone your reconciliation with God until you are laid on the bed of sickness and death. Then earth has nothing more in reserve for you. You feel that it is necessary to make some provision for futurity. But is it in your power to make that provision when you please ? If it be so at ordinary times, will it be so at the period to which you refer the great concern of salvation ? In regard to both these subjects, it is to be feared that you are greatly

in error. You think you can provide for salvation at any time you please to do so. But is forgiveness bestowed as a matter of right upon him who condescends to ask for it? Is it necessarily and of course communicated even to those who bitterly regret their past folly and wickedness? No! Salvation is the absolute gift of the all-gracious God. Nothing which we can do can give us a claim to it. It is indeed uniformly conferred upon those who have humble and contrite hearts. But how widely different from these are they who seek the divine favor only under the dread of impending vengeance, and who have spent all the years of their healthful vigor in the practice of sin. Have they any just ground to expect the divine mercy? They have none.

But if the attainment of reconciliation with God be not in our power at any time, much less is it so in the season of bodily distress, and upon the approach of death. Then reason may be confounded at the first onset of disease—the stroke of death may be instantaneous, or the pains of the body furnish little opportunity for the collected exercise of the powers of the mind—and thus the soul passes as it had lived, to encounter an awful retribution. You thus perceive how vain it is to rely upon the efficacy of a death-bed repentance. But your views may not extend thus far. You may be satisfied with reserving a portion of your life for the gratifi-

cation of your own desires, and determine to devote the residue to the great duties of serving God and preparing for a future state. But when will you enter upon these duties? Whether you say at the expiration of several years, or months, or even a few days, still there is one appalling consideration, which should excite to immediate action. It is only the present moment which you can know certainly to be your own. We should not even think of to-morrow, "for where is to-morrow?"

"In another world; this is sure to thousands,
The reverse to none."

Where the happiness of our souls throughout endless ages is at stake, it is folly to omit securing it now, and to defer it to a period which never may arrive. 'To-day, therefore, if ye will hear the voice of a merciful God, harden not your hearts. Now is the accepted time; this is the day of salvation.'

At the present time, I would especially urge you to make a decision upon this momentous subject. In a short time we shall make a public profession of our faith in Him who has redeemed us. Shall we not then see some whose purposes of good have become so matured as to induce them for the first time to lay hold on the covenant of their God—to express their hope and pledge their obedience. Let not a sense of unworthiness deter such from en-

gaging in the solemn act before us. If you repent of your sins—if your hopes of salvation rest upon Jesus Christ—if you cherish a sincere purpose of rendering new obedience, there is no obstacle presented to you. Obey the impulse to good which you feel in your own bosoms, and new grace shall be added to that from which this impulse springs. Stay not until you are better prepared. All the worthiness required is a sense of utter unworthiness. The gospel feast is provided for humbled sinners. There are no alarming denunciations to fill us with dread. The gracious invitation is, “Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely.”

SERMON XXXIV.

ON UNION WITH CHRIST.

JOHN XV. 5.

I am the vine, ye are the branches : he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit : for without me ye can do nothing.

IT is perfectly unintelligible, my brethren, how the Saviour could express himself in this manner, and yet possess no greater superiority of nature or character than is ascribed to him by some who bear the Christian name. If he had been simply a human teacher, although mighty in deed, and wise in instructing, he would still have been a man like ourselves—he could not with any propriety be said to abide in us—it would have been most arrogant and impious in him, to declare, “Without me ye can do nothing.”

But, conceive of Jesus Christ as divine—as God dwelling in human flesh—and all this is true and consistent. We can well conceive how all good is derived from him—how the life of the soul and the production of holy fruits depend upon union with Christ. The fact and the importance of this union with the Saviour, are the ideas involved in the text. Let us therefore bestow some attention in the elucidation of this subject.

I. What is the nature of the connection existing between believers and the object of their faith? This is the first inquiry. It is that of a teacher and his disciples. “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher sent from God,” expresses a feeling which forms one element of the Christian character. The instructions given by the Lord Jesus are received as authoritative declarations of what we are to believe and what we are to practice. They are to be received as submissively as a child receives the first elements of knowledge from an instructor, towards whom he entertains the highest veneration, and in whom he has the most implicit confidence.

But the connection which exists between Christ and believers, is that sustained by a federal head towards those whom he represents in a covenant made on their behalf. According to the language of the Apostle to the Romans, “as by one man’s disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

The acts of the Redeemer performed as our covenant head, are, as respects certain purposes, reckoned as our own acts. His sustaining the penalty of the Almighty's broken law, and his perfect obedience to its requisitions, are, in reference to our justification before God, reckoned as a satisfaction to the divine justice on our behalf—so that to the believing penitent, mercy may be extended consistently with the honor of the divine government. It is thus that Jesus Christ represents believers in the covenant which the Father has graciously entered into with his creatures.

There is however, another connection which they sustain toward him. He is to them the source of a spiritual communication, by which the apprehensions and affections of the soul are changed, by which he who has been dead in trespasses and sins, becomes alive to righteousness—rejoices in the service of God, and departs from iniquity. The Spirit of God, the agent in our sanctification, operates in consequence of the reconciliation effected by the Son. The vital energy residing in the head is transfused through all the members. The Spirit which without measure dwells in the Mediator, is in various degrees imparted to the several members of the church, which is his body. With regard to this connexion I observe,

1. That it is a most intimate one. “I am the vine, ye are the branches.” This is the similitude under

which it is expressed, and it certainly conveys the idea of intimate association and entire dependence. Nor can the propriety of the illustration thus given, be contested. The notion involved in the comparison is the communication of life. As the sap flowing from the vine to its several branches produces verdure and fruitfulness, so the grace proceeding from Christ produces in his followers spiritual life and the practice of piety.

2. The connection of which we are speaking is also a necessary one. "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing." This is the declaration of the Saviour himself. In order to apprehend the correctness of this statement, let us consider the nature of the life which the Christian enjoys. It is a life of acceptance with God. No longer under the curse of the law, and deprived of the favor of the Creator, the Christian is brought near to God—and contemplates him as a reconciled Father. And this life of acceptance which he lives, is by the faith of the Son of God. It is through the merits of Christ that we are introduced into this state. Our continuance in it depends on the same ground. He that believeth in Jesus shall be saved—he that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him.

Our deliverance from the condemnation due to our sins is obtained only in one method—there is a way

of salvation opened by the Redeemer, and other foundation than this upon which to ground the hope of happiness, can no man lay. We cannot stand in judgment with the Almighty and receive his approbation on the account of our own obedience. Many have been the years of our alienation from him, and deeply stained have they been with various transgressions. Not to the justice of our Creator therefore, but to his mercy, must our appeal be made—and that mercy alone operates through the redemption of Jesus, and towards those who are united to him by a living faith. Without Christ, then, we can do nothing toward our justification with God.

The life however, which the Christian leads, is not merely one of acceptance and reconciliation, but of communion with the Father—and this communion, in its origin and continuance, depends upon union with Christ.

It is comparatively of little moment that the iniquities of our past lives are pardoned, if the principle of corruption remains unextinguished in the heart. It will only remain for us to commence a new series of crime—we shall be as far removed as ever from either approving the character of God, or of being ourselves approved by him—and under these circumstances, can never inherit the blessedness of his kingdom. In the economy of our redemption, therefore, Jesus Christ is made the medium through which not merely pardon but holi-

ness is conveyed. To his disciples he communicates the grace which forms them into new creatures,—and then the practice of righteousness becomes their delightful employment—they can approve of the holy law of God—contemplate his perfections with pleasure—pray to him with humble confidence, and rejoice in hope of the full manifestation of his favor.

Let us now reflect on the consequences of this union with Christ. They are most interesting—for they comprise present peace, and the certainty of future blessedness. Because I live, ye shall live also, said the Saviour to his disciples. It has already been remarked, that by virtue of our connection with the Saviour, his acts as respects certain purposes, are reckoned as our acts. In him we die under the curse of a broken law—justice is satisfied, and we are absolved from punishment. In him we are raised to a life of acceptance with God here, and in his resurrection from the grave and entrance into heaven, we have an earnest and a pattern of our own rising to glory at the last day. Can we then doubt the importance of our becoming branches of this vine? We shall thus have secured to us happiness of the highest order, and which can be obtained no otherwise. The Scriptures, the rule of our faith, the only unerring index to our condition in a future state, furnish us with no hope other than what is grounded upon the redemption of Jesus—and is

beneficial to none but those, who in the prescribed manner become interested in it.

Since, then, results so momentous depend upon union with Christ, the inquiry into the evidence which will satisfactorily demonstrate this fact, is certainly a most interesting and important one.

“If any man be in Christ Jesus he is a new creature, old things are passed away, all things have become new.” This is a scriptural criterion by which we may determine the relation which exists between the Redeemer and ourselves. If we are united to him, we become new creatures, i. e. in a moral sense, for the man physically and in an intellectual view, continues the same. But in his moral apprehensions and feelings a great change has been produced. Old things have passed away. The hopeless subjection to sin—the love of it, and the strong aversion to the service of God—the blindness in spiritual things which distinguish us in our natural state, are removed. All things have become new ; new affections animate the soul—a new course of conduct is entered upon—other and higher prospects allure our desires. The change wrought in the new creation is from evil to good. We cherish divine truth ; we love God, affectionately rely on the Saviour, and humbly walk in his footsteps. This, my brethren, is to be in Christ ; this is to be a fruitful branch of that vine which our heavenly Father hath planted.

You are connected with the visible body of Christ—do you possess a spiritual union with him? This is an inquiry of unutterable importance. Members of the church on earth do not in virtue of this union merely, pass into the enjoyments of the church triumphant. Christ has declared, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father.” “Without holiness no man shall see God.” See to it, therefore, that your hopes of the divine favor repose on a proper foundation. Strive to obtain reconciliation with your God, and the sanctification of your nature, and let your lives consist with the precepts of the gospel. Remember your continual dependence upon divine grace; meditate upon divine truth; commune with your own hearts and be still; pray to the Author of good, and attend on his ordinances. Let Christ abide in you, and abide ye in him; for without him, ye can do nothing.

But you do not all profess to be united to Christ. Many of you act as if it were of no importance to be so. Unreconciled to God, you seem not sensible of the necessity of procuring his favor; involved in guilt, you appear unapprised of the awful consequences to which it leads; impotent in yourselves, you do not turn to Him in whom all grace is treasured up. It is a melancholy spectacle to see you thus unconcerned and inattentive to your duty, while the precious hours of life are wasting, while

opportunity after opportunity is passing away unimproved, when the term of your probation may be almost exhausted.

In closing an address on that union with Christ which is productive of such happy effects, I cannot but tender to those who have been hitherto careless, a solemn admonition to seek this great blessedness. It is offered to the possession of every sinner, and the neglect to acquire it, will issue in ruin hopeless and unutterably great. I beseech you, therefore, to be reconciled to God. Alienated from him, you perish; reconciled, you live and die happy with him forever. These are solemn truths which have been often proclaimed to you; they are truths which many of you admit in words; but where is the conduct which we might expect from those who really cherish these impressions? If the forgiveness of your sins and an interest in the Redeemer, obtained in the manner exhibited in the gospel, be indispensable to your happiness, why do you neglect so entirely this great interest?

Many of you, no doubt, think that you will not altogether neglect it. There is some period, fixed or contingent, when it is your secret determination to attend to religious duty, and to seek pardon and the purification of your nature, and thus to become prepared for the happiness of a life to come. Thus you resolve, although your own judgment and observation will tell you what you have so frequently

heard declared to you from this place—that life is uncertain, death often unexpected, and reason often lost at the first onset of disease; and what is most important of all, that presumptuously continuing in sin and neglect of religion in the days of your youth, or the period of your health and prosperity, when age or infirmity, or the approach of death at any period may induce you to call for mercy, the God whom you have so long neglected may reply to you only with the stern denunciations of his justice.

I beseech you to weigh these considerations. Do not give them a careless hearing; if they now affect you, do not let the feeling which they produce pass away as you leave this house. Let them often return to you in your hours of solitude and reflection. Let some portion of this day be occupied with a solemn communion with your own spirit. Consider the indispensable duties resting on you, and may that God whose power and grace are without limit, so affect your hearts, that repenting and being turned to God, your sins may be blotted out, and through faith you may become fruitful branches of that living vine.

SERMON XXXV.

ON HEARING THE WORD.

LUKE viii. 18.

Take heed therefore how ye hear.

THESE words were spoken by Him who intimately knowing the nature of men, was aware of their disposition to treat with levity things deserving their serious attention. And of this necessity, we, who minister in holy things, can cherish no doubt. For often have we reason to exclaim, “who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed.” Although the message which we deliver is of unequalled importance and solemnity; although a contempt or neglect of it will be productive of ruinous consequences, there are few who bestow upon it a proper regard; there are multitudes who, by an inattention to it, are increas-

ing a guilt already sufficiently awful. It is an affecting thought, that the means of life thus become the occasion of death ; that the exhortations and warnings of the gospel are not merely uninfluential, but productive of serious detriment to those to whom they have been addressed. My object on the present occasion is, so far as is possible, to obviate this evil by calling your attention to the admonition of Jesus Christ, " Take heed, therefore, how ye hear."

This address appears to be an inference from some reasoning or fact previously under view. It will then be proper to inquire what this reasoning or fact was, and then to explain and enforce the declaration of our Lord.

The conclusion expressed in the text is derived from a parable in which the preaching of the gospel was compared to the sowing of seed by an husbandman. As the effect of the latter would vary according to the quality of the soil upon which it fell, so the gospel would impress men differently, according to the different dispositions with which they received it. In this parable we have represented every variety of character which exists among the hearers of the word. We have an accurate description of them all—from those upon whom it has no effect, to those who experience its full influence. One or the other of these characteristics is applicable to every man to whom the

message of God has ever come. A view of the parable will show the propriety of the caution which is grounded upon it. "Some seed fell by the way side, and was trodden down, and the birds of the air devoured it."

The interpretation of this is—"the seed is the word, those who receive it by the way side are those who hear, but then cometh the devil and taketh away the word out of their hearts lest they should believe and be saved."

The fact here referred to is one of frequent occurrence. The expositions of duty, the representations of danger, the admonitions to seek salvation, which are addressed to men, meet the ear and perhaps become the subject of a little thought, but before any impression is made upon the heart, all concern in regard to them is dismissed. The careless hearer will persuade himself that there is no reality in the things which are urged upon his attention, or at all events, that they are somewhat doubtful, and there is a possibility that no evil may arise from a neglect of them. And should they possess the reality and importance ascribed to them, it may be thought that some future period will be sufficiently early to attend to them. Such are the vain thoughts which fill the mind of men, and render them insensible to all the alarming and pathetic exhortations which can be addressed to them.

Those who hear the word but never comply with

its requisitions, are compared to a man beholding his face in a glass, for he beholdeth himself and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. How apt is this comparison ! Through the instrumentality of the written or preached gospel, men have sometimes a vivid conception of their character and of the end to which they are tending ; but when the eye is turned aside, or when the voice ceases to meet the ear, all this is forgotten ; no more impression being left than follows an attempt to fix permanent characters upon the unstable and yielding water.

Some seed, also, fell upon a rock, or upon stony ground, and as soon as it sprung up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. Such, our Lord tells us, are those, who, when they hear, receive the word with joy, but having no root, they believe for a while and finally fall away. These hear the word with joy ; they feel that the gospel is glad tidings to sinners ; they “ a while believe,” an assent is yielded to the important truths which God has revealed, which for a while produces a certain degree of obedience to the divine will. But in time of temptation they fall away because they have no root. The impressions made upon their hearts have no depth or firmness ; they have felt an alarm of conscience, but have not experienced that true repentance which arises from a conviction of the evil of sin and a sense of the goodness of

God. When, therefore, the temporary excitement which produced a solicitude with regard to the divine favor, has died away, it is to be expected that they will fall from the profession which they have made. Such instances have come under our view. Influenced by temporary convictions, men make a profession of religion, and a hope is excited that their hearts are really changed; but when the warmth of their feelings abates, or some trial is presented, they immediately fall away. The word has not been sown sufficiently deep in their hearts. The affections, which have been excited, are not of a permanent character; and the subjects of them, so far as any ultimate benefit is concerned, are unfruitful hearers of the word of life.

“Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it.” These are they, who, when they have heard, go forth and are choked with the cares, and riches, and pleasures of the world, and bring forth no fruit to perfection.

In some degree impressed with the preaching of the gospel, the individuals in question do not altogether neglect the duties which it inculcates, but the attention paid to them is entirely insufficient. For the work of our salvation is of such magnitude that it requires all the energies of our souls to be engaged in it. Any thing, therefore, which distracts our minds and prevents our paying an undivided attention to this great object, will have a

pernicious influence upon our religious character. Of this nature are the cares, riches, and pleasures of this world. How often has a concern for the happiness of the soul been banished by some trifling earthly anxiety! How does the possession of the riches and the enjoyment of the pleasures of this world, soothe the soul into a deadly repose, and suppress those thoughts concerning our future state which should always be cherished, because they manifest the vanity of all things besides.

Those then whose religious impressions are gradually weakened and finally destroyed by the tumult of temporal business or the agitation of worldly pleasure, are also deprived of any lasting benefit from the preaching of the gospel. "Some seed," continues our heavenly Teacher, "fell upon good ground, and sprung up and bore fruit an hundred fold." These are they who, receiving the word in an honest and good heart, keep it and bring forth fruit with patience. Upon these the gospel has a blessed influence. Receiving it as the word of God, they are by it convinced of guilt and misery, but they have also revealed the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Genuine repentance and lively faith are thus produced, and a joyous hope springs up in the soul. They will be fruitful in pious affections and holy actions—and they will yield this fruit with patience. They will persevere to the end, for they are born of the word of God, which liveth and

abideth forever. From the representation of the different classes into which the hearers of the gospel may be distributed, the inference was deduced—"Take heed therefore how ye hear."

The fact that so small a proportion of the hearers of the gospel, derive any lasting benefit, deserves attention. For it shows that in the way of receiving religious improvement there are serious impediments. And from the existence of these obstacles, we infer the necessity of "taking heed how we hear." We have the important privilege of hearing that word of God which instructs in duty and directs us in the way of happiness. But since there are many who perish notwithstanding all their religious advantages, we should with seriousness inquire how we may so attend on the ministry of the gospel as to save our souls. In entering therefore the house of worship, there are several reflections with which our minds should be deeply impressed.

1. We should then bear in mind that it is God, who in his word, and by the instrumentality of his ministry, addresses us. If God be our Creator—if we are in the most entire and absolute manner at his disposal—and if the perfections of his nature are infinite, then most certainly he should be regarded by us with the highest adoration; and when he speaks to us, we cannot yield an attention too exclusive.

Were the vail drawn from before us, and could we have a glimpse of the majesty of God, and hear a voice as from heaven addressing us, how would our attention be aroused! how would we stand in breathless expectation! When in ancient days the Almighty upon certain occasions, caused some manifestation of his glory to pass before his servants; how profound was the reverence, and extreme the terror which they experienced. And the message which they heard, how deeply was it fixed in their memory and on their heart.

But as certainly as God then manifested himself, so certainly does he now surround us, although we see him not—as certainly as he then spake to men, so surely does he now address those who hear or read his word. This will in words be admitted by many who have no strong impression of its certainty.

But without this impression, we are not in a suitable condition to hear the gospel message. We should feel that God is around us and speaks to us.

2. We should also be deeply affected with our condition as guilty and perishing creatures.

Our existence here is short and uncertain. We look backward, and the years are few since we began to be; forward, and a very limited prospect presents itself, ere a darkness intervene, into which no mortal eye can penetrate. But revelation gives us information that beyond this gloom there is another state of existence in which we shall dwell

forever. And in that state how wide a distinction will be drawn between the creatures of God. To the one class happiness will be allotted; to the other deep wretchedness. To the land of despair, and darkness, and sorrow, we are all by nature tending. But there is a path presented which will lead to a happy immortality and the endless favor of God. The way of salvation is clearly marked out in holy writ, and is the subject of the addresses which we from time to time make to you.

As then in the preaching of the gospel the Almighty speaks to you, and speaks in a manner the most interesting to a guilty creature, it is important that you should hear in a proper manner.

And in the first place, the gospel should be heard with close attention. Without a proper engagement of mind, no benefit will be derived from any discussion upon any subject. When the attention is frequently drawn off to other matters, the preaching of the gospel must be uninfluential; for the motives presented never become the subject of serious thought. And yet such is the fact with regard to many who hear the word of God. They are present in the sanctuary, but their minds are wandering to the ends of the earth. Frivolous thoughts occupy their attention—while the all important truths which are proclaimed make no impression upon them. Men are not thus inattentive when instructions are given on any subject connected with

their temporal welfare. No one imagines that the knowledge of any science or art can be obtained by bestowing upon it a few transient thoughts. And is the knowledge of God and of our duty, with the ability to secure our everlasting welfare, more easily acquired than the most common mechanical art? Surely not!

The importance of closely attending to the religious instructions which we receive, is therefore very evident. We should direct the whole force of our understanding to the comprehension of the truths which are brought under view—the attention with which they are heard should be unbroken—so that we may contemplate them in every connection in which they are presented. But, not only should the gospel be heard with attention, it is also necessary that we should on such occasions experience the greatest solemnity. This would naturally flow from the apprehension that God speaks to us, and that the subjects to which our thoughts are directed are of awful importance. Nothing can be more unbecoming in itself, nor more fatal in its consequences, than the levity and unconcern with which some attend on the ministry of the gospel. The word of God treats of subjects of the highest interest and importance to man. Eternity with all its concomitants, death, judgment, heaven, and hell, are the things of which it treats. The nature and perfections of the Almighty—the character and work

of Christ the Redeemer—the universal range of human duty, are also comprised in our teaching. And should not these great and dreadful topics arrest our attention, and fill our minds with solemnity. Is it natural or proper that such discussions should be heard with levity and unconcern, even were you doubtful of the correctness of the opinions advanced?

The conduct which has now been recommended will certainly be adopted, if you comply with the third direction which I shall offer on the subject of hearing the word of God.

3. “Hear the gospel with a firm persuasion of your personal interest in the truths which it discloses.” When the dreadful doom of the wicked is pronounced, remember that while separated from Christ this is your own doom. When the way of salvation is pointed out, and exhortations given to enter upon it, believe that they are addressed by the Almighty to you in particular. You should not imagine that they concern others and not yourselves, for as surely as you live, so certainly are you sinners—so certainly must you return to dust, and at the last day stand at the right or left hand of your Judge.

Let me then give as a last and most important direction, that you “hear the gospel with a resolution to improve this privilege in order to your salvation.” Let not the good seed be snatched

away which has been sown in your hearts. Be not persuaded that religion is unworthy of your regard. And above all, guard against the dangerous delusion that you may yet enjoy many sinful pleasures and then be reconciled to God. For to-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, is the divine command.

“To-day attend, is wisdom’s voice,
To-morrow, folly cries ;
And still to-morrow ’tis, when, oh !
To-day the sinner dies.”

Since, then, for us no to-morrow may ever arise, let us yield a present obedience to the divine command, let us seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near.

I would observe, in concluding the whole subject, that the preaching of the gospel never leaves us in the situation in which it found us. It always brings us nearer to God, or removes us further from him. I do not now refer to the tendency which the gospel has to harden where it does not melt the heart, though this is a solemn thought. I speak of the greater condemnation which will be our portion, if we are found to be unfruitful hearers of the word. Every time the gospel is heard and a compliance with its call refused, a fresh act of disobedience is added to the catalogue of our crimes—an act deeply criminal, for it despises the greatest goodness.

Take heed, therefore, how ye hear ; do it with serious meditation, and pray to God to impress it upon your hearts ; and may you through his grace become the diligent doers, and not the forgetful hearers of his word ; so that receiving it in an honest and good heart, ye may bring forth fruit to the glory of God.





CONSIDERATIONS
RESPECTING THE
GENUINENESS
OF THE PENTATEUCH,

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO A PAMPHLET ENTITLED

"THE CONNEXION BETWEEN

GEOLOGY AND THE PENTATEUCH:

BY THOMAS COOPER, M. D."



NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

THE following Essay was occasioned by a pamphlet written by Dr. Cooper, and addressed to Prof. Silliman of Yale college. Mr. Means's reply was first published in the columns of the "Southern Christian Herald," and then in a more permanent form at Columbia, in 1834.

The controversy respecting the composition of the Pentateuch, although it had never before been waged in this country, is by no means of recent origin. Aben-Ezra, the celebrated Jewish critic of the 12th century, had pointed out certain passages as written by a later hand than Moses, but without thinking in the least to impugn the authority of the Pentateuch as the genuine production of that Jewish Lawgiver, nor indeed of any portion of it as a writing of inspiration.

Spinoza, a learned but skeptical Jew, in his *Tractat. Theol. Polit.* Hamburg, 1670, was the first who contended against the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch. He maintained that it was composed by Ezra; and the same opinion was expressed by Anthony Van Dale, in his dissertation *De Origine et Progressu Idololatriæ* Amstelod. 1696. Isaac Peyrere, 1655, author of the theory of the Præadamites, believed that the Pentateuch was compiled from journals left by Moses, and from documents existing before him. That "the Book of the Wars of the Lord" was the first compilation, and furnished the foundation of the book of

Numbers ; and that Deuteronomy was not composed until after the times of David. Andrew Masius¹ supposed that the particular parts of the Pentateuch were first brought together by Ezra, or some other inspired writer later than Moses. Thomas Hobbes, the English deist, contends against the Mosaic origin, in his *Leviathan*, London, 1651. Richard Simon, in 1678, advanced the opinion that the *substance* of the Pentateuch was derived from Moses, but that the composition of the work as a whole, was committed to some scribe or prophet.² Le Clerc conjectured that the Pentateuch was the work of the Samaritan priest, sent from Babylon to Palestine, to instruct in the Mosaic religion the colonists who had been settled there.³ See 2 Kings xvii. 27. seq. Le Clerc lived to retract this opinion. Fulda maintained that some parts were derived from Moses, but that the whole was first reduced to order in the times of David. Nachtigal, that the five books were compiled from many old collections during the exile, perhaps by Jeremiah.⁴ Stäudlin,⁵ that much of the Pentateuch is later than the days of the Jewish Legislator ; that the book has either been composed at a later period, or has been greatly interpolated by a later hand. Bauer, that the Pentateuch cannot be older than David.⁶ Vater, that Deuteronomy is later than David, and that the whole was not brought into its present form until the time of Ezra.⁷ De Wette is of the opinion that the five books of Moses were composed substantially, some time between the reign of David, and the Babylonish captivity ; but received their present form after the Exile.⁸ Augusti

¹ In his *Commentary on Joshua* xix. 47. ² See his *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament*, Rotterdam, 1685. ³ *Le Clerc Sentimens de quelques Théologiens de Hollande*, &c. Amsterd. 1681. ⁴ *Neue Versuch*, &c. Helmstadt, 1796. ⁵ *Geschichte der christliche Sittenlehre*, Göttingen, 1799. ⁶ *Entwurf einer hist. kritisch. Einleit. in die Schrift. d. Alt. Test.* Nürnberg, 1806. ⁷ *Abhandlung über Mose und die Verfasser d. Pent.* Halle, 1805. ⁸ *Beiträgen zur Einleit. in das Alt. Test.* Halle, 1806, 1807.

agrees substantially with De Wette.¹ Hartmann supposes that all excepting the registers of names, and of the encampments of the Israelites, and the ten commandments, were composed between the reign of David and the Exile.² Bertholdt, that the Pentateuch was written between the accession of Saul, and the close of Solomon's reign.³ Herbst of Tübingen, believes the materials genuine, but supposes them to have been first brought together by Ezra and the one hundred and twenty elders who composed the Great Synagogue.⁴ Gesenius, that Genesis, Exodus, and Numbers, contain many portions which belong in the days of the prophets, but that Deuteronomy was composed after the captivity.⁵ Pustkuchen,⁶ Hoffman, of Jena,⁷ and Bleek, of Berlin,⁸ follow, on the same side.

On the other, and in favor of the genuineness of the Pentateuch as a writing of Moses, are found Mansveldt,⁹ Kuper,¹⁰ Daniel Huet,¹¹ Le Clerc in his later and maturer writings,¹² Bolville,¹³ Herman Witsius¹⁴ in his *Miscellanea Sacra*, John Dav. Michaelis in his *Einleit. in Schrift. des A. Bundes*,¹⁵ Jerusalem in his *Letters on the Mosaic Writings*,¹⁶ the celebrated Eichorn,¹⁷ Eckermann,¹⁸ Jahn,¹⁹ Kelle,²⁰

¹ Grundriss einer hist. krit. Einleit. in's alt. Test. Leipzig, 1806. ² Linguist. Einleit. u. s. w. Bremen, 1818, and Hist. krit. Forschungen ueber d. fünf Bücher Mose's, Rostock, 1831. ³ Hist. krit. Einleit. Erlangen, 1813. ⁴ Observatt. quaedam de Pent. quatuor libr. poster. auctore et editore in the *Commentationes Theologicæ*, Lips. 1825. ⁵ *Geschicht. der Heb. Sprache und Schrift*, Leipz. 1817, also *Commentatio de Pent. Samar. Halae*, 1815. ⁶ *Urgeschichte der Menschheit*, Lemgo, 1821. ⁷ In a periodical at Leipzig, 1822. ⁸ In Rosenmueller's *Repertorium*, Leipzig, 1822. ⁹ *Regneri a Mansvelt adv. Theologo-Politicum*, Amstel. 1674. ¹⁰ *Arcana Atheismi*, Rotterdam, 1676. ¹¹ *Demonstratio Evangelica*, Lips. 1703. ¹² *Dissertat. III. de Scriptore Pentateuchi Mose*, prefixed to his *Comm.* Amstelod. 1696. ¹³ *Réponse au Livre intitul. Sentimens, &c.*, Rotterdam, 1686. ¹⁴ *Miscellanea Sacra*, Lugdun. Batav. 1736. ¹⁵ Hamburg, 1787. ¹⁶ Braunschweig, 1783. ¹⁷ *Versuch einer Beleuchtung d. Geschichte des Iud. und Christ. Bibelkanon's*, Halle, 1792. ¹⁸ *Theol. Beiträgen*,

Fritzsche,¹ Kanne,² Griesinger,³ Scheibel of Breslau,⁴ E. F. C. Rosenmueller,⁵ De Luc,⁶ Krummacher,⁷ Hagel,⁸ Pfister;⁹ Pastoret¹⁰ and Salvador¹¹ in France; and Graves,¹² Horne,¹³ and Marsh,¹⁴ in England; and Schacht,¹⁵ Woerman,¹⁶ Pareau,¹⁷ and Muntinghe,¹⁸ in Holland.

