

TEN
SERMONS,

BY

JAMES MUIR, D. D.

ALEXANDRIA:

PRINTED BY COTTOM AND STEWART.

.....
1812.

49.
18. 4.
495.



THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

SERMON I. *

MATTHEW XVI. 1, 2, 3.

"The Pharisees also, with the Sadducees, came, and, tempting, desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, IT WILL BE fair weather; for the sky is red: And in the morning, IT WILL BE foul weather to day; for the sky is red and lowring. O YE hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not DIS- CERN the signs of the times?"

WE learn from the preceding chapter, that "great multitudes came unto" Jesus, "having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and ma-

* This Sermon was delivered at the *Episcopal Church* on the 29th December, A. D. 1811, other

A 2

“ny others, and cast them down at Jesus feet, and he
 “healed them; insomuch that the multitude wondered,
 “when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be
 “whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and
 “they glorified the God of Israel.”

The Pharisees, having heard of these miracles, afraid, lest their influence over the people might be lost; with the Sadducees, although their rivals in all other instances, joined in this, to tarnish the rising glory of Jesus, and to crush his authority.... Tempting him, they “desired that he would shew them a sign from heaven.” A prophecy of Daniel which they did not understand, was the foundation of this desire, “I saw” says the prophet

Sermons in this selection, were delivered, some at *St. Paul's*, others at the *Methodist's Church*. A friendly disposition has been cultivated between these Churches and the Presbyterian for some years, by frequent communications among the Pastors, and by an occasional interchange of Pulpits. On some less essential points there is a variety of opinion but we agree to differ. Luther and Zuinglius saw some doctrines in different lights, but these differences did not alienate their minds, nor prevent them from uniting their force against the common enemy. Never were systems apparently more at variance than those advocated by *Wesley* and *Whitefield*, but *their hearts were one*, and each according to the light afforded him, laboured faithfully in the vineyard, during life, and laboured with success. A sharp contention set Paul and Barnabas for a time a-part: Brethren fall out by the way.

“ 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 be-
 “ fore 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 ever-
 “ lasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his
 “ kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” De-
 scend in the clouds for our relief, break the Roman
 yoke, spread thy conquests far and wide, then will we
 acknowledge that thou art Messiah the prince, and bow
 the knee before thee. They were in hopes of expo-
 sing him by this demand to universal contempt. Proofs
 sufficient were afforded that he was the promised Mes-
 siah. Their rejection of him arose neither from any
 defect in the evidence, nor any incapacity to judge of
 that evidence, but from an unbelieving rebellious heart.
 With this our Lord charged them in my text, “ *O ye*

The present, being a state of childhood, feuds, the
 offspring of ignorance and infirmity often prevail, but
 the more christians are sensible of their ignorance and
 infirmity, the less inclination will they have to contend.
 It is no uncommon thing to dispute for ground which
 both possess. They fight in the dark, and neither
 know for what they fight, nor with whom, When the
 matter is explained they are astonished how much
 nearer they approach than was imagined. They have
 been fiercely engaged in a *war of words*.

Ashamed of such folly we bear with one another.
 Believing *love* to be the *most excellent attainment* :
 we covet the attainment. The enemies of Christianity

“ hypocrites ! ye can discern the face of the sky ; but
 “ can ye not *discern* the signs of the times ? ”

Illustrating these words, I shall through Divine assistance inquire what were the signs of the times in the age referred to in my text ? and what in our age are the signs of the times ?

What were the signs of the times in the age referred to in my text ?

The Son of God appearing on earth in human nature gave visible manifestations of the character and perfection of the God-head. Is *omniscience* a Divine attribute ? Christ knew every thing, even the thoughts of men before they were expressed. He surprised Nathaniel mentioning some secret transaction with which Nathaniel alone could be acquainted, and

are formidable for their numbers, artifice and strength, we unite lest enemies may take advantage of our disunion ; we unite to oppose more effectually every attack : we unite, seeing neither honour nor safety in childish feuds. The bundle of rods, presented by the dying father, in the fable, to his children, which united no exertion could brake, but separated were easily broken, contain a wise lesson which we keep in mind, but especially our Lord's command, “ Love one another, as I have loved you. By this shall “ all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love “ one to another.”

told the woman of Samaria all that ever she had done. He knew the moment when Lazarus of Bethany died; and when a nobleman's son at Capernaum recovered from a mortal disorder, although then at a great distance from either Bethany or Capernaum. He directed Peter to a fish which supplied them with money to pay the demanded tribute; and the disciples where to throw their nets with success after they had toiled all night and caught nothing. When he needed an ass to ride on, or a room where to eat the passover, he sent his disciples to bring the one, and to make ready for him in the other, mentioning, for their direction in these services, circumstances, which no man could foresee, with a precision which awakes our astonishment. The treatment, which awaited him at Jerusalem, from friends and enemies; from countrymen and strangers; from hell and earth; was known and particularly foretold, even events, which the actors therein themselves, never thought of, arising from the occurrence of the moment, and vastly different from what might have been expected to have taken place. He looked far into futurity, and spoke of the hardships to which his disciples should be subjected; of the destruction of Jerusalem; of the triumph of the gospel; of the final destination of men, with the same minuteness, and certainty, as we do of things immediately before our eyes.