In addition to these, the whole body of theologians of all countries, have been convinced that the Pentateuch is none other than the genuine production of the Jewish Legislator; and that the fact is as clearly proved by tradition, as we have any right to expect in relation to a book of such high antiquity.

Those who have impugned the genuineness of the Pentateuch, have been men whose theories have predisposed them to overlook the evidence in its favor. A large portion of these have been infidels, as Spinoza, Volney, Voltaire, Hobbes, the author of the Wolfenbüttel Fragments, and others. The rest have mostly been men who with Gesenius, Berthold, and De Wette, have no belief in the Scriptures as a book penned by Inspiration. Every person acquainted with the Rationalist divines of Germany, knows full well their

Altona, 1796. ¹⁹ Jahn's Einleitung, Vienna, 1803. Translated by Prof. Turner of New York. ²⁰ In a work published at Freyburg, 1811, 1812.

¹ Prüfung der Gründe mit welchen die Ächtheit der Bücher Mose's bestritten worden ist, Leipz. 1814. ² Biblische Untersuchungen, Erlangen, 1819. ³ Ueber den Pentateuch. Stuttgart, 1806. ⁴ Untersuchungen ueber Bibel, Breslau, 1816. ⁵ In the third edition of his Commentaries, Leipzig, 1821. ⁶ Grundsätze der Theologiæ, Theodiceæ, und Moral.

⁷ Paragraphen zu der heiligen Geschichte, Berlin, 1818. ⁸ Apologie des Moses, Sulzbach, 1828. ⁹ Gedanken und Betrachtungen ueber die fünf Bücher Mosis, 1826. ¹⁰ Histoire de la Legislation, Paris, 1822. ¹¹ Loi de Moïse, Paris, 1822. ¹² Lectures on the Pentateuch, London, 1808.

¹³ Introduction, &c. ¹⁴ Authenticity of the five books of Moses vindicated. ¹⁵ Animadversiones ad Antiq. Heb. Traj. ad Rhen. 1810. ¹⁶ Commentatio de libr. Vet. Foed. præstantia Traj. ad Rhen. 1821. ¹⁷ Commentatio de immortalitatis, ac vitæ futuræ notitiis, Daventriæ, 1807. Also Instit. Interp. Traj. ad Rhen. 1822. ¹⁸ Brevis expositio critices Vet. Fœderis, Groningæ, 1827.

prepossessions against any thing supernatural in the sacred writings; their industry in detecting expressions which ingenuity may turn into evidences of a more recent origin of these writings than is compatible with their high authority as inspired documents; their attempts to explain away whatever is miraculous, and their credulity in relation to whatever will make for their theories; and their incredulity in respect to any facts or items of evidence which may be adverse. The charge of credulity, which is ever uppermost in the attacks of skepticism against the believers in revelation, may well be turned upon the skeptic himself. He truly fulfils the inspired description of the Pharisee. He strains out a gnat, and swallows a camel.

That the friends of the Scriptures have sometimes been chargeable with credulity, there can be little doubt. Equally certain is it that unsound arguments have sometimes been plead in their defence. But, to charge us all with credulity; to set aside the arguments, and impeach the motives of the clergy, with the old and little insinuation that we are "the paid and hired defenders" of religion; that we preach the gospel and write in its defence, because thus we obtain our support; is, to say no more, unworthy of a magnanimous enemy. If indeed we did sell our services for the remuneration we obtain as ministers of the gospel, we should be the meanest and most contemptible of the creatures of God. We know ourselves and the men of other professions better than to do otherwise than despise the insinuation which is so often made against us. We have studied with them side by side in our boyhood, and with them were trained in the same pursuits, up to the time of our graduation at college. We know the guage of their powers, and are not afraid to compare the *educated* clergy of our country with them, nor to have that clergy meet them on any field of trial which it is

proper for us mutually to occupy. The day was when the several professions were all open to us, and when we might have entered those which are secular, and have stood side by side with the companions of our early studies. We knew that if we devoted ourselves to the church, the same prospects were not before us ; and yet we have yielded to the convictions of duty, and are preachers of the gospel. But we scorn the imputation that we are pledged, by any exterior necessity, to the opinions we proclaim, or that our minds are so biased that we cannot see the truth ; or that we are so fettered by the fear of man, that we dare not publish it to the world. What we preach we believe. It will not be said of Mr. Means, we are sure, that he defended the Scriptures, and preached the gospel, from any other than an honest and intelligent conviction of duty.

The divines who have been mentioned as defending the genuineness of the Pentateuch, were certainly, as every one must perceive in relation to most of them, under no bias of any kind, which could induce them to arrange themselves on that side of the argument. The greater portion of them lived in a country in which it has been more popular to oppose than to defend the inspiration of the Scriptures. Such are Eichorn, Michaelis, Eckermann, Fritzsche, Rosenmueler and others. Some who assumed the other side of the controversy, have become persuaded of their error, as they advanced in their inquiries. Le Clerc, as we have seen, after appearing as an impugner of the Mosaic origin, candidly retracted his error, and in the latter part of his life appeared on the opposite side. Nachtigal also became less confident, and in a great measure took back the theory which he had advocated ; and Richard Simon so explained his views that they were rendered compatible with the plenary inspiration of the writings in controversy. Hassé first denied

to the book of Genesis a higher antiquity than the latter part of the Babylonish exile ; but, twenty years after, he ascribes the five books to one and the same hand. He says, "It cannot be doubted that the purity of language, the elegance of style, and the poetic imagery discoverable in Genesis, betray the hand of Moses, and that the age of David presupposes the existence of the Mosaic writings."

A similar process is observable in the mental history of E. F. C. Rosenmueller. He first declared himself in opposition to the genuineness of the Pentateuch, but in the later editions of his Commentary, appears as its staunch defender. Surely the cause which is so often deserted by its advocates cannot be so indubitably certain as the foes of evangelical religion would have us believe. Anthony Theodore Hartmann,* the last author on this subject whose writings have reached us from beyond the water, and who stands committed against the Mosaic origin, acknowledges in respect to the controversy in Germany, that it has come down to our day without any decisive victory being gained by either party. It appears to us, that any one who examines this subject thoroughly and candidly, must come to the conclusion, that the theological tendencies alone of the Neological divines, their love of novelty and originality, their tendency to swing loose from every thing ancient, have been the real reasons which have prevented them from receiving the Pentateuch as substantially the writing of Moses. After the fullest examination, we are constrained to accede to the conclusion of the celebrated critic Michaelis, who thus expresses himself in his *Einleitung in Schrift. des Altes Bundes*, Hamburg, 1787. "That Moses is the author of the five

* To whom the editor acknowledges his obligations for most of the authorities quoted in this note.



books which are usually called his, is the common opinion of Christians and Jews, and I regard it not only as perfectly correct, but as certain as any thing which can be known respecting the composition of any ancient book." Professor Pareau of Utrecht, also, in his *Disputatio de mythica sacri codicis interpretatione*, Traj. ad Rhen. 1824, says, "that the Pentateuch in its present form, must be ascribed to Moses alone."

P R E F A C E .

THE dissertation presented to the reader, in the following pages, originally appeared in the columns of the "SOUTHERN CHRISTIAN HERALD." The writer did not enter the field of controversy unprovoked, nor without manifest necessity. A point of great importance, in relation to the authority of revealed religion, had been assailed, in a spirit of uncompromising hostility, with a startling array of arguments and objections, and by an individual long accustomed to dictate to the public mind, upon all subjects, even upon those most beyond his appropriate sphere.

The attack was, moreover, accompanied by a haughty defiance. It was repeatedly, and without qualification, stated, that no honest and intelligent man, acquainted with the merits of the question, would dare to maintain the genuineness of the Pentateuch. Under the circumstances of the case, then, the necessity of replying to the attack made, was commanding. The failure to do so, would be regarded as an abandonment of the point at issue.

To the argument now submitted, the writer would most earnestly solicit the attention of the public. Whatever may have been their sentiments hitherto, in relation to the matter discussed, he hopes to obtain from his readers a candid and patient examination of his arguments. To those whose minds have not yet been satisfied, with respect to the claims advanced by the religious system exhibited in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, he would respectfully suggest—that the inquiry prosecuted in the following sheets, cannot be un-

interesting to the general scholar; and that in a religious aspect, it must be of the highest importance, when the possibility only is admitted—that our conclusions are just—that the obligations of religion are founded in truth, imperative in their character, and not to be neglected without incurring fearful guilt.

Nor are the considerations proposed on the present occasion, alone intended to satisfy the minds of unbelievers; they are designed to enable Christians, speculative or practical, to furnish reasons for the belief which they cherish. No one, then, professing a submission to the claims of revelation, who is not well instructed respecting the evidence by which it is supported, should deem an attention to the following argument, in his instance unnecessary. It were a discreditable thing for him to receive opinions, with the reasons of which he is unacquainted. And were he even content to rest in this blind and irrational conviction, religion is in perpetual danger of being dishonored and injured, through his inability to meet the objections with which it is at all times assailed.

The writer has no more to add, but that the publication, in a more permanent form, of what was originally offered to the community in the fugitive character of newspaper essays, has been induced by the hope of giving a wider circulation to what, it is thought may be useful, and the wish to furnish to those interested in the subject, a condensed, yet comprehensive view of the whole controversy respecting the genuineness of the writings ascribed to the Jewish lawgiver.

Fairfield District, S. C., 1834.

ESSAY ON THE PENTATEUCH.

SECTION I.

INTRODUCTION.

AT the present period, a special call seems to be made upon the defenders of revealed religion to sustain the credibility of some of its most important records. No very long interval of time has elapsed since the publication of a tract entitled "The Connexion between Geology and the Pentateuch," which is intended to unsettle the popular belief in the divine origin of the Jewish, and by consequence of the Christian revelation also. Proceeding from an individual, who possesses so many real and adventitious sources of influence, this production is not to be disregarded, whatever may be the judgment which we may be called to pronounce upon its intrinsic merits. The author occupies a high literary station in this community, and with a great

and extended reputation actually possesses an erudition exceedingly various, if not the most profound.

The style, moreover, of the essay in question, is such as to make a strong impression upon the unthinking, the uninformed, and those whose minds are already biased towards the conclusions which it is designed to establish. With a show of logical precision and an affectation of considerable candor, there are joined much confident assertion, and many unwarrantable assumptions both of facts and principles. The author has also brought within a narrow compass, and exhibited in a popular manner, all the difficulties, real or imaginary, which are attached to the theory of the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch. That question then, which is at all times one of importance, becomes now one of peculiar interest. By those who sustain the theory just mentioned, some attention must be paid to it, if they would prevent the prevalence of erroneous opinions derived from a one-sided view of the subject. It is not meant that the matter has not hitherto been fully discussed. The contrary is the fact. As the objections to the genuineness and authenticity of the books, commonly ascribed to the Hebrew lawgiver, have been frequently produced ; so they have been patiently considered, learnedly met, and we think satisfactorily refuted. In making this statement, I am aware that the writer under view has asserted the direct contrary. He has

pronounced with all authority, "that not one of the objections in question, has been refuted or attempted to be refuted." * The affirmation is an astounding one, and so utterly at variance with fact, that we cannot imagine under the influence of what hallucination it was made. Partiality to our own views may readily lead us to deny the soundness of arguments proposed against them; but it cannot surely pervert our apprehensions so as to render us unaware of the fact of their having been offered. Professing therefore an entire incompetency to explain this mystery, it is again affirmed that very many attempts have been made to answer the objections proposed. But these do not exist in a form fitted to produce an impression on the public mind in general; but are found in voluminous works of a grave character, which few persons excepting theologians consult. Of the multitudes who may read Dr. C.'s pamphlet—so pregnant with difficulties, which are alleged to be insuperable, so full of scornful denunciations of his adversaries, and sovereign contempt for their arguments—how few can be expected to seek information from any source such as those above indicated. On this account it has been thought desirable that this community should have presented to them some considerations respecting the genuineness and au-

* Geol. Pent. p. 50.

thenticity of the Pentateuch, with a statement of the mode in which the usual objections can be obviated.

In the outset of the investigation, let us survey the ground which it is proposed to occupy. It is not then designed to mingle in the inquiry any personal or temporary considerations whatever. No reference will be had to the origin or merits of that controversy which seems to have been the occasion of the hostile demonstration against the Hebrew Scriptures, which it is now intended to meet in a spirit of candor, and with the weapons of legitimate argument.

The point at issue is this—Was the Pentateuch the production of Moses? Is it genuine, really proceeding from him to whom it is ascribed? Let it be remembered, that this is a consideration entirely distinct from the question respecting the authenticity of an historical record. Admit the Pentateuch to have been written by Moses; we may still inquire—Are its statements authentic? Prove that it proceeded from some other source—still its historical details may be true. To say then that this book abounds with falsehoods and absurdities, is not, consistently with the views of the Infidel, to suggest any proof that Moses did not write it, although such would be the fact upon the principles maintained by the Jew or Christian.

Before proceeding any farther, it may be well to

inquire—What influence the decision of this question may have upon the authority of revealed religion in general, and upon that of the Christian religion in particular.

What is the nature of the connection between the Old and New Testaments, and between the religious dispensations which they severally established? To what extent does the latter affirm the authority of the former? And how far may the manifest error involved in any portion of the one, affect the question respecting the truth of the other? These are questions of importance. Let us hear in reference to them the observations of the judicious Paley: “Undoubtedly our Saviour assumes the divine origin of the Mosaic institution—undoubtedly also, he recognizes the prophetic character of many of their ancient writers. So far, therefore, as Christians, we are bound to go. But to make Christianity answerable with its life, for the circumstantial truth of each separate passage in the Old Testament, the genuineness of every book, the information, fidelity, and judgment of every writer in it, is to bring, I will not say great, but unnecessary difficulties into the whole system. These books were universally read and received by the Jews in our Saviour’s time. He and his Apostles, in common with the other Jews, referred to them, alluded to them, used them; yet except where he expressly ascribes a divine authority to

particular predictions, I *do not know* that we can *strictly* draw any conclusion from the books being so used and applied, besides the proof, which it unquestionably is, of their notoriety and reception at that time. In this view our Scriptures afford a valuable testimony to those of the Jews.”*

It is not by this intended to say, that the inquiry concerning the genuineness and authenticity of the books of the Old Testament, is not an important one ; nor that this inquiry cannot to our minds be satisfactorily terminated ;—it is only meant to affirm that this is a distinct question from the one respecting the divine authority of the Christian religion, excepting in so far as has been above stated.

It is no easy matter to follow our author in his somewhat desultory observations and arguments. He sets out with laying down many principles—some in a greater or less degree correct, others the reverse, but taken as a whole, covering the entire ground of the controversy. With respect to the admission of these, he professes to anticipate no difficulty. He, however, enters more into detail, and again and again suggests various theories, derived from others, respecting the origin of the Pentateuch ; with many objections to its genuineness, and mixing up the question in reference to this, with the consideration of its authenticity,

* Evidences, part iii. chap. 3.

throws out many scornful accusations of falsehood, folly, and corrupt intentions on the part of its fabricators. In this essay a stricter method will be attempted. With a careful discrimination between the characteristics and proofs of genuineness and authenticity, I shall consider the reasons which induce the belief that the Pentateuch was written by Moses, examine the validity of the several objections to this hypothesis, correct various errors of the writer, upon whom I have already made some remarks—and then investigate the subject of the truth and divine origin of that book, which is the great depository of the laws of the Jews, and the most important of their historical records.

SECTION II.

The Pentateuch traced to the Babylonish Captivity.

THE Jewish people is the most remarkable of all those to whom the earth has been assigned as an habitation. Other nations have been more renowned in arts or arms, in literature or civil polity. No one has been comparable to it in its religious distinctions, or resembled it in its peculiar destiny. Presenting for ages, amid the almost universal defection of the human race from the primeval and pure worship, an example of a mono-

theistic faith and elevated moral system ; possessing historical and sacred records extending into the remotest antiquity ; and after a national existence of fifteen centuries, and the continuance in a state of dispersion for a still longer period, yet remaining an insulated portion of the family of man, resisting all the amalgamating influences of time, servitude, and an active spirit of proselytism in those among whom they live—the Hebrews have occupied and still possess a station of solitary pre-eminence on the pages of history. Nor are they alone distinguished by the circumstances just indicated ; they possess a more remarkable prerogative derived from the fact, that the religious systems, which sway the minds and influence the conduct of the most important portion of mankind, are founded upon that which was promulgated among the descendants of the renowned individual, to whom the divine promise was given, that in “ his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed.” The Christian and Mohammedan religions, widely differing in their genius, their moral influence, and the character of the evidence upon which they rest—alike refer to the revelations made through Moses and the prophets. And while the disciples of the former, regard themselves as the spiritual children of Abraham ; the tribes of the desert among whom the latter originated, glory in him as their natural progenitor. And with respect to the great law-

giver of the Jews, as observed by J. Von Muller, "his institutions, his history and his name, are now, after near four thousand years, the objects of veneration among all the nations from the Tagus to Hindoostan, from the frozen seas of Scandinavia to the country of myrrh and frankincense." Apart therefore from the sacred considerations associated with the Hebrew Scriptures, there should be produced in reference to them, a high respect and lively curiosity—as records of an age long gone by, as a picture of a very primitive condition of society, and as the great original depository of those religious truths or errors, as they may be differently esteemed by various persons, which have powerfully and permanently influenced the human mind in these latter ages. Such being the interest attached to these writings, the inquiry into their antiquity, genuineness and credibility has been often prosecuted, and must ever be deemed an important one, in a point of view both literary and religious.

It is intended in the following essay to attempt a brief outline of the reasons, which induce a belief of the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch, the most ancient of those writings which constitute what is called the Old Testament. The name has respect to the division of this production into five parts. The four last of these divisions, contain a full account of the organization of the Jewish polity, civil and religious, with a narrative of those events

which preceded or attended its establishment. The first book furnishes a necessary historical introduction to the others, exhibiting brief notices of the origin of the human race, and the distribution of it into several tribes and nations, with a more particular account of the immediate progenitors of the Jewish people.

It will be recollected that reference has already been made to the distinction between the genuineness and authenticity of any book. It is not doubted that both these characteristics can be shown to belong to the work under consideration. These topics will, however, be made the subjects of separate investigation, and in the first place the proposition will be maintained—That the Pentateuch was written by Moses, at or about the time to which it is usually assigned. Pursuing this course we shall not be liable to embarrassment from the extravagant requisitions, which are grounded upon the supposition of the perfect accuracy and divine inspiration of this production; a thing which however true, it is not necessary in the first instance to establish, being more properly the subject of after consideration. The point which it is incumbent on us first to ascertain, is, that the Pentateuch possesses the same character of genuineness which marks other productions of antiquity—the works for instance, of Herodotus, Thucydides, Tacitus or Livy. It is manifest that evidence of a higher

nature or of a different kind should not be sought in one instance, which is not required in the other. But here the principle is interposed by our objectors, that the extraordinary or miraculous nature of the facts detailed in any book demand that a more exalted standard of proof in reference to its genuineness should be applied. The principle might have force with respect to the authenticity, or truth of the incidents recorded in any author ; otherwise it is perfectly futile and irrelevant. And no one ever thought of doubting that Livy wrote the history which bears his name, because there are many prodigies recorded in it.

It is now between three and four thousand years, since the delivery of their law to the Israelites in the Arabian desert. In tracing the existence of any literary production through so prolonged a period, it will be convenient to fix upon some great landmarks ; some intermediate points, at which we may pause in our investigation, and taking a survey of the results already ascertained, prepare to penetrate into a still more remote antiquity. There are two such epochs as those above referred to—the more recent, the coming of Christ ; the more remote—the return from the Babylonish captivity, about five hundred years before. We might, indeed, at once, advance to this earlier period, and assume the existence at that time, in their present form, of the books ascribed

to Moses. Of all the theories respecting the origin of the Pentateuch, to which more particular reference may be made in the sequel, whether proposed by theologians, heterodox as well as orthodox, or even by infidels, *not one* ascribes it to any writer later than Ezra. This fact, while it ensures the admission of our principle, does not preclude the necessity of some reference to the grounds upon which it rests. Have we then a perfect assurance of the existence of these writings at the period of our Saviour's birth? We have the most unquestionable evidence of this fact. Independent copies have been preserved both by Jews and Christians, between whom there can be no collusion. We possess besides, the Samaritan Pentateuch, of which we shall presently speak more particularly. In the New Testament, which, without any reference to its divine origin, is good evidence on this subject, we find manifest reference to these more ancient documents, as then existing. More particularly there is a distribution of the entire sacred writings of the Jews into the three classes, in which they have been at all times arranged; the law, the prophets, and the Psalms or poetical books. In Josephus, an author living in the first age of Christianity, of a priestly family, well versed in the learning and antiquities of his nation, we find the following testimony: "For we have not innumerable books which contradict each other; but only

twenty-two, which comprise the history of all times past, and are justly held to be credible. Five of these books proceed from Moses; they contain laws and accounts of the origin of men, and extend to his death. Accordingly they include a period not much less than three thousand years. From the death of Moses onward to the reign of Artaxerxes, who, after Xerxes, reigned over the Persians, the prophets who lived after Moses have recorded in thirteen books what happened in their time. The other four books contain songs of praise to God, and rules of life for man. Since Artaxerxes, up to our time, every thing has been recorded; but these writings are not held to be so worthy of credit, as those written earlier, because after that time there was no regular succession of prophets. What faith we attribute to our Scriptures is manifest in our conduct. For although so great a period of time has elapsed, no one has yet undertaken, either to add any thing, or to take away, or to alter any thing. For it is, so to speak, innate with all Jews, to hold these books to be God's instructions, and firmly to stand by them, nay, if necessity required, gladly to die in their behalf." * Philo, the learned Alexandrian Jew, also expresses himself in the strongest terms respecting Moses and his books. The Targums or Chaldee paraphrases

* Contra Apion, Lib. 1, § 8.

on these writings, likewise furnish evidence of their existence at the time for which we are contending.

Let us now examine the proof of the Pentateuch having been extant since the age of Ezra. In the passage of Josephus above cited, we find it stated, that "since Artaxerxes, up to our time, every thing has been recorded, but these writings are not held to be *so* worthy of credit, as those written earlier," &c. i. e. not having been written by prophets, they have no divine authority attached to them. Many of them, however, are useful moral and historical writings—of this character is Ecclesiasticus, written two or three hundred years B. C.—and in it we find express reference to the ancient sacred books of the Jews, under the expressions: "the law, the prophets, and the rest of the books."

The celebrated translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, which is termed the Septuagint, moreover took place 280 years B. C., in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus. It is not to be supposed that the original work did not exist long before this time, the more especially since the Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language about the era of the captivity, and books were no longer composed in it. But the least shadow of doubt is removed from this subject, by a reference to the fact, that a totally distinct edition of the Pentateuch is preserved by the Samaritans. This people received their name from Samaria, the capital of the kingdom of the ten

tribes after their revolt from the house of David. About 700 years B. C. this kingdom was subverted by the Assyrians, a great part of its inhabitants transported, and their place supplied by colonies brought from beyond Euphrates. The new inhabitants of the land becoming incorporated with those of its original occupants who remained, and being instructed by an Israelitish priest, formed a mingled race, with a religion substantially Jewish, but with sundry modifications derived from their ancient heathenism. There had been a long religious and political rivalry between the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, previously to the overthrow of the latter. For the first Jeroboam had not only gained for himself a throne, but had established a schismatical worship. It was not then to be expected that relations more amicable would exist between those contiguous nations; now that new and still greater differences had arisen.

Two hundred years afterwards, when the Jews returned from the captivity in Babylon, the Samaritans proffered their assistance in rebuilding the temple of Jerusalem; which being rejected, they threw every obstacle in the way of the accomplishment of the work. Out of these incidents, grew up a still more bitter animosity. Eventually the son of the Jewish high priest having married the daughter of the Samaritan leader, and having been driven from Jerusalem, a temple was built on

Mount Gerizim in which he might officiate. During the career of the Macedonian conqueror, and in the age of Antiochus Epiphanes, many circumstances of an exasperating nature, took place between these already hostile races ; and to the time of our Saviour, there had yet arisen among them "no friendly dealings with each other."

Of the Samaritans, there are yet existing some remnants in their original seat, and elsewhere. They have in their possession a copy of the Pentateuch, written in the Phœnician or ancient Hebrew character, such as was used previously to the captivity. This has been obtained from them in modern times only, by the learned of Europe, although several of the early Christian fathers were apprised of its existence in their age.

Concerning the antiquity of this copy and the source whence it has been derived, there has been much controversy among the learned. Two different opinions, however, have gained for themselves the greatest support. Some suppose it to be very ancient, and think, that in the form in which we now have it, it existed among the ten tribes before Jeroboam. Others on the contrary, who do not refer the Pentateuch to Moses, but to some author about the time of the exile, conclude that the fugitive priest, Manasseh, to whom allusion has already been made, took with him from Jerusalem the Jewish copy of the law, and translated it into the

ancient Phœnician character, to which the Samaritans were more accustomed. This is the theory of R. Simon, Fulda, Paulus, DeWette, and Gesenius.* Rosenmueller, Pro. in Pent. § 6. referring to these two opinions, gives in his adherence to the former; alleging as a very forcible reason for this belief, that in the whole space of time which elapsed from the revolt of the ten tribes until the destruction of the Samaritan kingdom, the prophets, Israelitish as well as Jewish, always and earnestly exhorted the people to render worship to Jehovah alone, such as is enjoined in the Pentateuch; and to the observance of the whole mass of laws prescribed in it; the same remarkable care in guarding the Mosaic institutions, being exhibited by the true prophets, both of Judah and Israel; and this entire agreement, proves that there must have been a code of laws, common to both kingdoms. These considerations, we think, enable us to trace the Pentateuch to the age of Solomon, B. C. 1000—at all events, the second theory above mentioned, *proposed by our adversaries*, enables us to establish the fact of its existence *immediately subsequent to the captivity*.

* It may be well to observe, for the information of some, that no particular authority should be attached to the opinion of any German writer, in virtue of his being a *Theologian*, inasmuch as the wildest and most daring spirit of speculation, untrammelled by any regard to the truth or inspiration of the Scriptures, has long prevailed in the churches of Germany.

As, then, our investigations are likely to be protracted and may become tedious to some, and as the fact under discussion is on all hands admitted, we shall regard it as incontrovertible, that the Pentateuch did exist in the age of Ezra, who flourished 444 years B. C.

SECTION III.

Concerning the agency of Ezra, in reference to the Pentateuch ; the authority of the books which bear his name, and the subject of the Jewish canon in general.

THE age at which we have now arrived, is celebrated in the annals of the world, and of the highest interest in the Jewish history. Cyrus, the illustrious founder of the Persian Empire had lived, and his successors had undertaken those memorable expeditions against Greece, in which was remarkably demonstrated the inefficiency of mere physical force, when opposed to the energies of freedom, and in which such moral and intellectual qualities were developed in the invaded people, as have covered them with imperishable renown. The illustrious schools of Grecian philosophy then originated. Herodotus, the father of profane history, was preparing his immortal work. The various

nations of the earth, were becoming introduced to nearer connection with each other. And the shadows which rested over a remote antiquity, were in the act of being lifted up.

To the Jews, however, this was a period of still greater moment. It was the era of their renewed political existence, of the rebuilding of their desolated capital and temple, and of the re-establishment of its imposing worship. During several successive irruptions into Judea, the king of Babylon had carried into captivity multitudes of Jews, the holy city had been captured, and the house of Jehovah destroyed by fire.

At the expiration of seventy years, the period announced by the prophet Jeremiah as the term of their captivity, an edict of Cyrus was issued authorizing their return to their own country. Successive colonies led by Zerubbabel of the royal line, by Ezra and by Nehemiah, between the years 536 and 444, B. C., amid many obstructions and delays, succeeded in rebuilding the temple and city walls. The Jewish polity, civil and religious, was under the auspices of the two leaders last mentioned, placed upon that basis substantially, on which it continued until the final dispersion of the nation. Of the general history of Ezra, we know not much, except what is furnished by the record, that "he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God had given," and by the narrative of the

reforms which he effected, and the observances which he restored among his countrymen, in conformity to the requisitions of that law.

As in the discussions respecting the genuineness of the earlier portion of the Old Testament Scriptures, much has been said in relation to the agency of this distinguished individual, in writing, compiling, or issuing a new and corrected recension of those Scriptures, it will be necessary to inquire what are the decisions upon this subject, of contemporary documents, of trustworthy national tradition, and of probable conjecture.

What documents have we then existing derived from that age? Besides the works of the prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, we have the historical books of Ezra and Nehemiah, all furnishing corroboration to each other. In addition to these, the writer of "Geology and the Pentateuch" wishes to introduce two other sources of evidence; what are termed in our translation of the Bible, first and second Esdras,* but in the primitive church, third and fourth Esdras; Ezra and Nehemiah being reckoned the first and second books of that name. It is indeed only the fourth book of Esdras, which will at all serve his purpose, inasmuch, as in this alone is contained the legend, respecting the burning of the law and its miraculous restoration through the instrumentality

* Greek Orthography of Ezra.

of Ezra. We may, however, institute an inquiry into the credit due to each of these books, not as inspired, but simply as contemporary documents, bearing upon their face a presumption of truth. In this aspect of the case, it is not necessary that we should enter at all upon the subject of the Jewish canon of Scripture, either in a general view, or with reference to these books in particular; yet since our author has led the way, we shall not shrink from following him. Let us then hear his objections to the *determinateness* of the canon in general. There is no known criterion of the books called "apocryphal,"—every ancient ecclesiastical author, and every division of Christians, have different notions of books "canonical," and books "apocryphal." "Professor Michaelis uses the term apocryphal for authentic, as distinguished from "inspired," and merely in opposition to "canonical." "There was no enumeration of canonical books by any Christian writer, until the time of Melito, Bishop of Sardis, A. D. 170." "No canon settled by authority, until the Council of Laodicea, A. D. 468." "Council of Carthage, A. D. 397, admitted the two books of Esdras." "The Greek and Romish Church receive Esdras as canonical." These passages occur Geol. and Pent. p. 51, 52, and on p. 7, it is said the canon was settled by Church authority, at the Council of Carthage, A. D. 397, although as is seen above, it is alleged not to have been settled by ecclesiastical

authority until the council of Laodicea, A. D. 468, and on the same page, we read: "There is no Jewish writer on the canon, now known anterior to the Talmudists," several centuries after Christ; although on p. 52, the author observes, "I am aware of the argument in favor of the present canon, drawn from Philo, Josephus," &c., who were certainly Jewish writers. These, however, are trivial inconsistencies, in comparison with others which shall be cited in the course of this essay.

We here observe, that the first objection to the determinateness of the Jewish canon, is grounded upon the ambiguity of the terms used in the discussion. It is granted that those terms have by different persons been used in various significations, at one and another period. There is no doubt that, according to the statement of Eichorn, the term "Canon," meant: 1st, a publicly approved catalogue of all the books which might be read in the assemblies of Christians for instruction and edification; 2nd, a collection of divine and inspired writings. In like manner the term apocryphal was first applied to obscurely written books, which in consequence were "set aside," and from them, nothing allowed to be read publicly. It was then used to designate supposititious writings, which in consequence of their worthlessness, were not used for public instruction, and finally writings not inspired. It matters not, however, what *terms* were used by the writers on

the subject which we have now in hand ; provided there be an entire consent respecting the matter itself. Eichorn has well stated, as the true and perspicuous notion of the canon, “that at the time of our Saviour’s appearance, there was in Palestine a collection, which made up a complete whole, and in the New Testament, was sometimes comprised under the appellation Scripture or Holy Scriptures ; sometimes paraphrased by law and prophets, or by law, prophets and psalms.” That there did exist such a collection, is fully demonstrated by this writer, in a lucid and beautiful treatise on the canon of the Old Testament, a translation of which may be found in a volume, entitled “Essays and Dissertations on Biblical Literature,” published in New York, 1829.

With the “learned and condensed arguments,” presented in this work, our author professes to be well acquainted, as also, with those of a later writer, *Jahn*, whom he terms “far more suspicious.” And in reference to both, in his usual uncourteous style, he observes, “they do well perhaps to defend the cause, which they were *employed* to support, and which supported them.” He did not advert to the fact, that German theologians allow themselves all freedom of thought and discussion, and that Eichorn especially was far from being subject to any trammels of authority. But to return—by these arguments it does not appear that our learned an-

tagonist was convinced, and he therefore presumes that they will be equally ineffectual with others.

I have no hesitation, however, in asserting my conviction that they must prevail with all intelligent and candid persons, who will bestow upon them a proper attention.

The great variety of topics which must necessarily pass under our review, does not permit the attempt to give an exhibition of these arguments. The reader is earnestly recommended to examine them, in the above cited work of Eichorn, and in Jahn's Introduction to the Old Testament, a translation of which, has also been made in this country. The confident assertion "that every ancient ecclesiastical writer, and every division of Christians, have different notions of books canonical and apocryphal," is there shown to be entirely unwarranted. And with regard to the statements, that there was no Christian writer on the subject of the Jewish Canon, until Melito, Bishop of Sardis, A. D. 170, nor any canon settled by Church authority, until the Councils of Carthage or Laodicea, A. D. 397 or 458, I would merely observe, that it is difficult to conceive for what purpose they were made. I do not know how much earlier than the period first indicated, a Christian writer could have been expected to advert to the subject, in a *systematic* way. Little more than a century had passed, since the first preaching of Christianity.—Where the great object was to extend

the knowledge of the truth, by the oral communications of living teachers, there were few writers ; and those who did exercise themselves in this way, were engaged with subjects which presented more urgent claims upon their attention. The few literary productions of the first century, and of the earlier portion of the second, were brief addresses to Christian Churches principally of an hortatory nature ; and apologies to the Roman Emperors, in which were repelled the calumnies, with which the new religion was assailed both by Jews and heathens.

Moreover, when Christianity was principally confined to Judea and the regions adjoining, when in all places there were many Hebrew Christians, from whom the associated Gentile believers would necessarily learn the number and names of the books anciently accounted sacred ; what could be expected other than such incidental allusions to this collection in general, or to its particular parts, as abound in the New Testament, and in the writings of those, who immediately succeeded the Apostles. At a somewhat later period, however, when Jerusalem was finally destroyed, under the reign of Hadrian, and the Jews dispersed from their own land ; and when in many parts of the world, where the gospel had been preached, there existed little acquaintance with Jewish opinions, and no minute knowledge of that previous religious system out of which Chris-

tianity had grown ; we might expect Christian writers to refer to these subjects in a more systematic way. Accordingly, we find Melito, Bishop of Sardis, who travelled into the East with a view to ascertain from the accounts of the Jews there, the contents and number of their sacred books, communicating to his brother Onesimus the result of his investigations.

In almost every Christian writer of repute, during the next three or four hundred years, we meet with enumerations of the Old Testament Scriptures, agreeing in all important particulars. Many of these are cited by Eichorn, and other writers on the canon, and all may be found in "Lardner's Credibility of the Gospel History."

It is, therefore, ridiculous to talk of no canon being established by church authority, previously to the Council of Carthage, or that of Laodicea. In truth, the Christian Church had no authority to declare any thing in relation to this matter. It is a mere subject of historical inquiry—What was the collection of sacred writings extant among the Jews, in the time of our Saviour, to which he and his Apostles gave their sanction ? In determining this, all we need is the testimony of credible witnesses living at or near the time. And of this we have all that can be desired.

We are now to examine the assertions of our author in relation to some particular books—the first

and second, or, as they were anciently reckoned, third and fourth books of Esdras. "The Greek and Romish Church receive Esdras as canonical." The Council of Carthage admitted the "two books of Esdras;" and page 11, it is said, the Greek Church and the Roman Catholics admit this book of Esdras, (the fourth,) as genuine. A quotation is also made from Prideaux, which will presently be cited; by which the authority of this book is attempted to be supported.

The first remark which I would make upon these statements is, that here we have an artful blending together of the claims of two books, having no necessary or actual connection with each other. What may be true of the third book of Esdras, he attempts, in this way, to establish respecting the fourth. Of the various portions of Christendom, the Greek Church alone recognizes the canonical authority of the third (called in our Apocrypha, the first) book of Esdras—and this recognition, it is attempted by a skilful generality in terms, to extend to the fourth book, (or second of our Apocrypha.) A still more striking illustration of this remark, is furnished by the mode in which Prideaux's testimony is used. The fact of a suspension of the building of the temple, for the space of two years, being referred to by this author, in his "Connexion," &c., gives occasion to the following remark: "so saith the writer of the first apocryphal

book of Esdras ; and although he be an apocryphal writer, and is, in most things wherein he doth not translate from the canonical book of Ezra, very fabulous, yet, in this particular, he may be well supposed to deliver himself according to the received traditions of the age in which he lived and the histories then extant ; and this was very ancient ; for it is certain he wrote before Josephus : and an ancients evidence than this, we cannot have from any writer, since the Scriptures of the Old Testament, concerning this matter.” * Now this passage is quoted by our author, and prefixed to an attempt to prove that Ezra wrote the Pentateuch, a thing asserted not by the writer of the third, but of the fourth book of Esdras. Prideaux’s testimony is therefore clearly irrelevant ; but the uninformed might be thence led to conclude that this distinguished divine intended to guaranty the competence and credibility, as an historical witness, of the writer of fourth Esdras. But what does Prideaux say, concerning this book ? Controverting the opinion of certain fathers, he observes, p. 103, Vol. II. Connexion,—“ They had no other foundation for it, than that fabulous relation which we have in the second (fourth) apocryphal book of Esdras ; a book too absurd for the Romanists themselves to receive into their canon.”

* Vol. II. p. 31.—Charlestown, 1815.

The second remark which I would make, respecting the statements now under view, is, that with an exception or two they are grossly incorrect. The Greek Church does not receive fourth Esdras; neither does the Roman Catholic; nor did the Council of Carthage. What could have led our author into these errors? He seems to have forgotten that Ezra and Nehemiah were anciently reckoned as the first and second Esdras. For once his universal learning has failed him, or he has voluntarily erred to serve a purpose. But were Ezra and Nehemiah accounted as first and second Esdras, as I have asserted? The proof is abundant. Let us hear the Council of Trent, in its “*Decretum de Canonicis Scripturis*.” In the enumeration of the books of the Old Testament, we perceive “*Esdraë primus et secundus qui dicitur Nehemias*.” No notice is taken of the third and fourth books. Lactantius, whom Gibbon has pronounced the most eloquent of the Latin fathers, A. D. 306, quotes Nehemiah under the name of Esdras, because it was reckoned the second book under that title.* Jerome, A. D. 392, in that preface, concerning all the books of the Old Testament, which he terms, “*Prologus Galeatus*,” giving an enumeration of them, consistently with our received canon, only grouping two together in some instances, after the manner of the

* Lardner, Vol. III. p. 527, London edition, 1831.

Jews, who aimed at a correspondence with the number of letters in their alphabet, observes—"The eighth of the class Hagiographia is Ezra, which among the Greeks and Latins, makes two." And in the preface to his translation of Ezra and Nehemiah, he says, "by the Hebrews, they are reckoned as one book, called Ezra; but reckoning them as two, *he* had not translated the dreams of those apocryphal books, third and fourth Esdras, which were not found among the Jews, and were therefore not to be regarded."* Origen, A. D. 230, speaks of Esdras first and second, as being in one book, called by the Jews, Ezra. To the same purpose express themselves, Epiphanius, Rufinus, and Athanasius in his Paschal epistle. We need no farther proof of our position; and when in the canon recognized by the Council of Carthage we find mentioned first and second Esdras, no man of common intelligence can suppose that any other books are referred to, but those of Ezra and Nehemiah. In relation to the fourth book of Esdras, I would only remark farther, that it is not extant in Greek, and never was in Hebrew, and subjoin the observation of the learned Basnage: "We suppose the author to have been a Jew who was educated in Chaldea. In his writings, he has borrowed his arrangement, style and prophetical expressions from

* Lardner IV. p. 420.

Daniel.” “He was in reality a Christian, for he often speaks of Jesus the Son of God ; but he retained after his conversion, the reverence which was felt by all the Jews in the time of Christ, for their cabalistic learning and traditions.”* Such then is the poor authority upon which rests the legend of the miraculous restoration of the law by Ezra, after it had been burnt ; a writer living five hundred years afterwards, utterly unsupported by any contemporary, or intermediate document, at variance with national tradition, and opposed by authentic records. That some of the early Christian fathers should have confided in his statements, can add nothing to his authority. We have access to all the sources of evidence which they possessed. And we thus perceive, of how little force is the remark of our author : “ Esdras would never have ventured to publish this, as a fact, to the whole Jewish nation, which the production of one copy could confute, if the assertion could be contradicted.” This remark would have full force, provided the spurious Ezra had made his statement at the time when the fact was alleged to have taken place ; but with the understanding, that it was made five hundred years afterwards, it is entirely futile. To this we may add the consideration stated by Jerome, that this fourth Esdras, was not found among the Jews.

* Basnage, appended to Jahn's Heb. Com. p. 578.

But we have it again suggested, "that it is not true, that certain ancient fathers had no other reason for their opinion, than the passage in fourth Esdras—they were supported by the traditions of the whole Jewish nation, leaving it uncertain whether the Pentateuch was a composition, or compilation by Ezra, or partly one, and the other." How very logical is the conclusion arrived at in this remark; the fact that the book of the law was burnt and restored by Ezra, is *proved*, by the universal tradition of the Jewish nation, declaring what?—why, "*leaving it doubtful* whether the Pentateuch was composed, compiled, or partly one, or partly the other."

And here, I would note, once for all, the artful and disingenuous use which our author makes of the phrase, "the Pentateuch, *as we now have it*." If Ezra had added a single note, or modernized a single name, it might be said, that the book *as we now have it*, was not the work of Moses. So, also, if in the lapse of ages, any, the least accidental corruption or omission in the text had occurred. When, therefore, an author is cited by our antagonist, as holding that the Pentateuch, *as we now have it*, was not the work of Moses; let him state what degree of change was believed to have passed upon it. Let him also, more particularly explain his meaning, when he declares, that he would not believe upon his oath, any well-informed man, who

should assert, that the Pentateuch, *as we now have it*, was written by Moses. But we are told, that “after the complete destruction of Jerusalem, no positive evidence of the loss of all documents, is necessary.” In reference to this, let us remember our objector’s favorite adage, “affirmantis est probare.” It is no where said, that all the copies of the law were in Jerusalem, much less in the temple. Had it been so, they might have been preserved among the precious things, the vessels of the house of God, which were carried off by the conqueror. But Daniel had long before gone into captivity, and being an individual of great learning and piety, doubtless had with him the sacred books of his nation. So would we remark of Ezekiel, who prophesied among the exiles—and of Jeremiah, who remained in Judea until a party of his countrymen compelled him to accompany them into Egypt. Surely also, some of the priests and Levites, a body of men especially devoted to performing the ceremonial observances, and teaching the moral precepts of their law, must have had copies of it. Confirmation of this conjecture is furnished by contemporary documents, as will be shown in the next section.

SECTION IV.

Of the agency of Ezra, in relation to the Pentateuch, as appears from history, as affirmed by tradition, and as indicated by the probabilities of the case.

THE utter worthlessness of the fourth book of Esdras, as furnishing any evidence of an historical fact, having been clearly shown, it only remains for us to inquire, what light is thrown upon the subject of our present investigation, by the productions which are, unquestionably, derived from the age to which it refers. In the book which bears his name, Ezra is introduced to our notice as a ready scribe in the law of Moses, which the Lord God of Israel had given. Certainly then we are to understand this law as existing and in writing; for in the account given in a previous chapter (iii.) of the return of the first band of exiles under Zerubbabel, more than fifty years before, it is recorded that they built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt-offerings thereon, as it is *written* in the law of Moses the man of God. Ezra is farther represented as leading a second colony to Jerusalem, authorized by the Persian king to establish and enforce all ordinances necessary to the well-being of his nation. Various abuses are reformed by him; and under his auspices, with the concurrence of the succeeding governor, Nehemiah, there takes place a solemn

recital of the law, in the hearing and at the request of all the people. "All the people gathered themselves together as one man; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the Lord had commanded Israel."—ch. viii. 1. On the 24th of the seventh month, a solemn fast is held, with confession of sin. The Levites on this occasion, in the course of their acknowledgment, make a particular recital of those incidents in the history of the Jews, connected with their deliverance from Egypt and settlement in Canaan. This circumstance furnishes proof that the Pentateuch, substantially in its present form, then existed. The time taken for its deliberate reading is a corroborating consideration; and there is not the least intimation, that on this occasion, any production was brought under view of the people, of which they were before ignorant. And here it may be a matter of curiosity to collate two passages, connected with this subject, from "Geology and the Pentateuch." In page 47, we read: "Ezra the scribe brings out the book of the law of Moses, and reads it to the assembled people. This took up from the morning until midday, including the time occupied by the comments and explanations of thirteen priests, besides Ezra and Nehemiah. Now, this could not have been the Pentateuch, whatever it was—a morning could not have sufficed for the purpose." Nor did it. The reading

was continued for seven successive days, as we shall find our author with strange inconsistency arguing, in the extract which I shall next adduce. In giving reasons for his belief of the Esdrine origin of the Pentateuch, the third consideration alleged is: "Because the book of the law composed or compiled by Ezra, took him seven days to read it to the people."—Page 50. Was there ever a more glaring contradiction? Can we have any confidence in a writer who is so utterly careless as to commit such an oversight? Or can it be possible that it was intentionally committed, with the hope that it would pass unobserved by the multitude of his readers?

The account of the solemn reading of the law, which I have above extracted from the book bearing the name of Ezra, is all that we meet with in documents written at that time, concerning his connection with the Pentateuch. We find elsewhere abundant recognition of its existence, but no specific account of any critical care bestowed, in correcting, editing, or arranging it. It is well known, however, that according to the traditions received by the Jews of later times, much of this nature has been ascribed to the individual who so largely shared in the work of reorganizing the Jewish polity after the captivity. Let us see what the representation of that tradition is. Let us take it from Prideaux, who is admitted by Dr. C. to be a witness of un-

questioned competency. He observes in his *Connexion*, Vol. II.—“But the great work of Ezra, was his collecting together and setting forth a correct edition of the Holy Scriptures. This both Jews and Christians give him the honor of, and many of the ancient fathers attribute more to him in this particular than the Jews themselves; for they hold that all the sacred Scriptures were lost and destroyed in the Babylonish captivity, and that Ezra restored them all again by divine revelation. Thus saith Irenæus,” &c. We thus perceive that the Jewish traditions extend no farther than the ascription to Ezra of a *collection* and *correct edition* of their sacred books, with an illustrative observation occasionally introduced. The favorite position of Dr. C. was only maintained by certain Christian fathers, whose sole authority was the fourth book of Esdras.

But while on the subject of Jewish tradition, it is necessary to advert to what that tradition is supposed to mean, when it speaks of the law of Moses. Our author says, p. 15, “one concession I am compelled to make, that the expressions, the Law, the Law of Moses, the Law of the Lord, and the Book of the Law, are often met with throughout the Bible.” He is sure they do not mean the Pentateuch, but observes, “In explaining them I know of no better authority than the universal and uniform account given of them by the Jews themselves.” Again :

“The references to Jewish writers and authorities by Prideaux, is laborious and ample ; and from them, and from his summary of Jewish opinions, it appears that these expressions do not mean the Pentateuch, except so much as was written at Sinai by Moses himself, as we shall see, i. e. the two tables of stone ; but they mean and refer to the collection made by Ezra, from the traditionary information delivered to him. All this is so plain that I shall assume it as undeniable, and consider the Law, and the Law of Moses, mentioned in the Old Testament, as expressions that refer, not to the law that Moses *did* write, but chiefly to the law that Moses did not write.” Now it is strange that expressions occurring in books long anterior to Ezra should refer to a *collection* which *he* made from the traditionary information delivered to him ; but I suppose there is here a little confusion of thought, and that it was meant to be asserted, that what is spoken of, in the historical books of the Jews, as the law of Moses, was merely that unwritten, traditionary law, which Ezra afterwards committed to writing. Yet it is strange that the designation “book of the law,” should be given to a mass of civil and religious observances, regulated by traditionary information communicated orally. But we have seen the principle of our author—now for the proof which he gives. He contents himself with referring to Prideaux’s summary of Jewish opinions,

and the authorities cited by him. And what do Prideaux and his authorities affirm on this subject? Absolutely nothing, I unhesitatingly and broadly assert, in the remotest degree sustaining this principle. The reverse is clearly established. It is utterly amazing that a writer, having any pretensions to candor or intelligence, should have so mistaken the matter himself, or should have attempted thus to mislead his readers. Let us examine the passage relied on for proof. The Jews have a twofold law, both given by Moses at Sinai; one committed to writing, the other handed down by tradition from generation to generation—both settled by the authority of Ezra; for while he published a correct edition of their sacred books, he also examined and allowed certain observances among the Jews, resting only on oral tradition. This is what Prideaux and his authorities declare. But is it said that Ezra committed this traditionary law to writing, and that to it chiefly refer the expressions, occurring in the various historical books of the Old Testament, the law, &c.? *Not one word of this.* Here is the statement given. “As to the ancient and approved usages of the Jewish church, which had been in practice before the captivity, they had, by Joshua and Zerubbabel, with the chief elders, their contemporaries, and by others that after succeeded them, been a gathering together from their first return to Jerusalem, as they could

be recovered from the ancients, &c. All these, and whatever else was pretended to be of the same nature, Ezra brought under a review ; and having, after due examination, allowed such of them as were to be allowed, and settled them by his approbation and authority, they gave birth to what the Jews now call their oral law.”* This oral law, it is well known, was never committed to writing, until after the time of Christ, when Rabbi Judah collected them and the Mishnah was formed. This, with the comments on it, termed Gemara, constitute the Talmud.

But again : this oral law, thus conveyed down by tradition, was the comment of which the Pentateuch was the text. I shall not cite the long accounts which, according to Prideaux, the Jews give of the delivery of both these laws, by Moses, at Sinai ; I would only observe, that Moses first delivered to Aaron the written law, and then the oral, which was its interpreter. Aaron did the same to his sons ; then to the seventy elders, and they to the whole congregation ; that they put the text into writing, but the interpretation of it they delivered down by word of mouth to the succeeding generations. It is farther related, that many years afterwards, immediately before his death, “Moses delivered to them thirteen copies of the written law, from the *beginning of Genesis to the end of Deuter-*

*Prid. Con. Vol. ii. 93. Charlestown ed.

onomy, one to each of the twelve tribes, to be kept by them throughout their generations, and the thirteenth to the Levites, to be laid up by them in the tabernacle before the Lord." The oral law was also committed to Joshua; by him to the elders succeeding; from them extended to the prophets, from age to age, until the time of Ezra; from him, still unwritten, it passed to various individuals, successively, until the time of Rabbi Judah Hakkadosh, who wrote it in the book called Mishnah. Prid. Vol. ii. 98. Again, p. 107: "The *five books* of the law are divided into fifty-four sections. This division many of the Jews hold to be one of the constitutions of Moses at Mount Sinai." Moreover, "the written text consisted of 613 precepts, into which they divide the law." Surely this was more than the decalogue, or a few chapters of Deuteronomy. Can any thing then be plainer, than that the universal Jewish tradition reports Moses as having delivered in writing, at Sinai, the very books which we now have under the name of the Pentateuch? And may we trust our eyes, when, in reference to an opinion directly opposed to all this, and after an appeal for support to an authority utterly contradicting it, we read, "all this is so plain that I shall assume it as undeniable"! Must we not admire the promptness with which our author advances to his conclusion, when after this *formidable* array of proofs, he says, "I trust I have

shown that by the expressions, the law, &c. the Jews *do not, and never did, understand* the Pentateuch." Surely no clerical logic can be worse than this, nor can the patrons of orthodoxy furnish any rarer specimen of "impudent hardihood of assertion." Every honorable and candid man must admit, that whatever may be the true state of the case, such a mode of managing the controversy is utterly discreditable to him who uses it.

We have seen then what contemporary documents assert, respecting the agency of Ezra in relation to the sacred books of his nation ; what is the tradition on this subject, be its value more or less ; we have only briefly to inquire, what is dictated by probability or analogy. On this topic I shall merely cite a passage from Knapp's Theology, Vol. i. 82. He observes that at particular periods in a nation's history, learned men appear who interest themselves in its literary productions. "They take pains to preserve their text or to restore it when it has become corrupt: they show the distinction between genuine and spurious writing ; and they make collections or lists, comprising only those which are genuine. Such persons anciently appeared among the Israelites, and afterwards among the Christians. And such among the Greeks, were the grammarians of Alexandria, under the Ptolemies. They distinguished between the genuine and spurious works of Grecian literature. The books admitted into the

canon they called *εγκρινομενοι*, and the books excluded *εκκρινομενοι*. The excluded books were of course less used, and have since mostly perished, vide Ruhnken, *Historia Oratorum Græcorum Critica*, page 96. These remarks illustrate the origin of the collection of the Holy Scriptures."

We may reasonably conclude, therefore, that Ezra with other learned men, his coadjutors, did bestow that care in collecting and editing the literary monuments of their nation, which we know to have been exercised in other instances.

It appears then—I. That we have the fullest evidence of the existence of the Pentateuch, immediately after the return from the captivity.

II. There is nothing in contemporary or trustworthy documents, or tradition, asserting that it then first existed—that Ezra fabricated it.

III. It is national tradition that he collected and edited the sacred books of the Jews.

We have now to inquire—What reasons sustain the belief that the Pentateuch was not written in any intermediate age, but must be referred to Moses as its author?

SECTION V.

Various theories respecting the origin of the Pentateuch—Positive evidence that it is the production of Moses.

THE author of the "Connexion between Geology and the Pentateuch," observes, p. 18, "that this book is by *universal acknowledgment*, so garbled and interpolated, as well as so utterly uncertain as to its author or compiler, that it carries with it no historical credibility." He also remarks, p. 53, "that the fact of these supposed writings of Moses having been compiled at some unknown time, *subsequently* to the captivity, is *on all hands admitted*."

This writer assuredly uses terms of universality in a very extraordinary acceptance. If there be this entire agreement, why does he so zealously and perseveringly exert himself in sustaining his proposition? Are there no ignorant or interested supporters of orthodoxy who maintain a different opinion? Surely there are. Otherwise our antagonists, with their rare benevolence and unquestionable disinterestedness—who, in the very spirit of martyrdom, are resolved to emancipate their fellow men from the thralldom of priestly domination—would have a light task to accomplish. But perhaps it is meant to affirm this universal consent, respecting the spuriousness and worthlessness of this

production, of those only, who having the same critical acumen and the same honesty of purpose which are possessed by our author himself, deserve to have something conceded to their opinion. But here again the assertion is, unfortunately, utterly opposed to the true state of the case. Neither among avowed infidels, nor among the free thinking theologians of Germany, may we find this harmonious acquiescence in the theory above suggested. Rosenmueler, in his "Prolegomena in Pentateuchum," has given a full enumeration of the conjectures of those who dissent from the received hypothesis respecting the origin of this book. Some of these may be here briefly stated. Le Clerc, at one period of his life, ascribed the Pentateuch to the Israelitish priests, sent by the king of Assyria to instruct the inhabitants whom he had transported into the conquered kingdom of the ten tribes. This was two hundred years before the return of the Jews from their captivity. Frid. Carl. Fulda thought that the Pentateuch was not *older* than the time of David. Nachtigal supposed that previously to the time of Samuel, there were existing nothing but genealogical tables, with few or no literary remains; that the achievements of ancient times were only commemorated in songs and on monuments; that at this period these historic odes, which had been in a great measure drawn from inscriptions on stone or brass, were in the

schools of the prophets committed to writing ; that in succeeding times many books were written by wise and erudite men, which contained these odes, narrations concerning ancient affairs, and a collection of laws ; and that from books of this sort, brought together by the care of the learned of that age, under the direction perhaps of Jeremiah, the Pentateuch was compiled at the time of the exile. To Bertholdt it seemed probable that this book was reduced to its present form by Samuel, and deposited in the ark of the covenant ; and that a copy of it, written upon Egyptian linen, was that volume of the law found by Hilkiah in the temple. Even Volney supposes it to have been written by Hilkiah—of course not after the captivity. What then are we to think of the *agreement on all hands* that it was not more ancient than the latter period ! Spinoza, Vater, De Wette, and Hasse, maintain this, but a large majority even of the opposers of the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch affirm the contrary ; while the great body of theologians and biblical critics, trace it to the age of the Jewish lawgiver, and to himself as the writer. It may be well also to observe, that of the authors above cited, Le Clerc and Hasse subsequently changed their opinion and wrote in favor of the genuineness of the Pentateuch. Rosenmueler likewise, a most distinguished German commentator, having originally denied, afterwards sustained this view. As to any deference which

should be shown to the judgment of such renowned critics as Vater and De Wette, it should be remembered that they, as well as the advocates of more orthodox sentiments, had their preconceived opinions, under the influence of which the reasonings were conducted by which they arrived at their particular conclusion. The latter, for instance, assumes it as impossible that miracles or prophecy should exist. He rests his belief of the modern origin of Genesis, upon the consideration of the miraculous events related in it, for he argues, "Such accounts can only owe their origin to *popular report*, which must have been of very long standing to have become exaggerated in the degree in which it is given in this book."*

We are now prepared to examine the evidence by which the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch is demonstrated. In the outset of the investigation, however, it will be necessary to institute the inquiry—What does this document bear upon its face in relation to its age and authorship? If it do not purport to have appeared at a time coeval with the origin of the Jewish polity, and to have proceeded

* "Common sense determines that such miracles are *impossible*.
 * * * Might not events have happened which seemed to be miraculous?—a close inspection of the narrative will negative this supposition. The result is already attained, that the narration is not contemporary, nor derived from contemporary sources."—*De Wette, Ev.* § 145.

from the lawgiver himself, it were useless for us to assert claims on its behalf which itself disavows. We are repeatedly told by the writer of the tract to which reference has been so often made, that such is not the fact. It is denied "that any passage of the Pentateuch assigns itself generally, or any book of it specifically, to Moses." Again it is said "that Moses does not claim the Pentateuch as his production, in any one assignable part, and that it is not ascribed to him from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation." Yet again it is authoritatively pronounced, "Moses no where claims the authorship of these books, nor are the five books of Moses, nor any book among them, mentioned, or cited, or referred to, in any part of the Bible." In view of these assertions it is incumbent on us to ascertain what can be learned, with respect to the antiquity and origin of the Pentateuch from its own declarations, and from the remaining Jewish historical documents. And yet in meeting this very requisition of our antagonist himself, we are doomed to smart under his sarcastic reflections upon clerical logic. "No author is permitted to fabricate evidence in his own favor. You must establish the genuineness and authenticity of the Pentateuch before you can quote its authority for any thing contained in it." Then follows his specimen of clerical logic, which I shall not condescend to transcribe. All that I will here observe is—how

unhappy is the lot of the poor theologians. If they attempt to prove from its own declarations that the book under our view claims to be written by the Hebrew legislator, they are accused of employing the absurd reasoning to which allusion has just been made ; if they omit to do this, they are triumphantly told, the Pentateuch makes no pretension to be his production.