Is *omnipotence* a Divine attribute? Christ exercised boundless power, both in the works which he himself did; and which he enabled his disciples to do. Heaven, earth, and hell were at his command; every element and every intelligence, human or celestial, good or bad.

Is *goodness* a Divine attribute? and *wisdom*? That *goodness*, and that *wisdom* were displayed in the doctrines which he taught, and in every transaction of his whole life.

What Divine attribute did he not possess and bring fully in view during his tabernacling on earth? By giving eyes to those who had no eyes, and limbs where these members were wanting; by multiplying a little bread and a few fishes to a quantity sufficient to satisfy the appetites of thousands, and to leave fragments, when all were fully satisfied, far exceeding the original supply; by bringing to life those who had returned to the dust, and renewing organs which death had destroyed, *creative power* was convincingly exerted. By changing the course of nature in all its parts; for at his word, water became a delicious wine, and waves a solid body upon which he and his disciple could safely walk; the winds rose to a horrid tempest, or were hushed to a perfect calm; the sun was dark at mid-day, and the earth trembled to its deepest foundation.

in abhorrence of the crime of abandoned men, by whom he died; by over-ruling the will of men; deterring them from acts of violence before his hour came; or inclining them, without the least hesitation to forsake their friends, their employments, and all their prospects on earth when he required their attendance upon his person: In these acts behold the governor of the world and learn the efficacy with which he executes his government. Pronouncing men's sins forgiven, and assuring the dying penitent, "To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," he appeared to be the saviour of men, who saves them from their sins, and allots them mansions in the celestial world. By rising from the dead, and raising others who had been dead, men had a proof amounting to demonstration that he shall raise the dead and bring them to judgment.

Of the signs shown the Jews our Lord particularly speaks of "the sign of the prophet Jonas." Jonah, unwilling to denounce the judgments of God against Nineveh, fled from the service, but a violent storm punished his guilt, he sunk in the waves and was swallowed up by a great fish, but was kept alive until the third day, when he was thrown upon dry land, and his commission to repair to Nineveh renewed. This being known by the Ninevites was a confirmation of his being sent by God; it roused their fears and led them to repent. Events, attending Christ's death, also

confirmed his mission from God, so fully, that the Roman centurion was compelled to bear an unqualified testimony in his favour. "From the sixth hour there
" was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.
" And, about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud
" voice, saying Eli, Eli, lama, sabachthani? that is to
" say, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
" Some of them that stood there, when they heard
" *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias. And straight-
" way one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it
" with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to
" drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether
" Elias will come to save him."

" Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice,
" yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the vail of the
" temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom;
" and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, And the
" graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints
" which slept arose, And came out of the graves after
" his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and ap-
" peared unto many. Now, when the centurion, and
" they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the
" earthquake, and those things that were done, they
" feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of
" God."

Beside, he was declared to be the Son of God with

power, by his resurrection from the dead. Of this the Evangelist gives an impressive description. "Behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

Beside the earthquake, a dreadful tempest is supposed to have raged, indicating the presence of God, to rescue his son from the power of death. To this the words of the psalmist, in the nineteenth psalm, fully apply.

Christ, forty days after his resurrection, having ascended on high, and sat down on the mediatorial throne, gave a glorious display of his irresistible power in the destruction of Jerusalem, and in the alarming signs which introduced that event. Of these the Apostle Peter speaks, and in them behold a prophecy by Joel completely accomplished.

B

A flaming sword hung over the city Jerusalem, and a flaming comet for a whole year.

The temple shone at midnight with a brightness equal to that of day.

The gate of the temple which the united strength of numbers was necessary to open, opened of itself, when a voice was heard, "Let us depart."

The son of Ananias, whom no threatenings could intimidate, no punishment correct, ran through the city for seven years, without loss of strength, or any hoarseness, crying day and night, in a doleful tone, "Wo, wo! wo, to the city! Wo to the temple! *Wo to myself also,*" were his last words, when a stone from the Romans besieging the city put an end to his life.

Armies were seen contending in the air. There were terrible thunderings and lightnings; earthquakes in different places produced great destruction.

These signs were ominous of no common calamity to the enemies of Jesus. Josephus mentions these signs, and at large gives a narrative of the attending calamities. The truth of what he writes is attested by the emperor Titus himself.