But let us advance to the proof of our principle. Moses in express words testifies, Deut. xxxi. 9—13, 22, 24—26, that this whole book was written by him from beginning to end, delivered to the elders of the people and priests, that it might be kept in the tabernacle by the side of the ark of the covenant ; to be read in the hearing of all the people every seventh year at the feast of the tabernacles. And throughout the entire work, of which Deuteronomy is a part, Moses says that he committed to writing—now particular laws—now accounts of transactions occurring. Thus in Exodus xvii. 14, the conduct of the Amalekites and the destruction destined for them in a coming age, he declares that he had by divine command written in a book, without doubt already begun, as may be gathered, says Rosenmueler, from the words being written with the article—by which it is signified that he spake of one particular and well known book. Ex. xxiv. 4, 7. After the Israelites had received the law from Moses, “he wrote all the words of Je-

hovah in the book of the covenant which he read to the assembled people." When to these precepts others were added, he was also commanded, Ex. xxxiv. 27, to commit them to writing. Moreover, Numb. xxxiii. 1, 2, he is said, by the command of Jehovah, to have written out the journeyings of the Israelites. The book of Numbers is closed with these words: "These are the commandments and the judgments which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab, by Jordan, near Jericho." Lastly, in Deuteronomy, in which are contained the conclusion, the explanation and supplement of his laws, Moses in his addresses to the people, again and again speaks of "this law," and "the book of this law." Especially to be remarked is the place, Deuteronomy xxviii. 61, where in the address in which Moses threatens the Israelites with all calamities, in case of disobedience to the divine commands, among other things there we read, "Every sickness and every plague *which is not written* in the book of this law, them will the Lord bring upon thee." Whence it follows that Moses had delivered this book to the people and so had himself committed his communications to writing.

The result, then, at which we have arrived by this hasty review of the contents of the document whose claims we are discussing, is, that Moses is represented as at intervals writing much; as re-

ording not only laws, but narratives of transactions, predictions of future events, directions respecting particular works with an account of their completion—for instance the various instruments of the solemn and imposing worship which was instituted. The whole character of the book, with its expressed contents, is entirely conformed to what we observe in the Pentateuch now possessed by us. That the writer speaks of himself in the third person, need excite no surprise in one whose reading has extended so far as Cæsar's Commentaries.

But in many parts of the Old Testament, the “law of Moses,” and the law which Jehovah gave by Moses, is mentioned. In the book of Joshua—which though it be much more recent than the age of that leader, was doubtless composed, as respects its greatest part, from documents, if not obviously contemporary, certainly very ancient—we find it recorded, that very soon after the death of Moses, Joshua was admonished that he should read the book of the law continually. Josh. i. 7, 8. And again, in an address to the people, chap. xxiii. 3—16, this ruler admonishes the elders of Israel, that they should do all things which were written in the book of the law of Moses; and he not only makes mention of many laws, but many occurrences are described, and promises and threats proposed in it. At a still later period of the Jewish history, David, about to die, exhorts Solomon his son to

observe all the precepts "which are written in the law of Moses." 1 Kings, ii. 3. Nor does the 2d Kings, xiv. 6, admit of any question, in which Amaziah, king of Judah, is said to have spared the children of the murderers of his father, "according to what is written in the book of the law of Moses;" and to which there is subjoined the passage now read in Deut. xxiv. 16. Jehoshaphat, 2d Chron. xvii. 9, sends priests "with the book of the law of Jehovah" throughout the cities and villages to instruct the people. In the reign of Hezekiah, (2d Chron. xxx. 16—18; xxxi. 3, 4, 21.) this king causes the passover to be celebrated "as it is written in the book of the law of Jehovah." Under Josiah, (2d Chron. xxxiv. 15.) it is said that the book of the law of Jehovah, by the hand of Moses, was found in the temple.* During the captivity the book of the law of Moses is mentioned by Daniel, chap. ix. 13. References to this book after the return from Babylon, and before the time of Ezra, have been already cited in a former part of this discussion.

The above collection of passages, by which, we think, is proved the existence of the Pentateuch, in every period of the Jewish history, from the time of

* The supposition that this book is a forgery of Hilkiah, we shall consider elsewhere. Its being mentioned here, is a valid argument against those who ascribe the Pentateuch to Ezra, and refer it to a period subsequent to the captivity.

Moses to the era of the captivity, may suffice. Those who desire farther satisfaction may consult Jahn's Introduction. The only mode in which the argument grounded upon them can be evaded, is that adopted by Vater, who asserts that these citations only prove that certain laws and ancient written histories existed, but not the whole Pentateuch. In this opinion, which is a mere conjecture, he is, in substance, followed by Dr. C., who peremptorily denies that the phrases "*law of Moses,*" &c. mean the Pentateuch. We have already seen how "lame and impotent" was the conclusion attempted to be drawn from modern Jewish opinion, by a reference to "Prideaux and his authorities," to prove that about which they affirm not one word. As no additional reason is urged to sustain an opinion which our author again pronounces "*ex cathedra,*" we can only request a candid and careful examination of the testimonials above recited, and suggest some general considerations corroborative of the position which they are intended to sustain.

In what age and by what author any book was written, are facts which can only be determined by historical evidence. This evidence may be, first, the testimony of those who possess the means of information, and who have no inducement to mislead us. Second, certain marks in the work itself, as respects language, style and sentiment, which point

out its age and authorship. The evidence of the former class possessed by the work in question, is most ample. It has been handed down from generation to generation, as the production of him whose name it bears. Those who lived contemporaneously with its origin, and transcribed this book, together with those who in successive ages transcribed it, form a series of witnesses to its genuineness. This is a proof which we never hesitate to admit in regard to the profane authors of antiquity, and this national testimony is, in regard to the Pentateuch, particularly satisfactory. Books, at so early a period as the one at which it dates its origin, were rare, and it was less difficult to retain the recollection of the author from whom they proceeded. This recollection was preserved in the familiar instruction of fathers to their children. Deut. xxxii. 7; Ps. lxxviii. 3—7. A whole tribe, moreover, was devoted to the services of religion, which were intimately connected with a proper preservation of their sacred records. Nor was there any motive to induce the Hebrews to corrupt the pure tradition relative to the source whence they were derived; I mean so as to ascribe to Moses what did not belong to him. Rather might they have been tempted to *deny* that a book containing many representations discreditable to their nation had been written by their illustrious and honored legislator. And the very fact that the Jews ac-

knowledge of their ignorance of the date and authorship of several of their historical books, furnishes to us a guaranty that when they do affirm any thing on the subject, they speak from adequate information.

We find then, by a reference to the passages cited by the later writers of the Old Testament, that there was at all times a "book of the law of Jehovah, written by Moses." We perceive that the laws, the promises and threatenings, the historical narrations referred to, are all such as we now find in the Pentateuch. Particularly is this manifest from many allusions in the Psalms and prophets, which I have omitted to cite, but which may be seen in Rosenmueler's *Prolegomena*,* and in Jahn. The "book of the law," then, was the Pentateuch, as appears from the ancient national testimony of the Jews. Nor do their accredited modern traditions at all oppose this conclusion, NOTWITHSTANDING the REPEATED and CONFIDENT assertions of our ANTAGONIST.

* An excellent abstract of his arguments, with additional considerations, may be seen in an article on the Samaritan Pentateuch, originally published in the *North American Review*, April, 1826; afterwards in *Biblical Repository*, October, 1832, by Professor Stuart. Dr. C. speaks respectfully of it, and opposes some assertions to its arguments.

SECTION VI.

Positive evidence of the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch, continued.

BUT the internal marks of genuineness exhibited by this book are not less satisfactory than the external proofs which support it. The historical, political, and geographical details respecting the most remote antiquity which it contains, especially what pertains to the history and physical character of Egypt and Arabia, are so composed as to afford a strong presumption that they were written by a man who, at an ancient age, was liberally educated in the former country. What we read respecting the Exodus of the Israelites, and their journies through the Arabian desert, is in remarkable accordance with the statements of modern travellers. The genius and conformation of the entire work, are moreover in exact correspondence with the character and circumstances of the author. In the last of the five books, we hear the legislator addressing the people whom he had governed many years; but now advanced in life, as the more diffuse style, which all observe in Deuteronomy, proves. In this book, we hear the ruler, now near his end, recalling to the remembrance of his people all things which had happened to them during his government, and solemnly exhorting them to obey the laws

which he had by divine authority communicated to them, repealing also some, and supplying others. But Deuteronomy supposes the existence of the books which precede it, to whose matter it often refers, urging an observance of the laws contained in them, by a consideration of the events which they narrate. Again the order of composition exhibited in these books—the slight connection sometimes existing between its several parts having their own distinct closes, show an author not writing continuously, but with frequent interruptions, such as we know Moses to have been, oppressed with incessant engagements, and distracted by constant journeyings.

But among the internal evidences of genuineness possessed by the Pentateuch, may be mentioned that derived from its style, or the character of the language in which it is written. I am aware that reference has been made to this consideration for a purpose entirely different. It has been alleged as an argument against the antiquity of this book, that its language does not sufficiently differ from that which was common in a much more recent age. No difficulty is felt in making the admission that the Hebrew language in the ages of Moses and David, did not present the degree of diversity which we observe in some other instances. This, however, is the result of a characteristic which it possesses in common with the oriental, and by which it is dis-

tinguished from the occidental dialects. The permanence which marks eastern usages in general, is also an attribute of their languages. The facts, moreover, that these so little vary during the lapse of ages, is in a considerable degree attributable to the neglect to express their vowels, the consonants alone having been originally used. Of course the *spoken* language might at different periods present a great diversity, of which no trace would be exhibited by the same language in its *written* monuments. Accordingly, as Rosenmueler remarks, the Arabic of the Koran, but slightly differs from that used in the productions of ages much more recent. The same remark is also applicable to the Syriac. But having in the fullest manner made this admission, it is still undeniable, that the language of the Pentateuch exhibits the most unquestionable evidence of antiquity, and is remarkably distinguished from that of the later books of the Old Testament.

Prof. Stuart, in his article on the Samaritan Pentateuch, to which I have already referred in a note, makes the following statement, which is also made by Rosenmueler. The late Prof. Jahn, by betaking himself to his Hebrew Concordance, and looking the whole store of words through, to ascertain where and by whom they were used, arrived at the following result: "He collected from the Pentateuch more than two hundred words which are either not used at all in the other books; or are not

used in the same sense; or have not the same form; or if employed at all, are employed but in a few instances, principally by the poets, who prefer the older diction. To this class he has added a second still larger, of words frequently used in the later writings, but seldom or never in the older. From these classes are excluded all proper names, and in general all such as from different circumstances of ages and countries, and from the peculiarities of the writer, might be expected to be used at one time rather than another." This result attained by Jahn, Prof. Stuart observes, seems to have settled the controversy on this point in Germany; Gesenius not having in his last work ventured on the argument against the early date of the Pentateuch drawn from its language. We conclude then, that so far as the *testimony of a whole nation, the citations in subsequent writers*, numerous instances of correspondence with the characteristics of the reputed author and age in which he lived, and *the antique style of composition*, can establish the genuineness of any book, that of the Pentateuch is sustained in a manner to which we can find no parallel in literary history.

But it is alleged, with an air of triumph, that the learned and refined nations of antiquity were unacquainted alike with the Jews and their reputedly sacred books. Now, in the first place, it is an altogether unprecedented procedure, to require the

testimony of *foreign* nations to the existence or authorship of any literary production. He that should demand that the genuineness of the poems of Homer, for instance, should be established by Egyptian or Phœnician testimony, and who in the absence of this, should pertinaciously reject the most ample, and universal, and unchanging testimony of the Greek nation, would certainly not deserve to be argued with; and precisely of this nature is the requisition made upon the defenders of the Hebrew Scriptures. But again, where are we to look for confirmation, either of the authorship and age of these books or of the authenticity of the incidents mentioned in them? At the dawn of profane history, in the age when certainty began to distinguish its records, there is no question respecting the existence of the Pentateuch in its present form. The litigated point is, Did it exist many ages anterior to this? Jewish historical books of posterior origin, recognize this fact. But we are called upon to sustain it by a reference to authors of foreign nations. And where shall we find them? We shall not of course be expected to look to India, or China, countries claiming great antiquity, but whose remoteness forbids the expectation of finding any reference to the national concerns, and much less to the literary productions of the Jews, in their early writers, even admitting that any existed contemporaneously with the period of which we are treating.

With more reason might we turn to the Chaldean, Egyptian, and Phœnician records, as likely to furnish some notices of a people, connected with these nations by consanguinity, by language, or by a long series of transactions alternately of an amicable and hostile character. But where are those records? Of Berosus, the Babylonian historian, we have only a few fragments remaining preserved by Josephus and Eusebius, and he lived in the age of Alexander, a century after the time of Ezra. Manetho wrote his Egyptian history by order of Ptolemy Philadelphus, at a period no earlier than the date of the Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Of this history we have likewise very little remaining. In the person of Sanchoniathon, the Phœnicians furnish us with a writer of much greater reputed antiquity. But while some question the fact of his existence, the point cannot be contested that there is the greatest uncertainty respecting the time in which he lived. And the small portion of what he is supposed to have written, which remains to us, is possessed in a manner very indirect. Philo Byblos, who lived in the second century of our era, professed to translate his works into Greek. Porphyry made citations from them in his attack upon Christianity. These were adverted to with a different object by Eusebius, in whose *Preparatio Evangelica* they have come down to us. It is then most unreasonable to object that

we have not the testimony of writers in neighboring nations to the existence of the Pentateuch, prior to the Babylonish captivity. We have in truth no contemporary literary productions of those nations ; and if this be the fact respecting these ancient divisions of the human race, it is more remarkably so in relation to the Greeks, whose civilization, although high, and arts and learning, admirable, were yet comparatively of a recent date. Concerning them, indeed, we cannot express ourselves in terms more appropriate, than those used by Josephus in his treatise against Apion. He observes that many are so superstitiously attached to the Greeks, as to regard them as the very oracles of history, and then proceeds to remark, “ we shall find nothing among them that is not novel, I mean with respect to the building of their cities, the invention of their arts and the description of their laws ; the writing of history is of very late date among them ; whereas, by their own confession, the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Phœnicians (to say nothing of ourselves) have from time to time recorded and transmitted to posterity memorials of past ages in monumental pillars and inscriptions.” “ Their bare pretence to the knowledge of letters is of a late date. The antiquity of which they boast, goes no farther back than the Phœnicians, and they value themselves on the reputation of having had Cadmus for their first master. But so far are they from being able to

produce, either in their temples or public registers, any one authentic memorial of these times, that when it came to be propounded as a question, whether the use of letters was so much as known at the time of the Trojan war, it was carried in the negative. It is universally acknowledged that there is no Greek manuscript in date antecedent to the poems of Homer. Nor has it been admitted that Homer ever committed this production to writing. The prevailing opinion runs, that it passed like a kind of ballad which the people committed to memory, till in the end copies were taken from oral dictation.”*

SECTION VII.

The Pentateuch not fabricated in an age subsequent to that of Moses.

A RAPID sketch having been thus given of the argument by which the reference of the Pentateuch to Moses, as its author, is in our apprehension completely justified; it remains that a single consideration be urged, which respects the great difficulty, amounting under the circumstances of the case almost to an impossibility, of palming upon the

* Whiston's Josephus, Vol. IV., p. 364. New York, 1824.

Jewish nation in any age subsequent to that of their lawgiver, such a book as the one in question, provided it were a fabrication. Upon the contents of that book rested their whole political, civil, and religious constitution. Their sacred rites, their municipal regulations, their domestic institutions, were all connected with events detailed in the history which it contains. This production purports to be the most ancient record of the nation. Let us then suppose that at any period comparatively modern, it had first made its appearance. Could the existing generation have been made to believe, that what then first came to their knowledge had existed as a sacred and highly valued production, the directory of their ceremonial worship and the measure of their moral obligations. And had such an incident occurred, would there not have been some discussion respecting it, and might we not expect to find some traces of it in their history. But here our adversary supposes himself to have actually met our requisition, and points to the age of Josiah as the period, and to the High Priest Hilkiyah as the author of the alleged forgery. I shall not pause to inquire how this hypothesis consists with the other, so zealously labored throughout the pamphlet, which regards Ezra as the fabricator of the Pentateuch, but attempt, as briefly as may be, to meet the difficulty involved in the objection.

The circumstances of the case were briefly these.

During the repairs of the temple, undertaken in the reign of Josiah, the High Priest Hilkiab, is reported to have “found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses.” This was by him delivered to Shaphan the scribe, who carried it to the king and read it in his presence. The king was affected in an extraordinary manner by its contents—he rent his clothes, and directed a reference to be made to some authorized interpreter of the will of Jehovah, to ascertain what should be done in view of the sins of the people, and the judgments, in consequence, impending over them. Two inferences have been drawn from this narrative by De-Wette, Volney, and others. That the king and the principal ministers of religion, as well as of state, had never seen the book in question before, and that it was therefore a fabrication of Hilkiab. The former supposition may have been correct, without involving the truth of the latter. Let us then inquire what probability distinguishes the one or the other. Now let it be observed, first, that there must have been an acquaintance with the fact that there had been a book of the law given by Moses. There is manifestly a reference to something known to have existed, but of which they had *perhaps* not recently been in possession. The case might be an analogous one to that of Cicero’s treatise *De Republica*, which he was known to have composed, but which was for a time lost to the world,

being recovered only about twelve years since, through the researches of the Abbe Mai.

The only difficulty then, in the instance now in question, is the conceiving how a book of such a character should have been so completely lost, even among those whom we should most reasonably expect to possess it. In the reign of Jehoshaphat, between two and three hundred years previously, it existed, according to the testimony of the very same writer who records its discovery by Hilkiiah. This pious king is represented, 2 Chron. xvii. 8—9, as commissioning certain princes, Levites, and priests, “who taught in Judah, and had the *book of the law of the Lord* with them, and went about through all the cities of Judah and taught the people.” Had this book then entirely disappeared in the age of Josiah, or was there something merely in the particular copy found, which produced so deep an impression upon the mind of the young king? Was it the autograph of Moses, the very copy which he was directed to lay up beside the ark of the covenant? Did this circumstance, in connection with the high degree of national guilt which had been incurred, and of the perilous condition of the kingdom, give to such menaces of divine judgments, as are contained in Deuteronomy, an import far more alarming? A degree of probability is attached to this supposition by a view of the phraseology of the passage in Chronicles—“Hilkiiah found a book of the law of

the Lord *by the hand* of Moses"—so it is in the Hebrew, as indicated by a note in the margin of our Bible, although the translation in the text is, "given by Moses."

But it *may have been* that copies of the law had become exceedingly scarce, especially in the vicinity of the court, and among those who had been exposed to its influence during the preceding reigns. Manasseh, one of the worst sovereigns who had ever occupied the throne of David, had during fifty-five years labored to efface the knowledge of the true religion and to introduce an idolatrous worship. Amon, his son, pursued a similar course. Josiah succeeded to the kingdom when but a child, and early exhibited the best dispositions; and it was in the eighteenth year of his reign and the twenty-sixth of his age, at the beginning of the reformation which he undertook, that a copy of the law was found in the temple. The Rabbins say that Ahaz, Manasseh and Amon endeavored to destroy all the copies of the law, and that this was only saved by having been buried under a paving stone. This may or may not have been the case. We can, however, scarcely doubt that in the remoter parts of the kingdom, and among the more pious portion of the people, there were other copies secured and cherished, ready to be brought to light at a more auspicious era. But let us admit that the volume discovered by the High Priest, was the only one of

the kind existing in the kingdom of Judah ; the question arises, was there any thing in the circumstances of the case, to justify the suspicion, or sustain by adequate proof, the fact that Hilkiah fabricated the work which he professed to have found. Our author thinks that there was. He supposes that Hilkiah had enlisted his pupil, the young king, in support of the Jewish priests against the priests of Baal, and as the Jews knew nothing of the law of Moses, something of the kind was necessary as a system of religious ceremonies. He composed a book of the law, and pretended to have found it, after binding the workmen to secrecy. Now observe a glaring inconsistency in this passage itself: He refers to the existence of Jewish priests, and yet supposes that they had no system of religious ceremonies, until one was constructed for them on the present occasion. Again, this supposition is directly opposed to his own admission, page 26 of his pamphlet. In reply to the argument that the laws of the Jews, appealed to throughout the Old Testament, are the same as those contained in the Pentateuch, he answers, "granted ; they are a part of the oral law recited to the people." Here then is an acknowledgment that their laws and observances were, by means of tradition, known to the Jews through every period of their history. There was therefore no occasion for the High Priest to fabricate them, although he might commit them

to writing. But to our main question—As already observed, we know from the testimony of the same writer, who records the discovery of the book of the law, that a document bearing that name had been employed for the instruction of the people, several hundred years previously. We are also apprised, from numerous passages in the historical and prophetic writings of the Jews, that this book had been at various periods well known, and recognized as the production of Moses. And it does not appear that Josiah was at all surprised at the finding of such a book, but simply was appalled at a portion of its contents, which may have been unknown to him, while he possessed a general acquaintance with its religious system and code of laws. The matter then to be determined is—Was this ancient document the one produced by the High Priest, or did he in the room of it substitute something of his own? The latter supposition is utterly incredible. We have already considered the strong evidence which sustains the belief that the Samaritan Pentateuch existed, independently of that possessed by the Jews, at a period long anterior to the one now under view; and this seems an insuperable objection to the hypothesis I am combating. But could Hilkiah have written in a style so antique? Had he ever affected the use of archaisms, the occasional occurrence of words belonging to the language of a

more modern age, would have betrayed him.* He could not, moreover, have possessed the qualifications manifestly necessary for writing such a book as the Pentateuch. He had not the requisite knowledge of Egypt, as respects its manners and institutions and physical character. He could not have been so well acquainted with Arabia and its localities. And upon the supposition that from pre-existing materials he compiled the book which he palmed upon the Jewish nation as the work of Moses, the following objections present themselves, as observed by Jahn: "1st, He would not have arranged them in the manner of a diary, following the order of time, so as to introduce, now a law, then a historical fact, and then again a law. 2nd, He would not have repeated some laws as often as they were published; or 3d, He would have omitted in the former parts of the work, the laws which are altered in Deuteronomy; nor would he, 4th, after having previously given a minute description of the tabernacle, and of all its parts and utensils, have repeated that minute description when he recorded its completion." These considerations, which induce us to reject the opinion that the "book of the law" was either fabricated or re-written by Hilkiah, are equally conclusive against the suppo-

* The alleged anachronisms which may be regarded as something of this nature will be presently considered.

sition of its being forged or re-modelled by any other writer who lived in an age subsequent to that of Moses. Whatever conjectures may be formed, or whatever possibilities imagined, we have no hesitation in appealing to enlightened and candid inquirers, to determine, whether the greatest improbability is not attached to them; and whether the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch is not sustained by as high a degree of evidence, as, under the circumstances of the case, could be expected or desired. It is the height of absurdity to require, in literary discussions of this kind, the same quality and amount of proof as is demanded to substantiate recent transactions in ordinary courts of justice. But there are many grave objections made to the proposition which I have been endeavoring to maintain, which call for a patient examination in order to their satisfactory solution. The attempt to furnish this will be made in some succeeding sections.

SECTION VIII.

First objection to the genuineness of the Pentateuch—Alleged anachronisms.

WHEN there are found in any book, evident allusions to the circumstances of a later age; when, for

instance, places are designated by names different from those originally borne ; when institutions, the growth of times more modern are mentioned ; or when acquaintance is implied with arts not known to the supposed author, there is so far a presumption furnished against the genuineness of that book. Yet it is a presumption more or less violent, which may be neutralized or overthrown by other manifest considerations. These parts may be shown to be excrescences on the original work ; their origin may be clearly accounted for, or if not, they may in general be referred to that liability to glosses and interpolations to which all works derived from a very remote period are subject. Concerning the anachronisms alleged to exist in the Pentateuch, there has been, at various times, much discussion. Our author has entered into the subject largely and repeatedly. He represents the case in the instance under view, as one of the most aggravated kind ; the interpolations and text being undistinguishably blended, so that no confidence whatever can be reposed in such a book. A most unfair coloring is also given to the whole controversy, by the representation, that his antagonists assume, without any proof, that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, and then, with an equal want of evidence, regard every thing occurring in it incompatible with this hypothesis, as the consequence of interpolation. Whereas the true state of the case is this :—Here is a book

possessing very strong proofs of genuineness—such evidence as we cannot resist. Occasionally there is something occurring, which could not have been written by the supposed author. What is the conclusion which we are bound to adopt?—That the whole work is spurious? Certainly not. The entire genius and conformation of the production prove the reverse. What remains? We determine that in some way or other these passages have been introduced into the original text. Now, in obviating the difficulties of the objector, it is necessary to inquire—What is the character and amount of these anachronisms which are so much spoken of? Are they intentional corruptions? Are they so incapable of being distinguished from the original text as to cast a suspicion over the whole work?

In respect to the inquiry, concerning the number of alleged anachronisms, we shall find, that admitting them to the full extent, they are not considerable; and if we take away those which are doubtful, or which can be shown not to belong to this class, they are still less worthy of note. It was not left for the enemies of Revelation to detect these. The Rabbins had, at an early period, distinguished eighteen instances of what they supposed to be additions to the text, posterior to the age of Moses. Christian writers had also referred to the same subject. It is believed, however, that many of these passages do not necessarily involve

the supposition of a more recent origin, than that of the body of the work. Let us consider a few of them. In Gen. xii. 6, it is said that when Abraham first entered Palestine, "the Canaanite was then in the land." This is supposed to mean that the original inhabitants had not yet been expelled by the Israelites, and of course to imply that the writer of the passage lived at a time when this had been done. But neither is this interpretation, nor this inference, unquestionable. It is well known that Palestine was not the first seat of the Canaanites, that they came from Arabia, and that all which the sacred writer meant to indicate, was that even at that early period this migration had taken place—they were *then* in the land.

The next passage which we may consider is Gen. xxii. 14. "As it is said to this day, in the mount of the Lord, it shall be seen." Mount Moriah, which is here meant, was not so denominated, until the building of the temple, several hundred years afterwards—it is therefore supposed that this expression could not have been used by Moses, but by some writer long subsequently to his age. But respecting this passage we need experience no difficulty. It is susceptible of an interpretation, and, indeed, according to the just principles of interpretation, requires it, which is entirely consistent with the fact of its genuineness. With no view to the present exigency, there have

been several translations given of what is confessedly a different passage. Houbigant and others had rendered it "In monte, Deus videbitur"—In the mount God shall be seen—supposing it to be a prophetical annunciation of the future coming of the Messiah. Another version adopted by Rosenmueler, is—"In monte, Dei providebitur, curabitur, prospicietur." In the mount it will be provided for, cared for, or looked to by God. According to an observation of Jerome, it passed into a proverb among the Hebrews, if at any time they were placed in distressing circumstances, and hoped to be delivered by the divine interposition, they said, "In the mount, God will provide; as he had compassion on Abraham, he will pity us." We thus perceive that the phrase, "Mount of the Lord," which creates the whole difficulty, does not appear in the passage.

Another passage usually cited in the discussion in which we are now engaged, is Gen. xxxvi. 31. "These are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned any kings over the children of Israel." It is supposed that in two points of view this implies an age posterior to Moses. 1. It argues that there *were* kings reigning over the children of Israel when this statement was made. 2. It is not to be conceived that in the space of between two and three hundred years which intervened between Esau and Moses, there could have lived fourteen dukes or

phylarchs—then eight kings and afterwards eleven dukes. In reply to this, C. B. Michaelis observes, that the expression, “before there reigned any king over the children of Israel,” is not at all incompatible with the age of Moses and the circumstances of his people at that time. For both he and they were apprised by the promises long since made to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that kings would at a future period reign over the chosen people of Jehovah. Gen. xvii. 5; xxvi. 3; xxxv. 11.

As regards the second objection, it is replied—that it is affirmed upon insufficient grounds that the Idumæans had three forms of government, at several times existing among them; that their dukes were the heads or princes of families, not existing successively but contemporaneously; that they and the kings lived simultaneously, as appears from Num. xx. 14, compared with Ex. xv. 15; in the latter it being said that Moses sent ambassadors to the *kings* of Edom; in the former the dukes of the same country being represented as in consternation at the approach of the Israelites. Besides, in forming our judgment respecting the catalogue of the Idumæan kings, it will be important to consider that they did not exist according to hereditary succession, but were elevated to power either by election or violence. Among the kings enumerated, we do not find one who had a son as his successor. Nor were foreigners excluded from the succession,

as is apparent from the different cities and countries mentioned in the table of those who successively bore the regal title. These cities and countries must have been the places of their birth, inasmuch as it is extremely improbable that eight rulers, in immediate succession, should each have chosen a different metropolis for his kingdom. In a monarchy then, such as the one just described, we might expect shorter reigns and a more rapid succession of those who held the supreme power, than under one differently constituted; and since dukes and kings appear to have existed together, it is easily conceivable that eight of the latter might have lived in the space of time allotted to them.* This interpretation of his father, the younger and more celebrated Michaelis has adopted.