The Jews, in consequence of occurrences so uncommon, were greatly agitated; the hearts of some failed with fear; but others convinced that He whom they had crucified was the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world, repenting, put their trust in him, and became calm in the midst of confusion; safe in the midst of death.

Is our day marked with nothing peculiar? Are there no signs which command attention? Yes, our day is strongly marked, there are signs which command attention. God is now shaking the nations..... Europe has been for many years deluged with blood; potent thrones have been upset; cities have been reduced to ashes; men by land and sea have encountered such calamities as the sword and disease, as the tempest and the flood can inflict! The power of winds is well known to those who go to sea: on land also, their power is sometimes displayed. God rides on the wings of the wind; sensible of his approach all gives way. It is the homage of nature prostrating before him. July, 1786, gave a display of powers able to crush the boldest offender. A violent hurricane, raised the roof of the Presbyterian church, and tossed it about like the lightest substance. A solid mass of wall was driven in, and in the fall a third of the galleries, *except*

the pillars, with all the pews below were shivered to pieces. When the elders of the church and others came to ascertain the damage, their astonishment and dejection were visible ; a judicious member, who had mingled with the crowd, after a moment's pause, cheerfully exclaimed, " Never mind, keep a good heart, all " will be well, *see the pillars are standing.*"

Our own beloved country, the assylum of the oppressed, and the assylum of religion, claims particular attention. We have not escaped the *vices*, nor in some measure the *judgments* which are abroad in the earth. *Principles* and *practices* the ruin of European countries, have, among us their *advocates* and imitators. We have been roused and agitated. A *malignant fever*, year after year, scourged our cities ; the fly and uncommon seasons have alarmed the cultivators of the earth ; *embarrassments* of various kinds, and from different quarters, have made it difficult for the mechanic, the merchant, and for those who go to sea, to procure that subsistence for themselves and families, which former years abundantly afforded. The first of November 1810, was *so dark* that candles were necessary at mid-day to do business. On the 7th of June last, a *hail storm* was destructive in a degree unknown before.

The following account of the Hail Storm extracted from the minutes of the committee of the Presbyterian Church, was drawn up with caution, and is far from exaggerating any circumstance.

The weather on the 7th of June, was cloudy with short intervals of sunshine extremely scorching. About five in the afternoon the sky was overcast; distant thunder was heard, and frequent flashes of lightning seen. A dark cloud rushed forward from the West changing to the North as it approached the town attended with the severest hail-storm ever witnessed by the oldest inhabitants, which, in a narrow vane, raged for fifteen minutes. The *hail*, or rather the lumps of ice, were of irregular shapes, having sharp points. They weighed several ounces, and in circumference exceeded four inches, although the size was diminished before they could be weighed or measured in consequence of the deluge of rain. They fell with irresistible force; trees were partly stript of their foliage, and of large branches; the shingles and slates of several houses were split:—many gardens were destroyed;—The waters of the river were splashed a foot or two upwards and all around;—The bird was killed in its flight, the cattle panic-struck run about seeking shelter:—several citizens were bruised;—Every house in town having windows to the North lost their

glass, which lay strewed on the floors, and *through* every street;—Our church has lost glass to the amount of near three hundred panes.

Seldom have we heard more *tremendous thunders*, fatal last summer, both to man and beast. The sun eclipsed overcast the mind with gloom. The grave yard, during the year, has multiplied its inhabitants, although no epidemic has prevailed. A *comet*, the dread of darker ages, and ominous in every age, has, for months past, attracted attention. The power of God, lately, awoke no common feeling. The earth shook to the terror of many, and the surprise of all.

The earth was sensibly felt to shake on the 16th of December 1811, at the hours of three in the morning, of six, and of eight, by the inhabitants of Alexandria. The same alarm on that day, and repeatedly since, from the same cause, was given to the inhabitants in a South and West direction. The Mississippi has been dreadfully shaken, its banks sinking; trees at the bottom thrown up, its channel in some places changed. The general effect produced was a giddiness of the head, and sickness, which many who had no idea of an earthquake ascribed to disorder of body. Bells were set a ringing; clocks were stopped, doors, windows, what was suspended from the ceiling of shops or stores moved violently, yet a dead

calm prevailed. Thieves were supposed to be in the house, or some person under the bed. Some ran out of doors, dreading the wreck of nature. Whilst washing, I heard a loud noise for which I could not account: at breakfast, an unusual sensation was felt in my head, my chair moved with an undulatory motion: of the same sensation, and the same motion, all at table were sensible. Many inhabitants of the town had the same sensations, and the vessels at the wharf were observed to be agitated as on a rough sea.

I put little confidence in dreams, which *are often* but vanity, the following, being connected with the present subject of discussion and leaving very serious impressions, cannot like others pass forgotten.