But again, the expression occurring Ex. xvi. 36, "Now an omer is the tenth part of an epha," is supposed to furnish unequivocal evidence of a modern age, inasmuch as it is not customary to define measures while still in use. To this, however, Le Clerc forcibly replies—"It does not appear that the Hebrews ever used any measures, while in Palestine, different from their original ones, so that it might become necessary to define these; nor can it be shown that an epha was any better known

* The average of the reigns of the Roman Emperors, was ten years.

than an omer. Yet Moses who founded the Jewish commonwealth, inserted here and there, the fit occasions being given, something respecting their measures, lest at a future period they should be changed."

I shall particularly consider no other passage, although many more, which are usually regarded as additions to the text, might be satisfactorily explained. What has already been done, is sufficient to show that the number of texts calculated to produce difficulty, inconsiderable upon the largest enumeration, may be much reduced. Of the portions of the Pentateuch really belonging to a subsequent age, we may reckon as the most important, being by far the most extensive, the last chapter of Deuteronomy. Others consist in the substitution, on a few occasions, of the modern name of a place for one more ancient. Some are of such a character as the following :—Ex. xvi. 35—"And the children of Israel eat manna forty years." This term had not expired at the death of Moses; it is therefore concluded that he could not have written it. This inference is, however, by no means inevitable. He might have recorded it, immediately before his death, when the period indicated was so near its expiration as to justify the expression. But we have no occasion to insist on this consideration.

Now the appeal is confidently made to every man of candor and reflection, whether a very few passa-

ges of this kind occurring in an ancient book, furnish any evidence against its genuineness, or show it to be so corrupted as to be undeserving of any regard; or whether these interpolations are so undistinguishably blended with the text, as to cast a suspicion over the whole work. It is quite easy to conceive how these passages might have been introduced, without the least censure being attached to the author of them, or the least uncertainty being produced as to the genuineness of the residue of the work. The last chapter of Deuteronomy might very well have been added by any successor of the Hebrew lawgiver, who wished to complete the account of his eventful life. The substitution of a few modern for the ancient names of places, or an explanatory remark, from being a marginal gloss, might readily pass into the text, perhaps with some distinguishing mark, which through the negligence of scribes was afterwards omitted. Or, according to the much ridiculed theory, these additions might have originated in the Esdrine edition of the Scriptures, and been intended for their illustration.

There is a large class of passages, to which I have as yet made no reference, which Dr. C., following De Wette, regards as anachronisms. Every instance of a prophetic declaration is so esteemed. For example, predictions made respecting the future condition of the Israelites, to which the event corresponded, are supposed to furnish, in

themselves, evidence that they were not delivered until after that event. Now were we to meet, in any narrative of facts, a notice of occurrences as then taking place, which belonged to a later period, we should regard as highly absurd a solution of the difficulty thus presented, by the supposition of an insight into futurity. But very different from this is the case of a man, who professing to possess the spirit of prophecy, makes a reference to the events of a coming age, as yet future, but destined certainly to occur. When an illustrious individual, such as the dying patriarch Jacob, or Moses himself, when his end was approaching, undertakes to foretell the future destiny of his children or people, is the fact that the prediction made, corresponded to their actual subsequent condition, conclusive proof that such prediction was fabricated after the event? Should we not rather inquire whether it were within the competency of human sagacity to have foreseen what occurred, or whether there might not have been some fortunate, although accidental coincidence. If neither of these suppositions were admissible, would it not be incumbent upon us to consider whether the Supreme Being may not have lifted up the vail covering futurity for the consolation of a good man, or for the confirmation of a great system of moral and religious truth, designed, in the first place, to benefit a whole nation, and eventually all mankind.

Our author speaks with contempt of Prof. Stuart's remark, that such portions of the Pentateuch as those last referred to, cannot with propriety be denied to have been written by Moses, since no one can prove that he did not possess a prophetic spirit. And yet the remark is perfectly just. This is the very question upon which we are at issue. The unbeliever has no right to *assume* that his theory is correct ; although it is competent for him to advance reasons in its favor. The Jewish system professes to be of divine origin. Its claim is to be substantiated by the miracles wrought in attestation of it, or by the predictions proceeding from those who taught it. Whether such miracles were wrought, or such predictions made, is a suitable subject of inquiry. The evidence offered may be thoroughly sifted by the skeptic, but surely it outrages all propriety to take it for granted that prophecy is impossible, and then to assume, with no respect to other considerations, and even in defiance of the strongest proof, that all predictions occurring in any book, are either interpolations or conclusive evidence of the spuriousness of the entire work. This view of the subject is correct under any circumstances. But surely it will not be denied that there is some peculiarity attached to the Jewish system and sacred books, which might induce the expectation, that traces of divine power and knowledge should be there recognized which are not seen

elsewhere. In their own character, in the degree and nature of the evidence which sustains them, and in the religious and moral system which they teach, they are surely widely removed from all competition on the part of works, reputedly sacred, existing in any other nation. Besides, Judaism is intimately connected with a more perfect and extensively diffused modification of religious belief, prevailing over the only enlightened part of the earth, and supported by the most ample proof, which can be brought more immediately under our view, being blended with the transactions of a more recent age. If to the decision of Christianity any authority is to be conceded, a divine origin must be ascribed to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and the occurrence of prophetic passages in them may reasonably be expected.

The result then of the observations proposed in the present section may be thus stated :

I. The reference of the Pentateuch to Moses as its author is sustained by the most convincing evidence.

II. Of various passages, supposed to be inconsistent with this theory, many are susceptible of an explanation entirely satisfactory.

III. Of those which remain, none are to be regarded as intentional corruptions, nor do they attach any uncertainty to the text in general. They are either to be accounted for upon the sup-

position of the accidental transfer of a marginal note into the body of the work ; or to be referred to some subsequent authorized writer, whose object has been either to complete what was deficient or illustrate what is obscure.

IV. It is a manifest begging of the question to regard as interpolations the numerous *prophetical passages* which are found in these writings.

SECTION IX.

Second objection to the genuineness of the Pentateuch.—Passages incompatible with the actual circumstances of the reputed author.
—Deut. i. 1. Meaning of the Hebrew word עבר (eber,) and the Greek Περαν. (Peran.)

THE prosecution of a simple philological inquiry, would not seem to furnish any occasion, or present much inducement, to indulge in vituperation against one's adversaries. Yet is this reasonable expectation disappointed in the instance of our author, whose advanced age, long subjection to the softening influences of literary cultivation, and abundant professions of being actuated solely by the love of truth and a regard to the happiness of mankind, would seem to authorize the hope, that he would form a candid and just, if not a liberal and generous estimate of the character and motives of his opponents.

The critical discussion in which we are now about to follow him, is closed, on his part, with a long and virulent invective, to which there are too many parallels throughout the work upon which I am commenting. The "clerical profession is denounced as one that renders impartial examination a crime, and which requires those who adopt it, to insist on as true, what no man, who is a searcher for truth alone, can possibly accept as truth." It is said to be "disgusting to observe the virulence of clerical reproaches made against those whom they are pleased to denominate 'infidels.'" These latter persons are represented as "braving the reproaches of the interested, the lamentations of the hypocrite, and the fierce bigotry of the ignorant dupe of an interested clergy." We who are "hired," and paid, and salaried witnesses in favor of the cause by which we get our living, are admonished to recollect "that the day has passed by when infidels and infidelity may be made with impunity the hated subjects of clerical abuse." "The clerical craft is in danger, and the members of the church militant will do well to hasten to the rescue, better armed than they have hitherto been." "The glove is thrown down before them, let those who choose take it up." A defiance given quite in the forms of the ancient institution of chivalry! Pity it were that more of knightly honor and courtesy had not been shown in the management of the combat! The gauntlet has for a considerable

time lain untouched, and doubtless the accomplished cavalier, armed at all points for the conflict, has feared that, through the recreancy of his adversaries, no farther opportunity would be furnished for the exhibition of his prowess. This delay has arisen from considerations very different from any apprehension of the issue of the test being unfavorable. Many there are who in the cause of truth, and clad in its impenetrable panoply, are ready to meet at any time and on any field their boastful assailant. We rejoice that the number of those in the Christian ranks who are competent to do this, in an effective manner, is daily increasing. Yet we regard with surprise and pity the insinuation that revelation has ever wanted adequate defenders. We triumphantly refer to days that have gone by, and challenge a comparison in point of profound and various learning, and the powers of a masterly and convincing argumentation, between them and their adversaries.

That the petulance of our author has not been sooner rebuked, and his arguments earlier met, is to be attributed to the fact that his pamphlet has not attracted the attention which he expected, and which from considerations apart from its intrinsic merits, it should have received. From its title it was supposed to relate merely to the geological exceptions taken against the Mosaic record. These, so far as any considerations drawn from a science so largely hypothetical, are deserving of attention, it was

thought might with propriety be referred to those friends of revelation, whose pursuits particularly qualified them for this investigation. And in reference to those, to whom the character of the production in question became better known, it is to be observed, that in general they deemed it unnecessary to renew a discussion which in their apprehension had been terminated in a manner satisfactory to the public mind. In this opinion it is thought they erred. It is not enough that the enemy has been once met and vanquished, the battle must be renewed in every age. As old objections are revived, they must be again answered. As new modifications of erroneous opinions appear, they must be exposed and refuted. In the absence of a worthier champion, the writer of these essays has not hesitated to accept the defiance. He is willing to attempt the succor of the beleagured citadel, imperfectly armed although he may be. In spite of the strong temptation to a contrary course, he is not conscious that he has in any degree indulged in personal invective, when he should alone feel concerned to controvert the arguments of his opponent. He has been solicitous to ascertain and vindicate truth, and not to render odious either an individual or a class.

Let us then return from this digression, and consider the objections to the genuineness of the Pentateuch, founded on passages occurring in it, incompatible with the actual circumstances or known

sentiments of the reputed author. The first which I shall examine occurs Deut. i. 1. "These are the words that Moses spake unto all Israel *on this side* Jordan in the wilderness." To this version Dr. Cooper takes exception, asserts that it should be translated *beyond, on the other side* Jordan, and concludes that the author of Deuteronomy must have lived on the west of this river, and that he could not therefore have been Moses who died eastward of it.

Now the question to be determined is—What is the proper rendering of בעבר (be-eber.) It will be readily conceded that the term is often *susceptible* of the interpretation which it is wished to attach to it as its *sole* and *exclusive* signification. But does it not sometimes, unquestionably, mean *on this side*, and is there not therefore some general idea involved in the term, which authorizes its employment in this diversified manner? This cannot be denied. Our author himself refers to two passages, Deut. iii. 8, and Gen. i. 10 and 11, where the word in question must be translated *on this side*; but he *assumes* that in these instances it is manifestly *misapplied*, remarking that in a book so full of mistakes and interpolations, this may well be. Surely this is a summary mode of getting rid of a critical difficulty. The signification of words is determined by the usage of good writers. Here are two cases in which a particular meaning is necessarily attached

to a term—that meaning, however, is opposed to what *seems* to be indicated by other passages from the same writer. Should we not attempt an explanation of the matter upon some other principle than the assumption of a corruption in one class of out texts? Is it not unlikely that in a production of moderate length, two instances of a precisely similar mistake, in *writing* a simple and well known term, should occur? But we have not merely this degree of improbability to contend against. There are many *other passages* not at all alluded to by Dr. Cooper, where the original term must be rendered *on this side*. To these I would solicit the reader's particular attention.

There is no question that the book of Joshua was written after the conquest of Canaan, and of course by one living west of Jordan. In the 12th ch. 7th v. of this book, we find the following passage: "These are the kings of the country which Joshua and the children of Israel smote *on this side* (עבר) Jordan on the west." Again, Joshua xxii. 7, it is said, "Now to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh, Moses had given possession in Bashan;" but unto the other half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren, *on this side* (עבר) Jordan westward. As connected with this we may cite a remarkable passage in Numb. xxxii. 19. The two tribes and a half, who had received their lot in the region which had been conquered east of Jordan, expressed their

determination to assist their brethren in the conquest of the remaining part of the promised land, and then to return to their own possession—"For we will not inherit with them on *yonder side* of Jordan, or forward, because our inheritance is fallen to us *on this side* Jordan eastward." Here we have the same word in the original, differently rendered in the several parts of the same sentence. Other passages I shall not cite in full, but make a simple reference to them : Josh. v. 1 ; 1 Chron. xxvi. 30 ; Josh. i. 15 ; 1 Kings iv. 24. Let the reader examine them for himself, and he will be convinced that the term in question does mean *on this side*, not once or twice, but very commonly. But we are told, that in many instances it has a meaning directly opposite, and some ill-timed pleasantry is indulged in on the occasion : "This is truly a most convenient word, it means white ; it means black ; it signifies neither white nor black, but any color you please." It will be well for our author to defer his jesting until he has accounted for the passages above cited, and has replied to the considerations which I shall here subjoin.

Is he not then aware of an instance analogous to this, in the Latin word *sacer*, which at once means—sacred, holy, divine, and—cursed, detestable, horrible. "Auri sacra fames."—*Virgil*. "Intestabilis et sacer esto."—*Horace*. "Ego sum malus, ego sum sacer, scelestus."—*Plautus*. Has not his He-

brew erudition made him acquainted with the usage respecting the word בָּרַךְ (*barak*), which, according to Gesenius, means, 1. To bless. 2. To greet, or salute. 3. To take leave, renounce, revile. 1 Kings xxi. 10. "Thou hast reviled God and the king." Job i. 5. ; ii. 5. Perhaps also the term נָכַר (*nakar*) has escaped the accuracy of his research, which according to the same lexicographer signifies not only to *understand* but to mistake: not merely to be known, but to let oneself be unknown; to dissemble. In illustration of this peculiarity, Gesenius refers to the inseparable German prepositions *ent* and *ver*, which in composition sometimes express a negation or antithesis, sometimes not.

I trust then that the diverse significations ascribed to עָבַר will not seem so completely absurd, or so entirely without parallel, as they are represented to be. But, as has already been suggested, there is, in reference to all such words as those above cited, some primary meaning, from which all other acceptations, however apparently unconnected, naturally flow. This is clearly and beautifully apparent with respect to the term בָּרַךְ (*barak*.) No two things seem more opposite than to bless, and revile or curse, and yet the transition from one meaning to the other is easily traced. 1. It means to bless. 2. To greet or salute, because on such occasions persons speak well to each other; and in primitive times invoked a blessing. 3. To take leave, depart,

because the same salutations were usual then, as took place at meeting. From parting amicably, the transition is easy to a simple *separation*, then to one involving a *renunciation* of all friendly intercourse, accompanied even by reproaches.

Let us now inquire what is the leading idea expressed by עבר (eber.) The radical עבר (abar) which is a verb, means according to Gesenius—1. To pass on. 2. To go or pass through. 3. To pass by. 4. To pass over. 5. To overflow, spoken of water, &c. Here we find the notion of *passage* entirely the predominant one. This is the fact also, with respect to the various explications quoted by Dr. C. from Davies' Celtic Researches. Is it then absurd to conclude with Pagnini, Arias Montanus, Huet, and others, that the fundamental idea of the derivative word is “in transitu?” This idea is of course expanded and modified as we have seen to be the fact in reference to certain other words before mentioned. The statement of Rosenmueler seems to be entirely correct. Scholia in Deut. chap. i. 1, עבר “which properly denotes transitum, trajectum—passage—thence it is used to denote all that tract which is washed by a river or which is divided by water flowing in the midst of it, whether this tract be on the one side or the other.” In other words, it denotes in its greatest amplitude of signification the valley of any stream—and the expression בעבר הירד may well be rendered *at, near, or in the*

valley of Jordan. It does not occur to me that there is any passage in which the original word is rendered beyond, where it will not be equally well expressed by the explanation given above. And what is very remarkable, we find this word often conjoined with some other phrase which more definitely fixes its signification. This is to be observed in the passage already cited from Numbers xxxii. 19, where in the different parts of the same sentence, this term has a different sense, indicated by an adjunct expression. "For we will not inherit with them on *yonder side* of Jordan, *forward*," that is *westward*—the Israelites being advancing in that direction, "because our inheritance is fallen to us on *this side* Jordan, *eastward*." Another exemplification of our principle is furnished by Deut. iv. 47, 49. Two kings of the Amorites are mentioned as being "on *this side* Jordan towards the *sun rising*," and we have also reference made "to all the plain on *this side* Jordan, *eastward*." Again, in Joshua xii. 27, the inheritance of the tribe of Gad is spoken of by the writer as on the other side of Jordan *eastward*.

Instances might be multiplied were it necessary. These may serve to show that the term under discussion, is not, in the sense which we attach to it, so utterly vague as it is represented to be. I have hitherto made no reference to the decision of any lexicographer respecting the meaning of the deriva-

tive word, עֵבֶר, because it is more satisfactory to appeal *at once* to that authority, by which all their opinions must be sustained—the usage prevailing in the Hebrew writings. Yet it may be well to state that Gesenius who assigns to our term, *beyond*, as its leading signification, gives as his second definition—“that which is on this side,” adding the strange remark “as if used by one living on the other side.” He refers to 1 Kings, iv. 24, in illustration. Yet it is impossible to conceive what this text furnishes in support of the limitation attached to his explanation. He also takes no notice of the numerous passages resembling the one which he cites, many of which I have on the present occasion quoted.

He gives us his third definition—“side, quarter generally;” referring to 1 Samuel, xiv. 40—“on one side, on the other side;” to Ex. xxviii. 26, “which is on the side עֵבֶר of the ephod inward;” and to Exodus xxxii. 15—“the tables were written on both their sides, on the *one side* and *the other* were they written.”

It appears then to the writer that we have an exceedingly strong case made out, in favor of the signification which we attach to the word under view. And in reviewing the evidence by which our conclusion is supported, it is amazing to reflect on the contemptuous terms in which it is spoken of by

our adversary. Let us hear, however, what he has to allege.

He pleads the universal assent of the Jews, ancient and modern, that עבר means exclusively beyond. After observing the *total want of correctness*, which marks Dr. C.'s statements respecting the *Jewish traditions*, which he professes to derive from Prideaux and his authorities, the reader will feel little inclination to repose confidence in any similar, sweeping and unsupported assertion. Nor will the opinion of Dr. C.'s teacher, although he may have been a pupil of the celebrated Vater, be entitled to any weight when contradicted by the numerous instances which I have adduced of the *usus loquendi* of the ancient Hebrew writers.

But it is said that the ancient versions, with the exception of the Syriac, translate Deut. i. 1, "beyond Jordan." What are these versions? The Samaritan is spoken of, but in such terms, as to leave it doubtful whether it is regarded as a version or not. What is *properly* called the Samaritan Pentateuch is merely a document in the Hebrew language, expressed in the ancient Phœnician character—of course we have no translation of the disputed word, but the term itself differently written.

The Chaldee, Septuagint, Syriac, Arabic, and Vulgate, are the principal versions mentioned. The Vulgate may render the word in question,

trans, and yet it may be a misconception of Jerome—who although one of the greatest proficient in Hebrew among the early fathers, cannot be placed in competition with the author of the old Syriac version, who spoke a cognate dialect, and whose interpretation is different. If the Chaldee Targum and Arabic, do translate as they are asserted to do, it may be that the terms which they employ are marked by the same peculiarity of signification, which distinguishes the Hebrew word. I am inclined to suspect this, by the consideration that this is demonstrably the case with regard to the Septuagint, which is cited as sustaining the view of our adversary. *Πέραν*, according to classical usage, certainly means “beyond;” but what is its signification according to that peculiar modification of the Greek language, which appears in the version of the Seventy, and in the writings of the New Testament? The citation of a few passages will settle this point beyond all possibility of dispute. Let us then examine in the Septuagint a fact already cited from the Hebrew. Numb. xxxii. 19—it was seen that the word עבר in the former and latter parts of the same verse, had a different meaning attached to it, in consequence of the connection in which it stood. The case is precisely the same with respect to the Greek word *Πέραν*. “For we will not inherit with them ἀπὸ τοῦ πέραν Ἰορδάνου καὶ ἐπεκεῖνα, for we have received our inheritance ἐν τῷ περὶ τοῦ Ἰορδάνου ἐν ἀνατολαῖς.”

Here we find the original word whose meaning we are discussing, alike used to denote the regions *west* and *east* of Jordan—in the one instance connected with the term *επεκεινα*, *beyond*, in the other with the phrase *εν ανατολαις*—towards the east—on this side.

But there is another passage equally decisive of the point in controversy; the quotation from Isaiah, which occurs in Matthew iv. 15, “The land of Zebulon and the land of Nephtalim, by the way of the sea, *περαν του ’Ιορδανου*, Galilee of the nations.” Here we perceive that a tract of country which every one knows is on the *same side* of the river with Jerusalem, where Isaiah lived, is designated by him as *περαν του ’Ιορδανου*—our translators omitting to consider how the Hebrew idiom had affected in many instances the signification of terms in the Greek language, have rendered this passage “*beyond Jordan*.” Many critics have since noted the incorrectness of this version. Campbell, whose accurate learning and great candor none will question, translates thus: “on the Jordan,” remarking that both the Hebrew and Greek words signify indifferently “on this side” and on “the other side”—and that they should be rendered in general terms, unless limited by such expressions *κατ’ ανατολα* or *κατα θαλασσης*. Kuinoel also observes in his note on Matthew iv. 15, that *περαν* should be understood as meaning “ad, juxta, prope.” And again, in John i. 28, adds that *περαν* answers to the Hebrew

עבר and not only signifies *trans*, but *juxta*, *prope*, *cis*, sustaining his opinion by a reference to Vorstius de Hebraism, N. T. and Bielii, Thes. sub. γ. περὶ, ed. Schleusneri. Parkhurst, also, in his Greek Lexicon gives as one of the significations of περὶ, about, near. And yet Dr. Cooper cites this writer to prove that the corresponding Hebrew word always means *beyond*, *over*; and annexes the taunting observation, “I hope the orthodox will not object to Parkhurst.” I might go on and make many other citations, both from the Septuagint and the New Testament, in confirmation of our principle. To the general reader, however, it would be tedious, and to those particularly qualified to judge in the controversy, it cannot be necessary.

The result then at which we have arrived with a degree of certainty, equal to that attainable in any literary investigation, is—I. That both the Hebrew term and that by which it is rendered in the Septuagint, are used to express the nearer or farther side of a river indifferently.

II. Their inherent indeterminateness of signification, is shown by the fact that in numerous instances they are associated with phrases which limit them—“*on the side of Jordan eastward—on the side of Jordan westward.*”

III. These, therefore, according to the definitions of Kuinoel and Rosenmueler, not only mean at, on, near, but with considerable latitude, express the

whole region or valley washed by a stream in its course.

Our version of Deut. i. 1, is therefore correct, and the passage furnishes no argument against the Mosaic origin of the Pentateuch.

SECTION X.

Objection to its genuineness derived from the occurrence of passages incompatible with the known sentiments of Moses.

In sustaining any abstract truth, or in vindicating the accuracy of any historical record, it is often necessary to bestow much attention in obviating the difficulties which are supposed to be attached to the subject. It matters not what force of reasoning or amount of evidence be brought to bear upon the point in question, a single objection suggested is sometimes sufficient to suspend our belief or prevent it altogether. Hence it arises that the most laborious portion of the duty devolving upon the apologist for Revelation, is the replying to the numerous cavils presented by its adversaries. Nor is the importance of this duty less remarkable than its difficulty. In supporting truth, we are bound to present it in as clear a light as possible, and to answer all reasonable objections. Yet is this task far more difficult of accomplishment than the office

assumed by our antagonist. It requires neither learning nor ingenuity to make exceptions to the history or the doctrines of the Bible; nor is there any intelligence, patience, or industry, necessary on the part of the community, in order to its comprehension of them. Unfortunately, however, for the interest of truth, the case is otherwise when a reply is to be made to these exceptions. Profound research is often requisite to expose the inaccuracy of an assertion recklessly made, or to render intelligible a circumstance which belonging to a remote age and a very different state of society, is naturally productive of some perplexity; and the mind which would understand the elucidation which is given, must be something more than the indolent recipient of some brief remark thrown out in conversation, or some brilliant, although fallacious sentiment, occurring in the fugitive productions of the day.

It is manifest, therefore, that the advocate of grave and important truths contends under the greatest disadvantages; yet difficult as it is to obtain adequate attention to the considerations which we may suggest, in consequence of the aversion to intellectual labor so common among men—the effort must be made. In the course of the investigation which we have been pursuing, I trust that something of this duty has been satisfactorily accomplished. I am now to attempt its entire fulfilment.

The next objection to be met is—That the Pentateuch contains sentiments and regulations irreconcilable with the known opinions and purposes of the Hebrew lawgiver. It is therefore inferred that he cannot be the author of this book. In support of this view, Deut. xvii. 14—20 has been cited, where reference is made to the future appointment of a king, directions given respecting his election, and restrictions imposed upon his conduct. Moses, it is asserted, established a theocracy; he never contemplated the existence of a regal government among the Hebrews; and when at a period long subsequent, a request was made on the part of the people, to the prophet Samuel, to ordain a king over them who might lead them forth to battle, it was regarded by the Almighty as equivalent to a rejection of his authority. These are the suggestions of Ilgen, in which De Wette has followed him. I do not, however, conceive that any importance is to be attached to such considerations. Undoubtedly, according to the original organization of the Israelitish commonwealth, it might with propriety of speech be termed a theocratic establishment, inasmuch as their laws proceeded directly from God, were expounded by the priests and Levites as holy persons, and executed by the judges as divine vicegerents; to which we may add, that in difficult cases relating to government and war, Jehovah was consulted by Urim and Thummim, or



made known his will by the prophets, his authorized ministers. It is equally evident, that Moses desired this constitution to be a permanent one, because he deemed it most advantageous to the people for whom he felt interested. But is there any thing irreconcilable with these views in the passage before us? Does the writer direct or even approve a change in the form of government originally established among the Hebrews? By no means. He simply declares, "When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shall possess it, and shall dwell therein, and *shalt say, I will set a king over me*, like as all the nations that are about me; thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee whom the *Lord thy God shall choose*," &c. He merely anticipates what will be their future wishes. This might have been the result of natural sagacity, even without the prophetic insight into futurity which we suppose him to have possessed. "He well understood the temper of the orientals, whose propensity to kingly government was also remarked by the Greeks and Romans in later times. The example of all their neighbors, the idea of a nation being more respectable with a king at their head, the corruption of morals which gradually crept into the priestly order, the desire or the necessity of being always prepared for war—these and other causes may have induced

the Hebrews earnestly to desire a king.”* In prospect of this state of things, Moses allows of the existence of a form of government somewhat modified, but attaches to it such restrictions as would in a great measure obviate the evils incident to its establishment. “In this,” continues the philosophical writer above quoted, “his judicious conduct merits commendation, since he thus avoided the error into which other legislators both ancient and modern have fallen, in wishing to prescribe for their nation a form of government never to be changed. For even the best constitution of a state may become in a manner antiquated and enfeebled by abuses that are too strong for the laws, in which case it is expedient to alter it, and to convert, for instance, into a monarchy, a free republic, where the people have become lawless, or certain citizens too powerful or ambitious.—History confirms the observation, and the government which has in itself no inherent power of changing its form, will sooner or later experience a revolution, notwithstanding, with this difference only, that it will not be effected peaceably, but by force.”

The next objection which demands our attention is derived from a class of passages, which are conceived to represent the Almighty as visible, and which cannot therefore have proceeded from Moses

* Michaelis' Com. on the Laws of Moses, Art. liv. § 1, p. 1.

who taught the spirituality of the divine nature. We scarcely deem this imagined difficulty worthy of a passing notice, although much importance seems to be attached to it. Several texts are cited, such as Exodus xxxiii. 11—where it is said that the Lord spake unto Moses, face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend. It is astonishing that any one who pays attention to the context, or who is at all acquainted with the genius of the Hebrew language, and the modes of expression common among all nations in the early stages of their existence, should understand the author as here ascribing to the Deity, a corporeal form. In a passage immediately succeeding the one under view, it is declared no man can see God's face and live. We cannot suppose that any writer, however blundering, could within so short a space, have fallen into so palpable a contradiction. The truth is, that the expression, "the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend," is merely a figurative representation of the high regard in which the Almighty held his minister, and the direct communication which he maintained with him. The tropical significations of the word face, are exceedingly numerous. I need only refer to Gesenius, where the instances are noted, and shall merely cite a single passage from the very chapter which is supposed to present the difficulty which I am called upon to obviate.

In our version God is represented as saying, "My presence shall go with you"—meaning that he would by his power attend and protect the Israelites. A literal translation would be—"My face shall go with you." While on this topic, it may be well to suggest a general remark in relation to the anthropomorphical and anthropopathical representations occurring in the Bible—that is, expressions ascribing human form or passions to the Deity. No candid man of intelligence can fall into any misconception on this subject. We find it exceedingly difficult under any circumstances to conceive of God in his pure spirituality, much less to speak of his operations consistently with this character. Much more difficult then, and even impossible was it to hold communication in respect to these things with a people as a whole, rude and uncultivated, and having in their language no words for the expression of abstract or spiritual ideas. Much therefore as Moses and the sacred writers succeeding him insisted upon the immensity and invisibility of Jehovah—greatly as they censured any attempt to give a corporeal representation of him—even although it were taken from man—the possessor of intelligence which assimilated him to the Divinity, and constituted him lord of this lower world; still were they compelled to fall into an apparent inconsistency in their language. It was necessary to employ terms drawn from the objects

of sense, using them, however, in a metaphorical signification. To denote the commandments of God, they spoke of his *mouth*—in speaking of his knowledge of the actions of men, they referred to his *eyes* and *ears*—his *hand* was the expression of his power, and his *heart* the indication of his dispositions and feelings.

Still more frivolous than the objection which I have just discussed, is another respecting the imagined inconsistency between the prohibition to worship images, and the direction to form the brazen serpent in order to an emblematic use of it. It was sufficiently strange that the weak minds of a former age should have supposed the second commandment to forbid the execution of any work of statuary, even without the purpose of employing it as the instrument of an idolatrous worship. It is utterly amazing that such a notion should have entered the brain of an enlightened philosopher of the nineteenth century. In connection with this objection, our author animadverts on the supposed inconsistency between the curious and costly works accomplished by the Israelites in the desert, and the state of destitution, relieved only by miraculous supplies, which marked their wanderings. This was a favorite theme with Voltaire, who asserted that the quantity of gold employed in the fabrication of the golden calf alone, must have far exceeded the resources of the people. This and various other

exceptions of that ingenious and lively, but superficial and dishonest writer, have been well answered in a volume entitled "Letters of certain Jews to Mons. Voltaire"—a work written with great spirit and talent, distinguished by much urbanity, and enriched with many valuable illustrations of the Old Testament Scriptures. It may, however, on the present occasion, be only necessary to observe, that all the employment of the precious metals in the formation of these works, which required moreover the agency of ingenious artists, took place within one year after the departure from Egypt, when the resources of the Hebrews are represented as being most ample, and when having just emerged from a country marked by a high degree of civilization, they doubtless had with them artisans of every kind and of the most consummate skill.

We may now advance to the next difficulty proposed, grounded on Numbers xii. 3: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." It is thought that such an observation respecting himself is entirely alien from the dignity and modesty inseparable from our conception of the character of the Jewish lawgiver. The passage has attracted the attention of biblical critics as well as that of infidels. Eichorn regards it as an addition to the text subsequently made. In this view, Rosenmueler coincides, alleging that the connection is perfect and even more

natural without the third verse. He insists, in addition, upon the consideration that the phrase, "*the man Moses*," is without example in the Pentateuch. We might safely concede this point, in accordance with the principle laid down in a former essay. Such a reflection might well have been put down as a marginal note, by one who was struck with the consideration of the forbearance evinced by the distinguished minister of Jehovah. Through the negligence of some copyists, it might have passed into the text. All this may be supposed, without there being attached to us the censure involved in the following remark of Dr. Cooper: "If Moses wrote these books, such passages are interpolations; but it is strange logic to assume that they are interpolations for the sole purpose of making Moses the author." How uncandid is this insinuation. We do not act, as in this passage we are charged with doing. We have various, independent, and satisfactory proofs that Moses wrote the Pentateuch; we merely find it necessary, as in relation to all the most accredited works of antiquity, to make some critical emendations, and sometimes to reject a passage which is manifestly spurious. That the text which we have been considering is of such a character, is, however, by no means universally conceded. Dr. Adam Clarke thinks that all difficulties will be obviated by a correct understanding of the meaning of the passage. His suggestions are val-

uable, and although nothing can be more ridiculous or unauthorized, than the varying the translation of any passage in the Scriptures which becomes the object of misconception, it is equally unreasonable to persist in a false rendering, which is productive of serious embarrassment either in the conception of truth itself, or in the vindication of it from the charges made by its adversaries. "I think," observes the learned writer just referred to, "that the word rendered meek has not been rightly understood, ענו (*anav*,) which we translate meek, comes from ענה (*anah*,) to act upon, humble, depress, afflict, and is translated so in many parts of the Old Testament, and in this sense should be understood here." "Now the man Moses was depressed or afflicted more than any man of that land—borne down by the weight of the cares devolving on him, and afflicted by the perverseness and rebellions of the people confided to his charge." The reader may, in addition to what is here suggested, consider Gesenius's illustration of the meaning of the word in question.

Of the objections belonging to that class to which this number has been devoted, there remains but one to be considered. It is drawn from the occurrence of the plural word *Elohim*, to express the Deity. This is supposed to imply polytheistic notions, inconsistent with the Mosaic doctrine concerning the unity of the divine nature. By one in

the slightest degree imbued with a knowledge of the Hebrew language, such a difficulty could never, in good faith, have been suggested. As, however, our author's acquaintance with this language may not be more perfect than that which Voltaire possessed of the Greek,* and as the confident assertion of so *profound* a scholar, will, at all events sway the opinions of multitudes, it is incumbent on us to exhibit its fallacy. We have then no difficulty in allowing that the form of the word Elohim is plural, and that it is sometimes necessary to translate it accordingly. Why then do we often render it in the singular, and how does it appear that its use by the Jewish writers does not involve the belief in many Gods? By attending to a principal of construction belonging to the Hebrew language, recognized by all grammarians and lexicographers. In Gesenius's Lexicon, under the word Elohim, we find the following description:—"As a pluralis excellentiæ, God, in the singular. It is sometimes construed (contrary to the general rule concerning the pluralis excellentiæ) with plural adjectives ex: gr: 1 Sam. iv. 8; xvii. 26; but the verb is almost constantly in the *singular*, as in Gen. i. 1. The exceptions are Gen. xx. 13; xxxi. 53; 2 Sam. xvii.

* For some curious and amusing instances of ignorance in relation to the simplest elements of the Greek language, drawn from the works of this most superficial writer of universal pretensions, see 'Jew's Letters,' pages 463, 464.

23; Ps. lviii. 12.” The same principle is laid down in the Hebrew Grammar, essentially that of Gesenius, which Prof. Stuart has published. Some farther illustration of the doctrine is added, which I do not think it necessary to quote. Rosenmueler on Gen. i. 1, observes, “The plural Elohim is customarily used to express God. In poetic style, and in the later books of the Old Testament, the singular is found. Otherwise the Old Testament writers use the plural Elohim, but *construed* like the singular, concerning the one true God. For according to the peculiarity of the Hebrew tongue, the plural, as well masculine as feminine, is employed concerning one thing great and excellent in its kind.”

As I am not aware that any Hebrew scholar has ever impugned the accuracy of the above representation, I do not think it necessary to advance any thing more in its support. It will be sufficient to add a remark on Dr. Cooper’s reference to Parkhurst and Dr. A. Clarke, to illustrate one or two exceptions to the general rule established in the citations which I have made. The reference alluded to is in these words:—“That Elohim is in the plural, and that it is joined with plural adjectives, verbs and pronouns, Dr. A. Clarke, after Parkhurst’s Lex. has collected abundant instances in his note on Gen. i. 1.” Now it may be inquired whether Parkhurst and Dr. Clarke meant to assert that

Elohim was *uniformly* or even *generally* used in connection with plural adjectives, pronouns and verbs. We shall perceive in the sequel what was the opinion of the latter; and as respects the former, the very purpose which he meant to accomplish by his citations, would be frustrated by the establishment of such a principle. He proceeds upon the admitted doctrine that the plural designation Elohim is used to denote the one true God, a main proof of which is, that it is subject to the construction of a word in the singular; i. e. it has joined to it singular verbs, pronouns and adjectives. Hence he infers, fancifully, as is thought by many orthodox theologians, that a proof is thus furnished of a Trinity in Unity. He endeavors to corroborate his argument by showing that this plural denomination of Deity, although manifestly referring to the true God, who is one, and construed as a singular, is nevertheless not unfrequently connected with plural verbs, &c. What were Dr. Clarke's views will appear from his note on Gen. xx. 13. "Here the word Elohim is used with a *plural* verb, which is very *unusual* in the Hebrew language, as *this* plural noun is generally joined with verbs in the singular number." The passage upon which this observation occurs, is one of the few exceptions to the rule which holds good, generally, respecting all the attributive parts of speech, and almost universally in relation to verbs. Rosenmueler's remark is,

that these exceptions usually occur when respect is had rather to the plural form than to the signification of the word. That in this very text where the plural form obtains, both in the subject and predicate of the proposition, the discourse is concerning the *one* true God, is manifest by a reference to a parallel passage. In this place Abraham says, when Elohim caused me to wander (verb in plural form) from my father's house, that I said, &c. His allusion is to what is narrated Gen. xii. "Now the Lord (*Jehovah*) had said unto Abram, get thee out from thy country," &c. It is thus demonstrated that the word Elohim, even when construed with a plural verb, is used to designate that one God who was known to the Israelites by his proper name, *Jehovah*. Other instances where plural adjectives are joined to the word in question, when there can be no doubt that the true God is spoken of, are furnished Ps. lviii. 12; Joshua xxiv. 19. It is time, however, to close this discussion, with which I shall terminate the present section.

SECTION XI.

Objections particularly referring to the Book of Genesis.

“FROM the last verse of Genesis, to the end of the Revelation, there is no reference made to the book of Genesis or its contents.” Such a remark proceeding from any other writer than the author of the “Connexion between Geology and the Pentateuch,” would greatly surprise us. It, however, perfectly corresponds to many assertions with which we meet in that production. The total absence of truth which distinguishes it, I need not attempt to prove, so far as my concern is with those who are at all acquainted with the Bible, either in its earlier or its later portions. Yet to those less informed on the subject, the inquiry may be addressed—How could the succeeding books be at all understood without the history contained in this introductory one? How would the Israelites have known any thing respecting the God of their fathers; He who is ever called the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and whose promises, repeatedly made to these patriarchs, are so frequently referred to? And how could they have known any thing in relation to their migration into Egypt, and the events which there occurred?

It must be manifest then, to every one who will

reflect on the subject, that the book in question is absolutely indispensable to the completeness of the historical records of the Jews.

To this book, however, apart from its imagined want of connection with those which succeed, our author takes the strongest exceptions. There are several reasons which he suggests, against its reception as a genuine production.

1. It is composed of various independent documents. I am at a loss to conceive what bearing upon the subject this consideration can have. Dr. Cooper furnishes a full account of the several theories which have been offered respecting the sources whence Moses derived his materials for writing the history contained in Genesis. He seems to think that the admission of the correctness of these theories, which agree in the essential fact, that pre-existing documents were used, and differ only in respect to the number of them, is equivalent to an abandonment of the position that the first book of the Pentateuch is a Mosaic production. Absurd imagination! Such an assumption is entirely inconsequential. Does he not know that the orthodox Vitringa first suggested the opinion under view in his *Observationes Sacræ Lib. 1, civ. § 23, p. 36*, *Franeq. 1712*, long before it was fully developed by Astruc, A. D. 1753, and modified by Eichorn and Ilgen? Is he not aware that many have since adopted it, who never for a moment questioned the

authority of Genesis, as proceeding from Moses? Such is especially the fact in reference to Jahn and Rosenmueller among the biblical critics, and Knapp among the theologians; who have however shown the impotence of the attempts to ascertain the precise number of documents used, or to define accurately their beginnings or endings—and wherein consists the incompatibility of this theory with the views which we advocate? There are only three sources from which we can suppose Moses to have derived his materials. He must have received them directly from the Deity by inspiration, or derived them from oral traditions, or possessed some ancient written memorials of the human race. Admit the latter supposition to be true, either wholly or partially, and how does it derogate from the character of Genesis? Still its accuracy is vouched for by Moses, able, as he is allowed on all hands to have been, to judge respecting the trustworthiness of any ancient documents, and qualified according to our apprehension, to give them the sanction of an inspired prophet.

But it is alleged that these documents are conflicting, exceptionable in themselves, or manifestly derived from another people long subsequent to the age of Moses. There is supposed to be a contrariety between the two accounts of the creation of man, contained in the first and second chapters of Genesis, which are regarded as being two of these

documents. The plain state of the case is—that in the former chapter there is a brief mention of the formation of man in the general account of the work of the six days. In the latter the subject is resumed, and some details of the transaction are given, entirely consistent with the mere succinct statement previously furnished.

But in the one narrative, the designation given to the Creator is Elohim; in the other it is Jehovah Elohim. And what does this prove? that there were separate accounts in the hands of Moses, which he had derived from his forefathers? Let this be allowed, and what does the adversary gain? Who supposes that it at all detracts from the value of an historical work, that in its compilation, two distinct, although harmonious authorities have been used—the one going more into detail than the other? And these documents are not confusedly thrown together, or barely compiled by one who assumed no responsibility in regard to them. Moses often blends them intimately, as is the case in Gen. vi. 5, 6; “And God (Elohim) saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and it repented the Lord (Jehovah) that he had made man.”

By the way, I would remark upon a considerable oversight of Dr. Cooper, in referring to Eichorn's classification of texts. They who read the works of this writer, must have often wondered at his studious display of scriptural erudition, and at his

commendable zeal in enforcing upon them an actual and careful examination of the texts which he cites : “ I request,” he in the present instance observes, “ the reader to take his Bible and peruse the account of the creation by the *Gods* (Elohim) in the following order ; Gen. vi. 12, 13, &c. &c. and the Jehovah narration. Gen. vi. 5, 7,” &c.

Alas ! he has imposed upon the reader a difficult—an impracticable task. How can we read what is not written ? When the entire discourse is of the wickedness of the human race, leading to the desolation of our globe by an universal deluge—how may we find two separate accounts of the creation of man ? Surely it becomes the writer to examine the texts which he cites, and to ascertain their subject, before he refers the reader to them for his satisfaction, in relation to a particular hypothesis. The strong hold, however, in which the adversary intrenches himself, is the plural termination of the word Elohim. But after the full discussion of this topic in the last number, I do not deem it necessary to add a single remark.

The fallacy thus being shown, of any conclusion detrimental to the authority of Genesis, drawn from the fact that Moses used pre-existing documents ; and the assertion that these are conflicting, satisfactorily refuted ; we are prepared to meet the exceptions to these original sources of information independently considered. The Elohim document

is said to be a Chaldee tradition added to a Jewish one, and the assertion is, that the production which they constitute, did not exist until after the transportation to Babylon. And what are the reasons for this belief? An attempt is made to exhibit a formidable array of them, by a double enumeration of one, and by the fabrication of others which involve the inference of the actual from the possible.

The first proof, so called, that the book of Genesis had its origin during the captivity, is that Elohim is plural. So fond of this argument is our author, that in addition to his former reference to it, he has twice mentioned it in the single paragraph which we have now under view. For an exhibition of the insufficiency of this consideration, the reader must again be referred to the discussion gone into, on a former occasion. I may, however, suggest one additional remark. Greatly as the Jews were prone to idolatry, prior to the chastisement inflicted by their long and mournful captivity; after this period, they never gave the slightest indication of a similar propensity. Any respect paid to the gods of other nations, any thing derogatory from the honor of Jehovah, they appear to have regarded with extreme abhorrence. Now let it be admitted that they had adopted or compiled any historical document, at that time, is it credible that they would have tolerated in such document, any thing which recognized a multiplicity of Gods?

But the word El is not Hebrew but Chaldee. This is a remark for which our author is indebted to Voltaire; although, by a singular neglect, this lively writer is not mentioned in the general list of authorities which is furnished. Perhaps it was thought that a more imposing display of learning was made by a reference to Hobbes, and Spinoza, and Father Simon.

“These puppies of Jews,” writes the courteous Frenchman, “are of so late a date that they had not a word in their language to signify God, the name El was originally Chaldean.”—*Phil. Dict.*

What if it were so? Was not Abraham a native of Ur of the Chaldees? Did not Isaac, his son, obtain a wife from Mesopotamia? Is it forgotten that the wives of Jacob were Chaldean, and that the patriarch himself spent many years of his life in the “land of the children of the East?” Is it then surprising that a designation of the Deity derived from this oriental dialect, should have been in use among the descendants of these individuals? Moreover, Hebrew and Chaldee are languages now nearly resembling each other, they are both branches of one original stock, and of course varied from each other less at a former and remote period than they do at present. This being considered, who can doubt that they had not a few, but many words in common? We have as authority for this, Mons. Voltaire, who in singular contradiction to what is

above quoted from him says, "This word El signified God among the first Phœnicians," (who spake Hebrew.)—*Phil. Dict. Art Phœn.* The position therefore in reference to this word which is attempted to be maintained, we perceive to be utterly untenable.

But the traditions contained in Genesis, are farther said to be Chaldean, because they agree with the Phœnician and Chaldean writers, as cited by Josephus, Alexander, Polyhistor, and Eusebius from Berosus." Chaldee, *because* they agree with the *Phœnician* writers! Why not Phœnician rather? And if the Phœnician and Chaldean writers, independent authorities, concur in a particular representation, in which they are also sustained by the Hebrew records, why should not these latter be considered a separate and additional witness? But two other of our adversary's reasons remain to be considered—the one that Ezra, educated at Babylon, would derive all his knowledge from Chaldean writers; the other, that the Jews of that period would be conversant with the literature and traditional cosmogony of the country in which they lived. I would here simply repeat a suggestion already made, that this involves an argument from the possible to the actual. It is a mere begging of the question. It is saying nothing more, than that *if* Moses *did not* write Genesis, Ezra or some other Jew *might* have done it, during the exile.

It seems then that the imposing array of objections brought up against us, is so much diminished, that but two require to be seriously met. These are—that El is a Chaldean word, and that the cosmogony, or account of the origin of created things contained in Genesis, is Chaldean. A sufficient refutation of the argument founded upon them, it is thought, has been furnished by the observations already made. The latter of the considerations above mentioned, may perhaps deserve some additional attention. It is admitted that the traditions preserved by Berosus, do greatly resemble the narration which Genesis presents. This observation also applies in a degree even more remarkable, to the fragmentary records of the Egyptians and Phœnicians, as they are exhibited in Diodorus Siculus and Sanchoniathon. A similar correspondence may be traced in the accounts of the origin of things existing among the ancient Persians. To the Hindoos and Chinese, it is not deemed necessary, at present, to make any reference. Now it is not probable that from any one of these nations, all the rest borrowed their cosmogonies. The obvious conclusion is, that they were derived from some common and more ancient source, and that they were founded on transactions really taking place.

But the other document assumed as one of the originals of Genesis, in which the term Jehovah is

used, is also denounced as suspicious. To support this proscription, a reference is made to the following passage, Ex. vi. 3: "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty: but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them."

The difficulty connected with this passage is, that in many parts of the preceding history the name Jehovah occurs. Yet here it is supposed to be declared that this name was not previously applied to the Deity. The inference is, that the book of Genesis, containing this history, must have been written after Exodus, and is contradictory to it. The only and the entirely satisfactory solution of the difficulty presented is, that the text cited does not prove the name Jehovah to have been entirely unknown to the ancestors of Moses. Various writers use different methods of establishing this conclusion.

We premise to a statement of some of these, the general consideration, that there can be no real inconsistency between the passage in question and the numerous texts in Genesis, where Jehovah is employed as a well known divine appellation. If it were so, would not they, who according to the gratuitous supposition of our adversary, at a late period foisted the book of Genesis into the collection of the Jewish historical records, have avoided an inconsistency so glaring, by new modelling the

spurious production which they are assumed to have borrowed, or expunging the single passage which seemed to create any embarrassment? Upon the supposition we have made, principle could have presented no obstacle to such a proceeding—interest and common sense would have imperatively enjoined it. But to return—some understand the phraseology of the text, Ex. vi. 3, as employed not in an absolute but comparative sense. God was not so much known to the patriarchs by the designation of Jehovah, as by that of El Shaddai—God Almighty. Others think that in the present instance the word *only* is to be understood as supplied—that he was not only known to them by the name Jehovah, but by that of El Shaddai. Such, according to Dr. Gill, was the view of Saadaï Gaon, a Jewish Rabbi, head of a school at Sora, near Babylon, author of an Arabic translation of the Old Testament, &c. who flourished A. D. 930. This interpretation is supported by a reference to Gen. xxxii. 28: “Thou shalt no more be called Jacob, but Israel,” where the meaning necessarily is: “Thou shalt no more be called Jacob *only*—but Israel likewise.”

Some again propose to read the passage interrogatively: “By my name Jehovah, was I not known?” An affirmative answer being supplied.

The explanation most generally approved, however, is that furnished in the following paraphrase.

To your ancestors, I have shown myself to be the Almighty; but as a God, faithful, unchangeable, (the idea involved in the term Jehovah,) and fulfilling the promises which I gave them concerning the occupation of the land of Canaan—they have not known—*had no experience* of me. He does not intend that the name itself was unheard of by the ancestors of Moses—but that they had not seen brought to pass what was signified by that name—as among the sacred writers “to be called,” is sometimes the same as “to be,” so here the name is denied to one, who has not yet exhibited the character, or exercised the influence involved in it. See the subject more fully developed in Rosenmueler.

I must not, however, omit to mention, that an elaborate investigation has been made of this subject in a late number of the Biblical Repository, by an American writer, who has proposed a new, and as he thinks, more satisfactory interpretation. Not, however, regarding it as preferable to the one above stated, I shall content myself with referring to the article itself.*

In connection with the topic now under discussion, and with a view to deprive the Jews of all originality whatever in their religious system, it has been asserted that even the name Jehovah—

* Bib. Rep. No. xii. Art. 4.

the most remarkable appellative of the God whom they worshipped—was derived from the Phœnicians and Egyptians. The existence of such an opinion, furnishes a remarkable exemplification of the facility with which error is transmitted from one writer to many succeeding ones—who are content to receive, without examination, the assertions of those who have gone before them. No principle seems to have been generally recognized as a more certain truth than that the name Jehovah, or, *Iaw*, was known to the nations above mentioned. Yet Professor Tholuck of Halle, has shown to a perfect demonstration the total fallacy of this supposition.*

He traces the general prevalence of this opinion to Schiller's Essay on the Mission of Moses, the leading ideas of which are derived from the book of Brother Decius, or the Hebrew Mysteries by the celebrated Reinhold. The latter individual who speaks of the Egyptian origin of the name Jehovah as a well known fact, introduces as a guaranty, Voltaire, who says: "The most sacred name among the Egyptians was the same which the Hebrews afterwards adopted in their language, viz. I-ha-ho. This was pronounced in various ways, and Clemens Alexandrinus assures us, in his Stromata, that no one might enter the temple of Serapis, who did not bear on his breast or forehead

* Bib. Rep. No. xiii. 3.

the name I-ha-ho, or Jao, which denotes the eternal God."

"What a remarkable fact of antiquity," observes Tholuck; "but—if it could only be found in Clement; I have never succeeded in finding it." This able writer, whom I have just quoted, proceeds to investigate the *grounds* of the opinion, the *history* of which he had just given. He sets out with the statement that not one single ancient writer affirms that God was called *Iao* by the Egyptians; and he establishes this statement beyond all dispute, by an examination of the few passages usually cited on the subject. The first is Diodorus Siculus, i. 94, where the author speaking of the Egyptians incidentally makes the observation: "It is related that among the Hebrews, Moses professed to have received his law from the God Jao." The whole paragraph in the original may be seen in the Biblical Repository, No. xiii. p. 95. No one can avoid sympathizing in the astonishment expressed by Tholuck, that any author should have quoted this as sustaining the belief of the *Egyptian origin* of the word in question, nor avoid concurring in the supposition that there was some unaccountable slip of the memory in the writer who first cited the passage, and that the error once committed, has been successively propagated by those who adopted the quotation without verifying it. In addition to the passage from Diodorus, only

two testimonies of antiquity have been brought forward to show that the name Jehovah, or Jao, existed beyond the limits of the Mosaic institutions; the one from Macrobius, proving, it is thought, the employment of this name in the Grecian mysteries—the other in Porphyry, showing its existence among the Phœnicians. Macrobius flourished in the first part of the fifth century of the Christian era, under Theodosius the younger. The passage in his writings above referred to, consists of verses ascribed to Apollo Clarius. According to Tholuck, Jablonsky, in his *Pantheon Egyptiacum*, has clearly shown that these verses belong to a Judaizing Gnostic. Besides, does the knowledge of the name Jao, among the Greeks, or Egyptians, or Orientals of Western Asia, in the second or third century of our era, prove that it originated among them, and not rather that it was derived from the Jews then universally dispersed?

“We know from Jamblicus, that the syncretic theosophists of that age were accustomed to adopt foreign names of God, and employ them in their incantations.”—*Tholuck*.

The passage from Porphyry, is professedly derived from Sanchoniathon, and is preserved by two of the fathers of the church, Eusebius and Theodoret. It, however, fails entirely in answering the end for which it is cited. Porphyry simply says, “Sanchoniathon gave a true account of the Jewish

history, and this because he received his accounts from a priest of *Ievu*”—*Jevu*.

There are two other data which are supposed to furnish proof of the hypothesis which I am opposing, one of which is an inscription on the temple of Isis at Sais, transmitted by Plutarch, but of which no mention is made by Herodotus, or Diodorus, or Strabo. For an exposure of the insufficiency of these testimonials, the reader must, however, be referred to the article of Tholuck, where entire satisfaction may be obtained.

The present section has already reached an undue length, and we have yet before us a class of objections, which, if I mistake not, our author regards as particularly forcible. The next section will contain an examination of their validity.

SECTION XII.

Objection to its genuineness, derived from the alleged fact, that Moses was unacquainted with Hebrew, the Egyptian being his vernacular language.

To the class of objections discussed in the last section, belong the suggestion, “that Moses was never out of Egypt, except so far as the land of Moab,” and the consecutive inquiry, “What could induce him to place Paradise upon the Euphrates?”

And what could he know of Pison, and Gihon, and Hiddekel ? ” Prior, therefore, to the consideration of the difficulty stated at the head of the present essay, it will be necessary to inquire how far the Hebrew lawgiver was qualified by his attainments in geographical knowledge, at least, for communicating the information contained in the book of Genesis. It is thought that the above stated questions, although captiously proposed, will, in their solution, lead to the adoption of views entirely at variance with the result at which the author of them hoped to arrive. For where, in the whole range of history, may we find an individual in whom so many qualifications for writing the production in question, meet, as in Moses—descended from Chaldean ancestors—nurtured at the court of Pharaoh, and instructed in all the learning of the Egyptians—having, doubtless, intercourse with the Phœnician merchants, whose pursuits led them to all parts of the world then accessible to commercial enterprise ; and who, in fine, spent eighty years of his life in Arabia—during forty of which as a private individual, his acquaintance must have been extensive with the Nomadic tribes who ranged from Egypt to the Euphrates, and who throughout the forty years succeeding, as the leader of the Israelites, had extensive dealings, peaceful as well as warlike, with various surrounding nations. Surely, it is alone necessary to direct the reader’s attention to the

facts thus hastily enumerated, to produce in him a feeling of surprise that any one should for a moment have questioned the entire competency of Moses, to furnish all the geographical and historical details which are contained in the early Hebrew writings—and when the question recurs, “What could induce Moses to place Paradise upon the Euphrates?” we have only to answer, that *there* was the first seat of the human race, and that with this fact the historian had ample means of becoming acquainted.

But let us now advance to the consideration of the objection, “that Moses and the Israelites did not, and could not write, or read, or speak Hebrew, which was the language of the Phœnicians and Canaanites, until after the invasion and peaceable settlement of the promised land.” What then is the proof of this startling assertion? It is said “that Chaldee was Abraham’s native language, and that Hebrew was the language of the Canaanites which Abraham and his posterity learnt by travelling among them.” Who doubts this? And yet our author, prodigal of testimony where none is wanted, cites in support of it, Dr. Rees, and his authorities quoted under the head ‘Hebrew character,’ in the Encyclopedia—which authorities are Le Clerc, and Joseph Scaliger, and Walton, and Selden.

I have said, who questions the statement above made? I know of no other but Dr. Cooper him-

self, who leans on it for support, and yet who professes to disbelieve it in part. He admits that Abraham acquired the Hebrew language, but "*naturally infers* that he would not teach it to his descendants, from his great reluctance to permit Isaac to marry in Canaan." However *natural* may be this inference, it appears to be not only entirely without proof, but opposed by the learned authorities which are above quoted, and conclusively shown to be false by a passage in the patriarchal history. Respect is had to Genesis xxxi. 46, 47, where at the parting of Jacob, and his father-in-law Laban, a pile of stones was erected as a memorial of a covenant into which they had entered. "Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed." Their languages were therefore different—Laban spoke Chaldee, but Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, and the progenitor of the Israelites, who at the close of his life, with his family, made Egypt his permanent residence, spoke a different dialect which was Hebrew. It appears then to be incontrovertible that not only did Abraham, according to the admission of our antagonist, acquire a knowledge of Hebrew, but that this also became the language of his descendants. And all this occurred by a process the easiest imaginable—Hebrew and Chaldee, now cognate dialects, nearly resembling each other, originally presented still less diversity than is at present manifest. For accord-

ing to the opinions of almost all critics, there was originally but one language in that section of Asia, which includes the region of the Euphrates, Syria, Palestine, and Arabia. The original identity of the languages subsequently prevalent throughout this part of the world, is proved, not merely by their having many words in common, but by their whole genius and structure. It is generally supposed that a full exhibition of this primitive speech is furnished by no one of those derived from it; and that these latter have, by their respective deviations from it, assumed their specific character. Many, however, do assert that the Hebrew itself is that primeval tongue which gave rise according to Gesenius:—1. To the Aramean, spoken in Syria, Mesopotamia, and Babylon, and which includes the West Aramean or Syriac, and the East Aramean or Chaldee; 2. To the Hebrew spoken in Palestine and Phœnicia, from which the Punic is descended; and 3. To the Arabic, with which the Ethiopic is nearly allied. The claims of the Hebrew to this prerogative are well stated in an article of the *Biblical Repertory*—Princeton, Vol. II., No. 2, p. 320, on the Antiquity, History, &c. of the Hebrew language.

But to recur to the course of our argument; there is no doubt that the Israelites carried the Hebrew language with them to Egypt—the contrary opinion is not only totally without evidence, but in

direct opposition to it. The question then is—did they lose it during their continuance in that country? Our opponent thinks that they did. He asserts that they adopted the Egyptian language, and that they did not acquire that of Canaan until after the entire conquest of the promised land, perhaps in the reign of Solomon. Truly, we may adopt the remark of our author with some slight variation: “The hardihood of assertion exhibited by the patrons of heterodoxy is absolutely amazing.” To sustain the fact which Dr. Cooper *assumes*, there is not the least show of evidence in the Jewish records themselves, nor the testimony of a single author, nor, as far as my information extends, the corroborating *opinion* of any modern writer. This is the first instance in which I have not been able to trace Dr. Cooper’s reasonings and objections to some source beyond himself, and regarding this as a specimen of his inventive powers, there is no reason to apprehend that the cause of revelation is placed in greater peril by the assaults of this new champion, than it has frequently been in days past. In the absence then of any shadow of *proof*, how is it attempted to show that the Israelites lost their language in Egypt? Simply by a reference to an analogous instance, in which a similar result is supposed to have taken place. I allude to the Babylonish captivity. Now admitting for the present, that the Jews did totally lose their

language during the seventy years' transportation, it would not follow that their ancestors had lost it during their abode in Egypt, even for a period still longer. The cases are marked by strong features of discrimination. The Jews, when carried beyond the Euphrates, were much dispersed—their communication with each other, in consequence, much obstructed—and there was nothing in their political or civil condition which tended to perpetuate their language. But how different were the circumstances of their ancestors, at a former period, even when most depressed by Egyptian servitude; they had gone down to Egypt as the kindred of an highly distinguished favorite and minister of the king of the country. There had been assigned to them a distinct portion of the land as their peculiar and exclusive possession. This had been the result of the provident management of Joseph himself, who was anxious to preserve his family from the corrupting influence of Egyptian customs and superstitions. He had directed his brethren to announce themselves to Pharaoh, as shepherds, with the avowed object of obtaining for them a place of abode, of which they would be the exclusive occupants, inasmuch as "every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians." Gen. xlv. 34.

Occupying, therefore, the land of Goshen, admirably suited to their pastoral occupations, and for more than a hundred years distinguished by the

royal favor, it is not surprising that “the children of Israel were fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceedingly mighty, and the land was filled with them. Ex. i. 7. Under these circumstances no one can suppose that they lost their language, nor was this effect to be anticipated when a reverse was experienced by them, and the munificence of former kings was followed by the oppression of their successor. Still the Hebrews remained in a body. They were not slaves, occupying a station of domestic servitude—they were the disfranchised subjects of a despotic monarch—in lieu of a heavy pecuniary tribute, severe and continued labors were exacted from them. But out of this condition grew neither the necessity nor the inducement to adopt the language of their oppressors—no necessity, inasmuch as the daily intercourse of life could be maintained in the Hebrew—no inducement, for they could not admire nor wish to imitate a speech which had then become the vehicle only of arbitrary mandates or stern reproaches.

That they should therefore have relinquished the use of their own language in order to the adoption of that of Egypt, is an assumption as utterly improbable as it is altogether destitute of evidence. But in case this had been done, how would the dialect of Canaan, ever have come into use among the Israelites. If according to our author, they

refused to adopt it, while they were yet a single family of wandering shepherds, sustaining amicable relations, and having daily intercourse with the inhabitants of the land, is it to be supposed that they would do this—when as a conquering nation they entered Palestine—when they were the executors of the divine judgments upon a devoted people, and when they were forbidden to retain, even as slaves, those whom the Almighty Ruler of nations had adjudged to death for their crimes? And although a portion of this condemned race, was, under the arrangements of Providence, permitted to occupy, for several generations, a part of their original territory, and occasionally to harass, and even sometimes subjugate the Israelites, yet in all this, there was nothing which could induce the latter to substitute for their own language that of a rival and most odious people.

But in the considerations presented above, I have admitted a fact, upon which alone rests even the semblance of an argument offered by our adversary. I have conceded the point, that the Jews did lose their language during the Babylonian captivity. Had this been really the case, the alleged result would have been greatly facilitated by the striking similarity of the Chaldee and Hebrew dialect.

But the fact thus admitted, is by no means unquestionable. It is, on the contrary, extremely improbable that the Jews after their restoration to

their own land, spoke only the Chaldee. This opinion which has been very generally entertained, is supported principally by the passage in Nehemiah viii. 8, where an account is given of the solemn recital of the law under the direction of Ezra—"So they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading." But this statement, which is supposed to refer to a translation of the law from Hebrew into Chaldee, made by the Levites in the course of their reading, may well be understood of such an interpretation or illustration of the sacred text, as is now given by Christian teachers in their ordinary ministrations. In confirmation of this view, we may add, that the prophets, after the captivity, addressed the people in Hebrew, and that Nehemiah, xiii. 24, speaks of those who by their marriage with the daughters of Ashdod, brought up their children to speak partly the language of Ashdod and partly that of the Jews. Doubtless, during their residence in a foreign land, many of the Jews either acquired its language in full, or adopted a mixed dialect. The effect thus begun to be produced, was continued and increased by the ascendancy of the Syrian monarchy under the Selêucidæ, and the final result, after several ages, was the establishment of the Syro-Chaldaic—a mixture of the East and West Aramean as the vernacular language of Palestine. But this process

was one which went on very gradually, for in the time of the Maccabees, we find inscriptions on coins which prove that the use of the Hebrew was not then abandoned.

It appears that even the single analogous instance upon which Dr. C. grounds his opinion, that the Hebrews lost their language in Egypt, is a very dubious one—and that of any other proof, his assertion is entirely destitute. We must, therefore, regard his objection, that Moses, speaking in Egyptian, could not have written a book in Hebrew, as completely overthrown.

SECTION XIII.

Alleged impossibility of such a work having been produced in the age of Moses, derived from a consideration of the characters then used in writing, and the substances upon which they were impressed.

It was a favorite object with the philosopher of Ferney, in his numerous diatribes against the Jews and their religion, to establish the principle above stated. He asserts, “that in the time of Moses, hieroglyphic writing only was in use, and that the art of engraving upon polished stone, upon brick, upon lead, and upon wood, was the only method of writing, and that the Egyptians and Chaldeans wrote

in no other way." It was therefore Mons. Voltaire's opinion that nations employed more difficult processes in the earlier than in the later period of their existence, although he has elsewhere observed that "before hieroglyphics, men *painted* their conceptions in a clumsy manner." The use of colors, then, by his own showing, being known, it would have been much easier to have traced figures by their means upon cloth, or other light substances, than to have engraven them upon stone and metal. But we shall pass by this consideration at present, and remark, that he seems at a subsequent period to have learned that the Jews employed at least one more facile method of representing their ideas—i. e. by tracing characters in soft plaster with which stones were covered. Of this discovery, our author, upon whom the mantle of the patriarch of French literature seems to have fallen, has availed himself, and with singular ingratitude, in adopting and appropriating it, has flatly contradicted the opinion maintained by his instructor—that engraving upon polished stone, &c., was in use among the Egyptians. For he peremptorily denies that Moses, who came out of Egypt, and whose circumstances there had been such as to forbid the supposition that he was not acquainted with its arts, knew any other, or better mode of writing, than the tracing of characters in soft plaster spread over stone.

There seems, moreover, to be a want of entire

coincidence of sentiment between these two great men on another subject. The one asserts that hieroglyphic writing *only*, was in use in the time of Moses—the other seems to leave the matter in doubt, although afterwards, with no great consistency, he affirms, in reference to the particular instance of the Jewish historian, that “he did not write one line of phonetic Egyptian.” I shall cite in full what he says on this subject, with a view to the addition of some critical remarks. On page 36 of *Geol. and Pent.*, we meet the following passage: “in what *language* Moses wrote, whether in the hieratic or phonetic hieroglyphics of the Egyptians, *in which we are to presume he was instructed*, is no where said.” In this passage I would note two things. One is a new and surprising use of the word *language*, where the appropriate term would have been *character*. We do not speak of the hieratic or hieroglyphic language—but of the hieratic or hieroglyphic character, or mode of representing ideas by one set of sensible images rather than another. Intending to express the fact that our Hebrew Scriptures are written in the Chaldee *character*, or *letters*, we would not say they were written in the Chaldee *language*. This, however, may have been an oversight committed in the haste of composition; but there cannot be given the same excuse for the error which is the subject of my second remark.

There is displayed in the passage upon which I

am commenting, an utter confusion of ideas in reference to the modes of writing in use among the Egyptians. We have here a phonetic, hieroglyphic *language* of this people, distinguished from a hieratic, hieroglyphic language. What a total incongruity and absurdity there is in these expressions, will appear from some observations which I shall subjoin to the next quotation. At page 57 of his pamphlet, Dr. C. again says, "whether Moses wrote in the hieratic, the demotic, or the phonetic character, or in what form of hieroglyphic, or whether he used the *ta prota stoicheia*, described in the *Stromata* of Clemens Alexandrinus, I shall not stop to inquire." Here is dust thrown into the eyes of the unlearned. He does not intend to investigate the subject, but thinks it well to excite the admiration of the wondering multitude by the display of an acquaintance with all the intricacies of the ancient Egyptian learning. Unfortunately, however, there are almost as many errors as there are words in the sentence above cited. In the first place he distinguishes the *phonetic* from the *hieratic* and *demotic character*; whereas the former is only a particular *class* of *signs*, common to the *different kinds* of *writing* expressed by the two last mentioned terms. *Phonetic* is opposed, not to *hieratic* or *demotic*, but to *ideographic*. A *phonetic* character, is one expressing *sound*, such as the *letters* of our alphabet, which do not present *ideas*, but *words*: whereas an *ideographic* character

is expressive of the *object itself*, and does not merely enter into the composition of a word by which it is designated. Again, the clause, "or in what form of hieroglyphics," either implies that the hieratic, demotic and phonetic were distinct *species* of *hieroglyphic writing*, of which there were other kinds, or that this hieroglyphic writing was something entirely different from the modes of representing ideas denoted by the terms first mentioned. Now the hieratic and demotic, were not *subdivisions* of *hieroglyphic writing*, but they were two independent kinds of *writing in general*, in use among the Egyptians, of which the hieroglyphic was a *third* and *collateral* one. To make this entirely clear, let the following remarks be attended to. The most definite information respecting the written character of the ancient Egyptians, is derived from a passage of Clemens Alexandrinus in his Stromata, Lib. v. Tom. ii. p. 657. With this concur substantially the brief statements of Herodotus and Diodorus. The information given by Clement, was however never rendered perfectly intelligible until the recent discoveries of Champollion, with which it presents a remarkable correspondence. M. Letronne, in a letter to Champollion, published in the Précis du Système Hiéroglyphique, has given a translation of this celebrated passage of the Christian father, with a comment illustrating it.*

* See an Essay on the Hieroglyphic System of Mons. Champollion by J. G. H. Greppo, p. 26, Boston ed.

There are, says Clement, three kinds of Egyptian letters. 1. The epistolographic, 2. The hieratic, 3. The hieroglyphic. Herodotus and Diodorus furnish but two classes—the demotic or popular, and the hieratic or sacred. It appears that they grouped together under one denomination the two last divisions of Clement.

All the three kinds of writing mentioned by him have been recognized upon the monuments by Champollion—on the famous Rosetta stone, however, the term enchorial, national, or belonging to the country, was used to express what Clement calls *epistolographic* and the Greek historians *demotic*. “The *demotic* writing was the most flowing and simple of the three, and employed chiefly *phonetic* or alphabetic sounds. The *hieratic*, less simple than the *demotic*, differs from the *hieroglyphic* in the delineation of its characters, which are a kind of reduction, or rather the tachygraphy (the short hand) of the hieroglyphic signs to which they correspond. It employs much fewer *ideographic* signs than the *hieroglyphic*, but more than the *demotic* or popular writing. But in their *phonetic* parts, these three writings form (so to speak) but one, their only difference consisting in the differently formed signs which they employ.”*

With this explanation of the Egyptian system of writing, the reader may at once perceive how ex-

* Greppo's Essay, pp. 28, 29.

tremely inaccurate and confused are the terms in which Dr. C. refers to it. Nor is his allusion to the *ta prota stoicheia* of Clement at all more happy—he speaks of these as a certain class of written characters totally distinct from hieroglyphics, whereas they constitute *one* of the *two kinds of signs* employed in the hieroglyphic method.—“This writing, i. e. the hieroglyphic, says Clement, is of two kinds; one of these the *cyriologic* employs the *primitive alphabetic letters*; the other is symbolic.” Such is M. Letronne’s translation, in which it is to be observed that he renders *πρωτων στοιχειων*, the *primitive alphabetic letters*. For an illustration of the correctness of this version, see Greppo’s Essay, p. 30. This passage then merely confirms the statement already made, that in the hieroglyphic writing some of the signs were *symbolic* or *ideographic*, i. e. expressive of ideas, while others were *phonetic*, i. e. representatives of sound—in other words alphabetic characters. Such then is the *accuracy* of our author’s learning; I shall now exhibit a rare specimen of his logic. After having in the first extract from his pamphlet which is given above, admitted that Moses was instructed in the several kinds of writing employed by the Egyptians, and after having in the second, declined inquiring which of these varieties was used by him, he advances the assertion, the incorrectness of which shall be shown in the sequel, that “no man ever yet saw an

Egyptian book, or part of a book, or any other historical record beyond an inscription of mere names, till the settlement of the Greeks at Alexandria, under the Ptolemies and the introduction of Christianity among the Copts." By the way, this joining together two distinct events, three or four hundred years apart, to indicate the era of a particular transaction, is somewhat extraordinary. Let this pass, however, while we attend to the chain of our author's reasoning. "Moses therefore did not write one line of *phonetic* Egyptian, and whether he wrote any thing in any form of hieroglyphic, we know not." Here Dr. C. again uses the term *phonetic*, instead of *demotic*, to express the popular and most simple form of writing, and still seems uninformed that many of the hieroglyphic signs (Champollion says the greatest number) were *phonetic*. But we proceed with our citation. "Upon these points his whole history is silent ; no wonder ! What account *could* Moses give of them ? Did he write in Hebrew ? No. Hebrew like Samaritan is Phœnician," &c. *Admirable demonstration !* Moses did *not* write Hebrew, but Egyptian—and *therefore* he could give no account whether he wrote any thing in the phonetic [understand demotic] or hieroglyphic character of the Egyptians. After having by so *unexceptionable* a process reached this *irrefutable* conclusion, he rambles off with citations from Bochart and Petit and Walton, to prove that

the Hebrew is identical with the Phœnician. To this statement, which no one ever dreamed of contesting, he adds the remark, "A man must be sadly ignorant of literary discussions who doubts this at this day." What an air of condescending superiority is here assumed in reference to the imagined ignorance of his opponents. With what beautiful propriety may they retort the observation. A man must be sadly ignorant of the discoveries of the last ten years, to say nothing of the investigations of the learned for the last fifteen hundred, who exhibits such a total want of correct acquaintance with the system of writing employed by one of the most renowned nations of antiquity. But the merits of the question under consideration are distinct from the inquiry, how far Dr. Cooper is qualified to sustain the office which he assumes to himself of being an instructor in universal science. The objections which he has proposed may be valid, however superficial his acquaintance with related topics. Yet it is not foreign from the object had in view in these essays, to estimate the acquirements and expose the errors of one, whom many regard, in an eminent manner, as their guide, philosopher, and friend—and to whom this community in general have been too much accustomed to defer, on all points involving profound literary research. Opinions often attain extended currency, through the imagined superiority in intellectual power or sci-

entific attainment of him who promulgates them. It is hoped that henceforth no man will regard the decisions of Dr. C. as conclusive upon any subject, literary, or scientific, or moral, where there is requisite for its comprehension, either deep learning or candid investigation.

We return to the subjects proposed, and inquire whether there is any reason to doubt concerning the production of the Pentateuch in the age during which it purports to have appeared, derived from the consideration that the art of writing was not then in use. There can exist in the mind of a well informed man, no difficulty on this subject. There are the most satisfactory grounds for concluding that the invention of letters took place in an age long anterior to that of Moses. We shall omit the consideration of those pictured representations by which we may suppose men originally communicated their ideas; and, in regard to alphabetic writing, it may be observed that all the early writers attribute the invention to a very remote age, and to some country of the East. Cadmus, according to their report, introduced letters from Phœnicia into Greece, B. C. 1519—a little after the death of Moses. Anticlides, an ancient Greek historian, as quoted by Pliny, vii. 57, asserts and attempts to prove that letters were invented in Egypt fifteen years before Phoroneus, 409 years after the deluge, and in the 117th of Abraham.

Epigenes informs us that observations made on the heavenly bodies for 720 years at Babylon, were written down on baked tiles. Pliny, from these statements, draws the conclusion that the use of letters, as he expresses it, must have been eternal, i. e. very ancient. Jahn's Biblical Archæology, Sect. 85. That Cadmus first introduced letters into Greece, rests upon the statement of Herodotus, L. V. 58, who, however, expresses himself with an air of doubt, using the limitation, "as it appears to me." He is contradicted by Diodorus Siculus, V. 57, 74, who states that many generations before Cadmus, the Greeks were in possession of written characters, and used them for public monuments. Pausanias I. 43, makes mention of an inscription which he had read at Megara, the date of which was 1678 years before our era, which was therefore anterior to Cadmus, and consequently Pelasgic. See *Anthon's Lempriere, Art. Pelasgi. Mitford's Greece, C. ii. Sec. 3, pp. 118, 125. Beloe's Herodotus, v. 58. Note by translator. I might here make a quotation from Voltaire, who asserts that

* The original work of Lempriere, remodelled, greatly extended and vastly improved. The edition of 1833 (the third in quick succession) contains many articles of great interest, involving much research, and presenting the most important results of the critical labors of the profoundest scholars of Modern Germany. In its present form, although doubtless susceptible of much improvement, it is indeed a *Bibliotheca Classica*.

800 years before Moses, there were books written by the help of the alphabet. See letters of certain Jews, etc. p. 68. The authorities, however, given above, can derive no additional weight from the opinion of an author who did not hesitate to express the most opposite conclusions, when by this means he could effect a favorite purpose. In truth we might well dispense with all the information which has been recited above, inasmuch as there are now actually existing specimens of alphabetic writing, which have come down to us from an age prior to that in which we suppose the Pentateuch to have appeared. I allude to the manuscripts which have been deciphered by Champollion, as well as to the monumental inscriptions which he has enabled us to read. These, however, will again be brought up for our consideration, while examining the objection that "Moses could not have written the Pentateuch, because in his age the materials were not such as would have enabled him to produce so extended a work." It is proposed to meet this imagined difficulty in the next section.

SECTION XIV.

Did there exist in the age of Moses any suitable material, upon which the Pentateuch might have been written?

“THE Egyptian priests told all their chronological lies to Herodotus, but they proved them from no book.” Thus writes our courteous, and candid, and accurately informed author, whose enmity to the priestly order loses no opportunity of displaying itself, and whose amazing sagacity enables him to determine, in the absence of all evidence, what took place in a remote country more than two thousand years ago. Upon what authority rests the assertion, that the Egyptian priests did not confirm their statements by a reference to any written documents? Does Herodotus declare this? Certainly not. He rather gives us to understand the contrary, when in his *Euterpe*, § 145, he says “the Egyptians profess always to have computed the years and kept written accounts of them with the greatest accuracy.” Surely this pretension could not have been supported in reference to ancient transactions, of which the historian is speaking, if they had not been able to exhibit any written documents even of a more modern date. Does the assumption then, which we are considering, rest upon the fact that there are now in existence, no Egyptian writings derived

from a remote period ? Were it even so, would it be at all surprising, that in a country over which the tide of conquest has repeatedly rolled, and in which the sway of barbarians has for many ages prevailed, there should have taken place a destruction of all the productions of a learned antiquity ? Concerning Heliopolis, whose inhabitants are termed by Herodotus the most ingenious of the Egyptians, where Plato studied philosophy and Eudoxus astronomy, Savary remarks, “ a barbarous Persian has overthrown her temples, a fanatic Arab burned her books, and one solitary obelisk overlooking her ruins, says to passengers, this once was Heliopolis.” But the fame of Egypt is not supported alone by the testimony of ancient historians, who visited it when just declining from its high and palmy state, and recorded the results of their own observations and inquiries ; while its “ old magnificence is attested by its architectural remains, and the specimens which exist of its proficiency in the arts, useful and ornamental ; there is abundant evidence of the acquaintance with letters which distinguished its people, furnished by the inscriptions which cover its temples and palaces, as well as the rolls of papyrus, which have been brought to light by the ardent spirit of modern discovery.” Many most interesting memorials of the latter kind have been made known to us by the indefatigable Frenchman, who has created a new era in the study of Egyp-

tian antiquities. "In the rich collection of Mr. Sallier at Aix, a roll of papyrus has recently been discovered which has aroused the curiosity of all the learned of Europe. The manuscript which is in the *demotic* character is a history of the campaigns of Rhamses the great. It gives a circumstantial account of his conquest, of the force and composition of his army, and it was written in the ninth year of his reign." * This great king, who was the Sesostris of Herodotus, the Sesoosis of Diodorus, the Sethos of Manetho, and the Rhamses of the monuments, lived about 1500 years before Christ, near the period of the Exodus. In reference to this subject, and in confirmation of what the modern decipherers of Egyptian inscriptions have read, the reader may consult the remarkable passage of Tacitus, Lib. ii. Sec. 60, Annals.

We may thus judge of the degree of information possessed by a writer, who asserts, "no man ever yet saw a line of phonetic Egyptian." It is also apparent that papyrus was in use as a writing material, at a much earlier period than has been generally supposed. But of this fact we have a yet more striking confirmation. The burial vaults of the ancient Egyptians, their necropoleis, as they are termed, among many other relics of past ages have

* Champollion, Bulletin des Sciences Historiques, tom x. p. 200, cited by Greppo, p. 177.

furnished numerous manuscripts on papyrus. "Some filled with hieroglyphics and adorned with paintings of the divinities of Amenti or Egyptian hell, and with mystic scenes of the passage of souls, are only repetitions more or less complete of a kind of funeral ritual. Other manuscripts are traced usually in *hieratic* writing. They present various *kinds of acts* promulgated by Egyptian monarchs, and they bear the *names* and *dates* of the reigns of these monarchs. To this class belong a series of papyrus fragments, which for a long time remained unnoticed in the Turin Museums, but which have now been recognized by Champollion! An immense number of acts are there found, which belong for the most part to the eighteenth dynasty, and of which none are later than the nineteenth. But the most remarkable of all, contains an *act* of the fifth year of the reign of Thouthmosis III. the fifth king of the eighteenth dynasty, who governed Egypt two hundred years before the time when Moses wrote the Pentateuch." *

Here then I might let the controversy rest; one fact is worth a thousand theories and assumptions, and of that we are in possession. We *have* a manuscript, written on papyrus, long anterior to Moses; he might then have used the same material. But before dismissing the subject, it may be well

* Essay on the Hieroglyphic System, p. 165.

to add a remark or two, illustrative of the merits of the question, independently of the decisive fact just stated. We shall thus perceive that with no reference to facts disclosed by modern investigation, the assertion that the only mode of writing practised in the age of Moses, was engraving upon stone or metal, or the tracing of characters upon soft plaster, spread over the former substance, is rash and unauthorized. The notion entertained by some, that papyrus was not in use before the foundation of Alexandria, rests on the assertion of Varro. But Pliny observes, "many striking examples are found which contradict the opinion of Varro concerning charts." Caylus, according to Guilandin, cites also many similar passages from the ancients: see *Diss. sur le Papyrus* in T. xxvi. *Memoirs of Academy of Inscriptions*. But even had the papyrus not been known thus early—there can be no question that many other materials for writing would have been used before stone or metal, which manifestly require, of all others, the most skill and labor. Every one must assent to the correctness of the following remark of the Count de Caylus. "It is clear that as soon as writing was found out, it was laid on every thing which could receive it. The substances have varied according to times and countries. It may, however, be affirmed, that the most common substances and the lightest for carriage claim the

preference in a thing so necessary." Accordingly we find on linen envelopes of the mummies, many of which are not less than 4,000 years old, painted inscriptions. Moreover, Pliny states that the Egyptians used the palm-leaf for writing, previously to the employment of papyrus. This was so abundant in Palestine, that the whole country was called *φοινίκη*, from *φοινίξ*, a palm-tree.*

But passing from the general question, respecting the materials for writing used by other nations, let us take a view of the subject so far as the Hebrews are concerned, and guided alone by their historical records. Our adversary has attempted to prove by these very records, that Moses knew of no other or better way of writing than by tracing characters upon plaster which had been spread over stone. A reference is made to Deuteronomy xxvii. 2, 3, "And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones and plaster them with plaster, and thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law," &c. Let us be sure that we understand this passage. Is it then certain that the plaster was spread over the surface of the stones, and while in a soft state made to receive certain

* I am aware that different derivations have been given by Bochart and L'Abbe Mignot.

characters? In opposition to this view, we might refer to the passage in Joshua viii. 30, 32, where an account is given of the execution of this command of Moses. No mention whatever is made of plaster—it is simply said, “and he wrote *there upon the stones* a copy of the law.” “Plastering the stones with plaster,” may then have been done with some other view than to fit them for receiving an inscription. It will be remembered that these stones were designed to form an altar. It was customary to erect, as memorials of particular events, and as altars, where offerings to God were to be made, piles of stone rudely put together. Moses may, therefore, in the passage under view, be understood as directing the Hebrews to bestow more than ordinary pains in the construction of their altar. Instead of piling the stones loosely together, they were required to “cement them with cement,” for thus we may render “plaster them with plaster.” According to another opinion, the writing was to be in *relievo*, and the spaces between the letters were filled up with mortar. Inscriptions in the East were frequently executed in this way. Dr. Clarke mentions, as in his possession, a large slab of basalt, on which there is an inscription in Persian, Arabic, and Tamul; in the two former, the letters are all raised—the Tamul is indented.

Michaelis supposes that Moses commanded that

his laws should be cut in the stones themselves, and then coated with a thick crust of lime, that the engraving might continue for many ages secure from all injuries from the weather and atmosphere, and then when by the decay of the covering it should, after hundreds or thousands of years, first come to light, serve to show to the latest posterity whether they had suffered any change. An instance somewhat analogous to this, is presented in the case of Sostratus, architect of the famous tower of Pharos, near Alexandria, who while he cut the name of the then king of Egypt in the outer coat of lime, took care to engrave his own name secretly in the stone below, in order that it might come to light in after times, when the plaster with the king's name should have fallen off. For a full and beautiful development of this theory, see Smith's *Michaelis*, vol. 1, 357, Art. 69, Sec. 1. Let us however grant that the proper meaning of the passage is, that Moses did direct the inscription to be traced in the plaster with which the stones were covered. We then inquire into the reason of this direction. Did it arise from his ignorance of any other or better mode of perpetuating his law? We have satisfactory evidence that it was not. The art of engraving upon stone and metal was well known and practised at that period. I shall not cite the instance of the tables of the law prepared at Sinai, lest our author should assume, without

evidence, that they too were covered with plaster. I would refer to the direction given in Ex. xxviii. 9, 11, "And thou shalt take two *onyx stones* and *grave* on them the names of the children of Israel—with the work of an engraver in stone, like the engraving upon a signet," &c. Again, Ex. xxxix. 30, "And they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote upon it, a writing like to the engraving of a signet, Holiness to the Lord." Who then can doubt that the Hebrews in the age of Moses understood the art of engraving on metal and wood. That suitable materials for committing to writing more extended works were also in use, is implied in many passages. Let it not be objected that these testimonies are from a book, the authority of which is not acknowledged by our adversaries. *It is to be remembered*, that we are not now considering the general historical question respecting the ancient materials for writing—but that we are rebutting the assertion, that *from the Pentateuch itself, it appears* that no other mode of writing was known than the tracing of characters upon soft plaster. In this view of the subject, the evidence against the assertion amounts to perfect demonstration.

Were we then unable to assign any reason why Moses chose this particular mode of preserving any portion of his law, it would avail the adversary nothing. Yet we may suggest an explanation of

the subject, furnished by the context and in accordance with the ideas developed in other passages. With the direction to build an altar, on the stones of which certain promises and threats were to be inscribed, there is joined the prohibition "thou shalt not lift up any iron tool thereon." In the account which is given in Joshua, of the execution of this command, it is recorded that an altar was built of whole stones, over which no man hath lifted any iron. And in Exodus xx. 25, we read the general declaration, "and if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone, for if thou lift up any tool upon it thou hast polluted it." We thus perceive a very manifest reason why an inscription on an altar was not *engraved*, which would have required the use of an iron tool, but traced in soft plaster, which might be done with a wooden instrument. In reference to the farther inquiry, respecting the intention of the general law above recited, we may accept the solution offered by the learned Spencer De Legibus,* "that stones unwrought and retaining their original and entire form, are endowed with a certain native purity, and therefore remarkably correspondent to the sanctity of an altar." He adds, that in the earlier ages it passed into a law, that most symbols and instruments of

* Hebræorum Ritualibus, Lib. ii. c. vi. Sec. 1.

divine worship should be rude and destitute of ornament.

I must here terminate the protracted consideration which we have given to the various difficulties which are supposed to attend the belief that the Pentateuch proceeded from the hand of Moses. An *attempt* has at least been made to answer the objections, which Dr. Cooper declares to have been hitherto unanswered. What degree of success has attended the effort, an intelligent community will determine.

SECTION XV.

OF all the objections to the genuineness of the Pentateuch, advanced in the pamphlet which has given occasion for the present remarks, it is believed that no one of any importance has escaped our consideration. There is indeed one assertion made, to which I have not yet adverted, which furnishes a striking example of what cannot be regarded as any other than wilful misrepresentation. It is said that at the dedication of the temple by Solomon, "*search was made for the ancient documents and records of the national religion; but there was nothing found in the ark, save the two*

tables of the law which Moses put there at Horeb." Now the latter fact is announced both in the book of Kings and that of Chronicles, but in vain may we look for any confirmation of the former. "Search was made for the ancient documents and records of the national religion!"

Where this is mentioned, I confess, I have been unable to discover. Here it may not be inappropriate to remark, that it was not *in the ark* that the book of the law might be expected to be found. It was not directed to be deposited within this receptacle, but to be laid up *beside it*.

I would now repeat the remark, that I am not aware of having omitted to consider any objection proposed in our author's pamphlet, although it has been through close attention and diligent and repeated perusal of it that I have been enabled to throw into any order the undigested mass of his reasons and exceptions.

In the outset of this investigation, it was proposed to examine the question respecting the authenticity, as well as that relating to the genuineness of the Pentateuch. For the present, at least, this must be omitted. The writer has found the subject grow under his hands, and he fears that he has already exhausted the public attention, even if he has been so fortunate as to gain it. There are several additional inducements to abstain from the farther prosecution of the subject. A reference

to the arguments which prove the *authenticity* of the early biblical records, is not uncommon in the religious publications of the day, and in consequence, information on this point is pretty generally diffused. Again, it is the question concerning the genuineness of the Pentateuch, which is principally and almost exclusively discussed by Dr. Cooper. Indeed this is the only point, on which, ostensibly, controversy exists, although throughout his work there are many indirect attacks upon facts recorded and the system of religion taught in the Bible.

To meet and repel the various exceptions to the subject matter of our sacred records, which are scattered throughout his tract, would require space equal to that which I have already occupied.

As respects, however, the connection between Geology and the Pentateuch, and the consistency of the records of revelation with the appearances of nature, that which furnishes to Dr. C. the title of his pamphlet, but which occupies a very small portion of it—it is sufficient that I refer the reader to an interesting essay of Professor Silliman, in the edition of Bakewell's *Geology*, issued in 1833. It is not the syllabus of his lectures, appended to a former edition of this work, but a distinct treatise, in which, without naming Dr. C., or at all adverting to his uncourteous attack, he meets all the geological difficulties of the latter.

But although our researches have stopped short

of their final result, we have attained a point of elevation whence we can clearly perceive the conclusion of our progress. Many important principles have been settled, many facts authenticated; the way is cleared up for our further advance. Enough has been accomplished, to show that the Pentateuch was written by Moses, and promulgated in the very age of its production. So far then as the credibility of an historian is established, by his being contemporary with the transactions which he describes, and thus able to obtain an acquaintance with them—we may confide in the Jewish records. An important consideration, auxiliary to this, is furnished by the fact of the historian's connection with the events which he describes. That he was well informed, no one can doubt; that his narration is true, we have this guaranty, that it was addressed to eye and ear witnesses, who would have lost all respect for a leader who endeavored to palm upon them fables for truth, who would relate a series of prodigies, as having come under their own observation, when no such things had occurred. For although national vanity might connive at false representations, designed to advance the glory of the Jewish people, or to exhibit them as the peculiar favorites of heaven; it would most assuredly have been outraged by an account of their disgraceful conduct in numerous instances. We may then regard the established

fact, that the Pentateuch was written for contemporaries and addressed to them, as carrying with it a strong proof of the authenticity of the record.

In connection with the truth of the history contained in the five books of Moses, it would be interesting to consider the question of the divine authority of the system of religion taught in them ; which would be established by a view of the miracles wrought in attestation of it ; the accurate prediction of events to occur in a remotely succeeding age, and by its sublime theology and pure morality, to which we shall in vain seek a parallel in the instance of any other nation, however renowned for its antiquity, its arts, or its literary and scientific cultivation.

But these are topics which however attractive, I do not think it advisable to introduce at the close of what has been a protracted, and I fear tedious discussion. Such it has necessarily been. The adversary has occupied a wide field. Many of his objections, although frivolous, could not be satisfactorily answered within a moderate space ; others rendered necessary investigations, in which the public generally will, it is probable, feel little interest. The whole inquiry may be neglected by many who will be influenced by various reasons. Some, feeling already satisfied with respect to the conclusion meant to be established, will not care to examine the process by which it is reached ;

others will shrink from the intellectual effort requisite for the comprehension of an argument, necessarily treating of recondite matters ; while many, not wishing to be convinced of the truth of religion, fondly cling to preconceived opinions.

But whatever attention his argument may excite, or whatever estimate may be made of its merits, the writer possesses the satisfaction of knowing, that his object has been to sustain what he deems important truth, that he has used no disingenuous arts of controversy, and advanced no statement which he did not believe to be true.

So far as the discussion has assumed a personal aspect, he is conscious of never having, without necessity, used a harsh expression ; although he regrets that a concern for the interests of truth, and a wish to guard against the evil influence exerted by a great name, has compelled him in a few instances to abandon that tone of courtesy which would otherwise have been preserved toward his antagonist, on account of his elevated station and advanced age, as well as in accordance with the ordinary proprieties of social intercourse.



A

S E R M O N

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF

REV. ROBERT MEANS,

OF FAIRFIELD DISTRICT, S. C.

PREACHED IN THE SALEM CHURCH, ON THE SECOND SABBATH IN JUNE, 1836,

BY GEORGE HOWE,

Professor of Biblical Literature in the Theological Seminary, at Columbia, S. C.



S E R M O N .

By C. Howe D.D.

2 KINGS ii. 12.

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.

THE character of the prophet Elijah is marked with the elements of strength and grandeur, more entirely than almost any other which is portrayed in the sacred volume. God caused his powerful mind and amiable heart to exist, at a period when his service required such talents ; and under his providence this mind, with all its affections, was so disciplined in a school of trials, that it was prepared for the noble part, which it was to perform. Elijah lived in a day when religion was depressed, and skeptical notions, of foreign origin, had been imported into the Jewish realm, and were enthroned in the high places of power and royalty. With Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, whom Ahab had married, was brought in the Phœnician worship, which was sustained by all the ingenuity

of that wicked queen, who affords to the reader of sacred history a lively illustration of the fatal power which can be wielded by one bad woman, placed in the centre of attraction and influence. Instigated by her, Ahab erected a temple and altar to Baal in Samaria his capital, and built a grove consecrated to his cruel rites, while she maintained a crowd of idolatrous priests as a part of the royal household, and sent them portions from her table.

Meanwhile the spirit of infidelity pervaded the community, and because they preferred to have it so, the evidences of revealed religion were obscured and hidden from the minds of the people, and consequently all that was corrupt among them acquired new power. At last, the popular mind became prepared for the formal overthrow of the true worship, as has been the case at a later day in the French nation ; and Ahab, prompted doubtless by his wife Jezebel, slew all the prophets of the Lord who did not escape by flight from the hand of violence. Amid a population of 4,000,000 of people, 7,000 only were reserved by God, who escaped the vigilant eyes of persecuting idolatry, and maintained the true religion, perhaps unknown to each other, refusing to bow the knee to Baal.

Elijah himself eluded the hatred of the king, and kept beyond the reach of his vengeance. But called at length from his seclusion by the irreligion of the times, he challenged the priests of Baal to a bold trial of the divine original of the two religions, on the mount of Carmel. He erected an altar, according to the account given in the Bible, and made the startling proposition that the God who answered by fire from heaven, should be acknowledged the God of the nation. I forbear to repeat the graphic history of this event. The result you know. The fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the

stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces : and they said, The Lord he is God ; the Lord he is God. The tide of popular feeling was then changed, and Elijah perceiving it, seized on the priests of Baal, who by introducing another worship, had committed what under the theocracy was the crime of treason ; and taking them to the brook Kishon, he slew them there.

The office of the prophet in the old dispensation, was different from that of the pastor in the Christian church. The prophet was the pastor not of a single congregation, but of the nation. He was the guardian of the theocracy, and stood as a watchman to see that the fundamental laws of that species of government were never violated. Such was the office of Elijah ; and he was blessed by God, and honored as the instrument of recovering the people from their apostasy to idols. He interested himself in founding schools of the prophets, where the youth were educated in religion and literature beneath his care. And after a life of unexampled usefulness, he was carried up in a whirlwind to heaven. He walked with God ; and he was not, for God took him. Elisha, his disciple, his assistant and successor in the prophetic schools, was with him at that moment. “ 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.” The same words were uttered by Joash, king of Israel, in reference to Elisha when he was about to depart. In the thirteenth chapter of 2d of Kings, the death of Elisha is thus narrated. “ Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died. And Joash the king came down unto

him, and wept over his face, and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof."

My father, my father, is the language in which a disciple was accustomed to address his instructor and guide. As used both by Elisha and Joash, it is the expression of grief and affection; a lament over the departure of a revered and beloved instructor. And the words "chariot of Israel, and horsemen thereof," are an encomium passed upon him. He was the defence and ornament of his country. Elisha asserts of Elijah, and again the same is said of Elisha by Joash, that he was the chariot and horsemen of Israel;—her defence and glory more truly than were her horsemen, and chariots, and munitions of war.

We are led then by the text to the sentiment, that the man of piety, especially when endued by God with talent, and placed by him in a commanding station, is the defence and ornament of his country.

1. My first reason for this remark is, that he who embraces religion with all his heart, is instrumental of propagating it.

It is one of the most prominent injunctions of revealed religion addressed to all its professors, that they should win their fellow men to embrace it. "Go ye, says the Saviour, and disciple all nations." And to the command thus given, a special promise in favor of him who obeys it, is subjoined as a motive to obedience. "Lo, I am with you alway to the end of the world." "He that obeyeth one of the least of these commandments and *teacheth* men so, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." He shall be highly honored in a state of future felicity, and in the church below. "They that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars and as the firmament forever." To make no efforts of this kind,

is in the Bible, even treated as a sin, and is attributed to the worst of motives. "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart : thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." If, too, the Christian believes himself in possession of a priceless treasure—a treasure which is but increased by impartation, and if he believes that others are to be ruined through eternity who possess it not ; should he be endued with but the common feeling of sympathy and benevolence, he will strive to diffuse his own principles around him, and to make others the partners of his joy.

And the quiet, *unintended* influence of the pious man over the community in which he lives, cannot but win a respect for the principles he professes, and, with the divine blessing, convey them to the bosoms of others. It is often said that familiarity with vice removes its hatefulness and makes us its votaries. And it is a declaration of the Scriptures, that "he who walketh with wise men shall be wise, while the companion of fools shall be destroyed." Through all the forming period of life, it is by the imitation and observation of others, that we acquire most of our knowledge ; and, with the majority of men, their views, principles, feelings, and characters are gained, not by the study of books but by contact with men. There are so many points of interest about each man's character, that they who know him well, love rather than abhor him. And sympathy, which binds us to each other, that responding of heart to heart, as face answereth to face in water ; that awakening of kindred emotions in other bosoms ; that transfer of our joys and griefs, our opinions, emotions, and prejudices, to others whom the ties of society, kindred or friendship have bound to us, causes all the lessons of wisdom or of folly which any man may teach, to be indelibly imprinted in the minds of others. How obvious then is it, that whatever goes to constitute piety, cannot be

confined to the one mind in which it resides ; that its influence must go forth from that mind as a centre, and spread itself more or less widely around it.

Thus, we have been affected, and our education has resulted from the influence which minds that have come into being before us, have exerted upon us ; and we ourselves, when we are born, enter into this immense world of intellectual being. We enter into it, to send around us on every side, whether we will or not, an incalculable influence over relative and connection, over neighbor and friend, and to draw in the course in which we move, other immortal spirits, to virtue and consideration or to infamy and degradation in this life, and in the next to glory or eternal shame.

So that no human being, man or woman, lives devoid of responsibility, even to our fellow men. None is so small that he has no centre of influence, though he may sigh and say, What can I do ? And who will regard me ? And he who shall diffuse the disease of bad example or bad principle, is no less an offender in the sight of God, and no less guilty of sin against man, than he who designedly poisons a spring which furnishes a city with water, or intentionally spreads abroad a mortal pestilence.

2. Now Christianity, which is but the perfection and completion of the Mosaic form of revealed religion, is a combination of moral influences more powerful and more salutary than man has yet conceived. What Christianity can do to elevate man and to give peace and prosperity to nations, will not be known till the day predicted in prophecy shall arrive, when her influence shall reign on the earth, and predominate in the cabinet of every government, in every hall of legislation, and in every mart of business, as well as in the social circle and by the domestic hearth. Moral principle is essential to every government. Even an army of soldiers is without

value if it is entirely wanting among them. They are miserable aids to be depended upon for the defence of their country. Virtue must prevail in the hall of legislation, must preside on the bench, must reign in every seat of power, must pervade the mass of the people, or a government of law can never be maintained. Do we not all know that revealed religion is the perfection of moral virtue, and that the sanctions by which she enforces it, are of inconceivable power. Finding a conscience in the nature of man, and some knowledge and sense of a present Deity and a day of retribution, she reveals to the mind of each individual his true place in the scale of being. She bids him look from these scenes of time down the interminable vale of endless years. She shows him himself existing through eternal duration, feeling at every step the retributions awarded by God to his behavior here. She lifts up his eye from his present employments, and present relations to society, and shows him that he is connected with a larger society than this, at the head of which is the great and awful Jehovah, fearful in his praises and his judgments, but clothed with kindness to his creatures. She presents with faithful friendship the unnoticed and slighted claims of a heavenly Father to man's gratitude, love, and veneration. She follows him to the pillow on which he lays his head after a day of toil, and reveals the Creator to the created; the friend to the befriended; the benefactor to the object of his benefaction; the king to his subject. She thus makes us tremble to do ill, and fills us with anxiety to pursue the path of virtue, and with a strong hand holds out her shield to protect society from harm. You are not aware how much of the peace and quiet you enjoy flow from the protecting power of that religion which many affect so much to despise, and would pluck from her dominion over the hearts of men. Your

dwelling is safe from the incendiary's torch, your property from depredation, your life from the hand of the highwayman; the peace of your domestic retreat from the ruffian who would invade it, not because man is by nature virtuous and true, but because revealed religion, the object of ridicule to the shallow-minded skeptic and the thoughtless youth, watches with incessant care to protect you, creating around you, around your country and her institutions, a rampart of impregnable defence. While a cradled infant she has defended you; amid the gambols of childhood, has been your guardian; has attempered the fiery heats of youth; has given sobriety and dignity to the years of manhood, and silvered the head of age with her celestial radiance.

This religion is treasured up in the hearts of men. They who embrace it are its representatives, its teachers, its epistles of commendation. Their influence therefore, while they live, ought to be highly prized, and their removal should be lamented. One attached to them by affinity or friendship, might well mourn over them and say, My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof. Especially should this be the case, if these individuals have occupied such a station as gave their example greater influence, and their efforts a wider sphere of operation. If they have themselves been conspicuous to the public eye, and been honored with the public approbation; and if from their elevation they have shone forth in blessing and radiant purity; if with their tongue, with their pen, or with their wealth, they have exerted themselves to promote the reign of truth and piety, the world can ill afford to lose them, the good may sigh over their ashes and say, "When the foundations are removed, what shall the righteous do."

But who occupies a more enviable post of usefulness than

the clergyman, the ambassador of God to man, the teacher of righteousness, the promoter of virtue, intelligence, and truth? I know our office has been despised. An affected and shallow philosophy has been industriously employed in sneering at our characters and services, and in loading us with contumely. But our appointment was from heaven, one of the gifts conferred upon men by the Saviour when he ascended. And like all his bestowments, it is rich in benefits to man. A genuine clergyman, filling the pastoral relation in the manner contemplated by our church and most other Protestant denominations, has a more favorable opportunity of promoting the best interests of man, than falls to the lot of more than a favored few of the human family. Such a man I suppose to be fully educated, of cultivated mind, refined feelings, and amiable deportment, as well as of ardent piety. None others should be invested with the sacred office. None others are competent to discharge *all* the duties which fall within the wide range of clerical labor.

1. He stands in a place which is suited to command some of the deeper feelings of human nature. He occupies this sacred spot on the holy day of religious rest, to plead the cause of God, to point to a coming judgment, to speak to the conscience in its deepest recesses, to present to your view the victim on Calvary, the Lamb provided by God for man's salvation, to recover you to a heavenly Father from whom you have revolted, and to show you that only while your obligations to him are acknowledged and observed, are you safe and happy. The sacredness of the Sabbath, of the sanctuary, and of the Bible, and the holy dignity of worshipping God, attach themselves in some measure to him.

2. The truths which he teaches are adapted to man's wants, and are most deeply interesting to the human heart. The holy character of God; the all pervading nature and

control of the divine Providence; our imbecility, dependence, and alienation from heaven; the descent, humiliation, atoning death, triumphant ascension, and universal reign of the Son of God; immortality beyond the tomb; the resurrection of the sleeping dead; the necessity to which we are all subject of standing in judgment before the tribunal of God; the never-ceasing joy of heaven, and the unending suffering of hell, are in their nature and their relations to us, more commanding, more thrilling, more expanding and ennobling to the mind, and of more universal interest, than any system of truths which could be selected from the wide compass of all those sciences and professions which occupy the thoughts and interest the feelings of man.*

3. He is connected with his flock by many interesting relations. He joins the youthful pair in holy wedlock; he unites the children to the church by the baptismal vow; he comforts in affliction and bereavement; he is at the bedside of sickness, and in the chamber of the dying. In all these varied situations he comes in contact with the mind in its seasons most favorable for impression, and is instrumental of leading it to that which will promote its purity and peace.

4. The clergyman of the present day, in all Christian countries, is the zealous promoter of science and learning. The charge has been brought by the skeptical and irreligious portion of our country against the clergy, that they engross the education of youth, and that nearly all the colleges in our land are under their influence. But the charge is one of the highest eulogiums upon the clergyman which can be

* The experiment of substituting another system of truths for those of revealed religion, was tried by the Theophilanthropists in France from A. D. 1796 to A. D. 1802. It proved an entire failure. See a history of this instructive experiment in the Abbé Baruelle's *History of Jacobinism*, and the *Histoire de Theophilanthropie* par M. Gregoire. Also, in Dr. Alexander's *Evidences*, Chap. ii.

pronounced. It is indeed true that most of our colleges have been founded and builded up by the efforts of men of this profession. This has been because they were the friends of knowledge and of intellectual culture. The religion they profess flourishes in light, and languishes in darkness. It is of itself one of the most powerful instruments of raising and enlarging the mind. And it obliges them to promote the best good of their countrymen in every possible way. They are bound to pour forth a flood of light upon the world. And if they have been oftener officers of college than other men, and have often been made trustees in these seminaries of learning, it has not been by their own election and management, but by the free voice of the public, which has called them to these offices of trust and honor. May we go on in the course which we have commenced. And if men of other professions will not move forward and provide for the intellectual culture of the forming generation and of those yet unborn, be assured the work will be done by the educated clergy of your country.

5. And the pen of the clergyman is perhaps oftener employed, and more successfully than that of other men, in impressing those truths which ennoble man and prepare him to live here and hereafter, piously, usefully, and happily.

It is the business of the clergyman to study these truths. And if he have genius and enterprise he will publish them to the world. And they will live on the pages his pen has traced, and will bless mankind when his voice no longer resounds in the earthly sanctuary. The clergy have written more than the men of other professions. And it is true that they have written many dull and prosing volumes. But they have written others which will live till the millennial day, and scatter blessings through all coming time. The power of mind over mind is incalculable, and is eternal. And no

where is this power more concentrated, and more sensibly asserted than in the life-giving productions of sanctified genius. As the blind Homer of other days hath enlightened and elevated the past generations; so shall some Christian Homer arise among those devoted to the service of God, who shall purify while he enlightens the generations yet to succeed us.

6. The clergyman is bound to promote all those associations formed for the moral renovation of man.

Societies for the education of youth for the ministry, for sending the living preacher to the heathen, for putting a Bible into the hand of every man on the face of the earth, in his own mother tongue; the giving of a written language to barbarous nations, and the forming among them of a pure and Christian literature; these and all the methods which modern philanthropy has devised for the renovation of the world, owe their origin to the direct or indirect influence of this despised profession. The world is to be renovated by the gospel of Christ, not by power, nor by might, nor by organization, management, or chicanery; but by the simple promulgation of its clear and powerful truths, in the ears of every man, in every clime. And the clergyman is bound to go out, personally or by his influence, into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

One of these servants of God and friends of his country has been called away from his mortal labors and mortal sufferings, and from this place, often occupied by him to impart to you instructions from the divine word, I would lead you to a remembrance of his worth, to a recollection of his labors for your good, and would invite you to view him as he stands in that higher temple above surrounded by purer worshippers.

He was born into this life of trials December 29, 1796, and into the bosom of a family, many of whose members I

now see around me and which has been permitted to enjoy each other's society more than has usually been allowed to other family circles. From childhood he was fond of study, and entering at an early age, he graduated at the South Carolina college in 1813, when he was but seventeen. His attention was first turned to the study of the law, which he pursued with Mr. John Hooker, of Columbia, during the year 1814, and part of 1815. But it was not the design of God that he should devote his energies to the profession for which he had thus prepared. Because of his minority he was not then admitted to the practice of the bar. And before the hour for his admission had arrived, he had directed his attention to other and higher objects. Early in 1816 his mind was awakened to an unwonted interest in religious things. Those little narratives of "The Dairyman's Daughter" and "The Young Cottager," in which the artless tale of the conflicts and deliverance of the child of God, is traced by the pen of genius, were the instruments God used in his case, as in many others, if not to awaken, at least to heighten that slumbering sense of obligation to God which lies dormant in the unsanctified heart. Might it not have been too that the instructions of a pious and honored mother were then remembered with unusual power and affection? For, mothers, you do not know when the seed sown by you will germinate. You do not know when the soil in which you deposit it will be mellowed by the genial showers, nor what ploughshare will admit to it the quickening beams of the Sun of righteousness.

As yet he made no profession of religion. But in May of the same year, 1816, God took from him his beloved mother, the protector of his childhood; a mother whom many of you honor as a pattern of piety. His attention was thus turned to the ministry as a sphere of effort. From the vale of affliction

tion in which God had placed him, as he lifted his eye to heaven, he heard a voice crying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" and with humility and self-abasement he replied, "Here am I, Lord, send me." In a diary, written at this time, he says—"As I have dedicated myself to God in the gospel of his Son, I will make it the ruling object of my exertions to obtain the qualifications for this office, and to exercise them in a fervent and faithful manner. May God enable me to do this for Christ's sake." He was licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of Harmony in 1818, and continued engaged in the labors of the ministry in Salem church, at Winnsboro', Camden, and Newbury, until January, 1824, when he received a call from Camden, and one from Columbia at nearly the same time. He accepted the call from Columbia and was pastor of the Presbyterian church in that place for three years, when the term for which he was called expired. He was again invited to the same pastoral relation, but chose to decline it, and returned to the bosom of his family, in these his old accustomed haunts, where the ashes of his kindred sleep. And this was his home, and this sanctuary was the scene of his labors, and you are the persons whom he sought to lead to the Saviour, and for whom he prayed until he faded away and disappeared from the abodes of men. You recollect him as his manly and noble form rose before you, his countenance beaming with benignity and glowing with health, and you remember him as emaciated with disease, the hectic on his cheek, his steps tottering and slow, he stood among you the shadow of what he was.

In 1826 he was violently attacked with an epidemic which laid the foundation for a decline of his health. This decline was gradual at first, and almost imperceptible until the last two years, during which it has been painfully evident that he

was sinking fast to an early tomb. He was cheerful and resigned amidst his accumulated sufferings, and as his bodily powers failed, his mental energies were strengthened and invigorated.

His disease affected one of his eyes, the sight of which, after intense suffering, was entirely destroyed. This was the severest affliction he had yet endured. Devoted to study as he was, and delighting more in converse with the mighty dead than with the living—though he loved the living too—the chief source of his pleasure was now removed. And with the joyous light of the sun his intellectual enjoyment fled away, and the darkness and gloom from without sunk with oppressive power over his heart. During the last autumn his health was greatly improved, and he returned with renewed avidity to his studies, and looked forward again with almost the enthusiasm of youth to a life of usefulness. He now removed to Columbia, partly that he might superintend the education of his children, and partly that he might enjoy the advantages afforded by the ampler libraries located there, as well as by the literary society of the place. He was a candidate for the professorship of Sacred Literature in the college of South Carolina, and would have been unanimously elected had not the Almighty willed it otherwise. On the night before his election was to take place, the sight of his remaining eye became affected. He bore up against this last, this heaviest blow. He retired to rest, hoping that sleep and the morning dawn would dissipate the mist that was gathering over him. The sun arose fresh and young as at his first creation. But he shone to our brother with diminished lustre. His full glories he never again beheld. Perceiving that his sight was growing more and more obscure, he that morning withdrew his name from the list of candidates for the expected professorship. He

saw in a moment that his hopes as a scholar were at an end, and that the sphere of effort he had greatly coveted was now unattainable forever. Gradually the light of day was wholly excluded, and before his frame finally sunk upon its dying couch, or the force of his mind was at all abated, blindness, total blindness, had made him insensible to aught but the voice, the touch, the memory of friendship. What a blow to the scholar ! The stroke which had descended was aimed with unerring truth at the centre of his joys, his hopes, his ardent aspirations. I could but make the case my own. I could but imagine how I should pray, if such an affliction were in prospect, " Father, if it be possible, let *this* cup pass from me." I could but think of Milton's pathetic lamentation over his blindness.

" Hail, holy Light, offspring of Heaven first born !
but thou

Revisitest not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn ;
So thick a drop serene hath quenched their orbs
Or dim suffusion veiled.

Thus with the year
Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of eve or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine ;
But cloud instead, and ever during dark
Surrounds me."

" This last sad affliction, which withered all his earthly hopes and prospects, he received without a murmur ; and although he submitted himself unreservedly into the hands of his Maker, life had lost all its charms, and death was stripped of his terrors. When asked on the commencement of that melancholy week, if the prayers of the church should be requested for him, his reply was, that he knew God would answer the still small voice of prayer which ascended

from his sick bed ; yet it was right to use all the means of grace, and for example's sake, and that it might comfort his mourning family, he desired it might be done. He seemed to feel as one on the confines of eternity, just between his friends on earth and those in heaven. And he said he had been thinking very much lately, of those beautiful lines in the 182d hymn—

‘ The saints on earth and all the dead,
But one communion make,
All join in Christ their living head,
And of his grace partake.’

“ He spoke sweetly and affectionately to all his children and his brothers, admonishing them to make God their friend, and he never would leave nor forsake them. He expressed his gratitude to God for placing him among such devoted friends. He gave his parting benediction to his eldest child, and said he had prayed for them all, ever since they were born, and hoped their heavenly Father would always bless and care for them, and keep them in the right way.

“ On the last sad day of his mortal existence, he complained of great weariness and restlessness, and requested his beloved wife to read the 22d Psalm, seeming to feel it as applicable to himself. The hymn,

‘ My God, my portion and my love,’

he felt very deeply, and as she read,

‘ Thanks to thy name for meaner things,
But they are not my God,’

he repeated the last line with great emphasis after her. He often exclaimed, ‘ *Poor man*, he’s crushed before the

moth ;' and 'out of the depths have I cried unto thee,' sometimes in Latin,* sometimes in English. Nearly his last words were 'Come, Lord Jesus, come,' and his wearied spirit took its flight to the regions of everlasting bliss, to enjoy the *rest* appointed for those who love and serve God."

Thus passed your pastor, your husband, your father, your brother, your friend, from this vale of sorrow to the land of peace. His sky was indeed overcast. His sun was clouded, but flashed its radiance upon us through the gloom as it descended. It hath set in darkness, but hath risen on another shore in undying splendor. He hath passed the wilderness of life, the Jordan of death, and all alarms. Henceforth he is to be visited with no more pain, nor sorrow ; his bosom hath heaved its last sigh, and God with his own kind hand, hath wiped away all tears from his eyes.

It is indeed mysterious, that one so qualified to be useful, at the early age of thirty-nine, just when he should have entered and was entering a wider field of effort, should be cut off in his career. But I cannot regard his course as finished. Even on earth, he, being dead, yet speaketh. His influence yet lives in the example of his many virtues, and in the instructions he gave. Nor has his pen been idle or useless. It performed while he lived, at an important juncture, a work acceptable to the friend of religion, and we trust, to his divine Master. His career has not terminated. He hath but passed from this, to another and more desirable province in Jehovah's dominions, where his cultivated, affectionate, judicious, and talented understanding, is yet to be found ; not in a state of lethargic ease, but in active and grateful happiness, serving with holier devotions, and higher

* De profundis clamavi ad te Domine : Domine exaudi vocem meam. Ps. cxxix. 1. Vulgate.

zeal, and wider usefulness, its great Creator. True it is then, that in such a bereavement, "'tis the survivor dies." But *he* is not lost. The survivor may yet find him, and be united with him forever. In that country—

"Where our friends, our kindred dwell,
And God our Saviour reigns,"

it is possible to meet him. The way thither is through the Saviour, Christ. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." Let me then, instead of eulogizing the virtues of your pastor, relative, and friend, commend to you his instructions and example. Let me beg you to reflect that it was for *your* sakes he left the profession he studied first, and assumed the office of the sacred ministry. Surely it was not for honor's sake that he assumed it. The path of honor lies in another direction. In the legal profession, the highest secular honors might, I may say, would have been his. It was not for wealth. What then was the motive but the best good of his race. And for whose good in particular, if not for yours, with whom his life was passed, and as whose pastor he died. He had found the Saviour, and, like Philip and John, he ran to seek his kindred, and to say, "I have found him of whom Moses and the prophets spake." Since there is no assignable motive which led him to the ministry but your good, does not a voice come to you from his honored grave; does not one arise out of the secret recesses of your own heart, and bid you for his sake, to seek the face of God your king?

In this day of hope, and before the opened door of mercy, I add my feeble testimony to his, and beseech you to trust in that Saviour in whom he trusted; in whom, as he said on his dying bed, he entirely confided, and in comparison with whom the world appeared mean and unworthy.

I sympathize with you, his beloved relatives and friends ; I sympathize with you, his bereaved church, and tender to you in behalf of my brethren in the ministry and of the churches of this Presbytery, our and their sympathy. Had he lived and been in health, to-day, on the return of his family to this place, he would have stood before you, the minister of the Lord. When asked, " Know ye not that the Lord hath taken your master from your head to-day ? " you are obliged to say, with the silence seeking grief of Elijah, " Yea, I know it, hold ye your peace." But while you exclaim with him, with grief and veneration, " My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof," let me beg you to remember the consolations of the Bible, that God hath there declared himself the father of the fatherless, and the widow's God and guide, and the unslumbering Shepherd of Israel. Rise then from the affliction which hath bowed you down, unto a holier confidence in God, and say, The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.