A young friend, of thirteen years old, the daughter of very worthy parents, gave this account of a dream, "I was at the street door with my uncle, when a neighbouring hill appeared on fire, from which issued a black smoke, which seemed to envelope the whole town in total darkness. I heard a voice, the voice of God, saying, *"I shake the earth, and do terrible things, Be prepared,* as he spake the earth trembled.—" The child awoke in consternation and could with difficulty be pacified. It left on her mind an awe of God and a desire to please

him. This happened during the night, and whilst attempting to pacify her, the earth shook very violently.

Even this week has not been unmarked. Tidings from Richmond appal the heart: the *Theatre*, crowded in an unusual manner, *took fire*, whereby many have lost their lives, or sustained great damage. Ah, what a death! and at what a time! We are kept in awful suspense. A revolutionary spirit has seized South America to her utmost extent. *War*, a scourge to be deprecated by all, threatens us, from a *subtle, savage, terrible enemy* on our frontier, and from a formidable foreign power. If we must suffer, let us fall into thy hands O God; not into the hands of men, more ferocious than the beasts of prey.

You are observant in other matters, "When it is evening ye say, *it will be fair weather*; for the sky is red: And in the morning, *it will be foul weather* to day; for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not *discern* the signs of the times?"

Great changes, both in the civil and religious state of society, have taken place in our day, and greater may yet be anticipated. The signs of the times indicate vast revolutions. Look back; what has been done

in former periods? When Jerusalem became inconsiderate and hypocritical, oppressive and prophane, our Lord put a final period to her civil and religious polity. Pagan Rome, besotted with her idolatries, and drunk with the blood of saints, was divested of authority, which was put into the hands of Christian princes. The empire retaining *the name*, but little of *the power* of Christianity, was left a prey to barbarous nations. A dismal darkness overspread the earth, and prevailed during several succeeding ages. Never did our Lord forsake the earth, nor for one moment quit the reins of universal government. One object was in view, to which all events are subservient, the establishment of a spiritual kingdom. This was expressly revealed, ages long past, to Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, and explained to that monarch by Daniel a Prophet of God, under the emblem of a stone cut without hands from the rock, which, by a gradual increase, attains a magnitude, which fills the whole earth.

The prospect at some periods is dismal. It is a winter's day. The sun, at a cheering moment breaks through intervening clouds, but during tedious hours he is hid. The sky is gloomy, and the air chilling; vegetation is interrupted, and the earth barren: no bird sings on the branch, no beast is sportive in the field; grass grows not for cattle, nor herb for the use

of man; a wide extended waste continually presents itself to the exploring eye. But at other periods, the scene is completely changed. The winter is over and gone, and the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come; and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree puts forth her green figs, and the vine with her tender grape gives a good smell. Such a period the prophecies of Scripture leads us to anticipate, when Christ shall appear in triumph, and grant all that his most devoted followers can desire.

To one prophecy, and to one only I claim your attention, but it is clear, interesting, and express. "I saw" says John, "an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon that old serpent which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither

"his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their
 "foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and
 "reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest
 "of the dead lived not again until the thousand years
 "were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. Bles-
 "sed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resur-
 "rection; on such the second death hath no power;
 "but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and
 "shall reign with him a thousand years."

Satan, bound with a great chain; cast into the abyss; his confinement secured by the seal of heaven, express the restraints, which, for a given time, prevent him from deceiving the nations. *Thrones and judgment* intimate a state of purity and triumph. Righteousness shall flow as a stream, and judgment as a mighty current. The resurrection of the martyrs is the circumstance which involves this passage in most difficulty. In John the Baptist, Elijah is said to be revived; nay, a spirit of wisdom, holiness and zeal animating a nation, is represented as a resurrection which restores to the earth, the wisdom, holiness and zeal of those by whom the earth in former ages had been benefitted. If a succession of witnesses animated by the same spirit be spoken of as the revival of the first who had been slain, why may not a race of men resembling the martyrs, in piety and firmness be characterised in the language here used? If men of no other spirit are then to be

found, what expression more proper than this, "*The rest of the dead lived not again?*" When all are distinguished for exalted piety, shall not *this earth* look like *heaven*; the *church militant* like the *church triumphant*; the *mortal* like the *immortal* state? Glorious shall be the success of the gospel. Christ shall receive the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. His spirit shall rest on nations, families and individuals. All shall resemble Christ and be happy in the resemblance. Wars shall cease, and men as brethren live in unity.

These prospects cannot deceive us, they are decreed, and shall be realized. The darkest moments precede the dawn of day. Such the darkness which now involves the earth, but symptoms of the dawn are evident. The nations disdain the fetters of ignorance and superstition. They are bursting from thralldom. Europe is throwing off chains rivetted for ages. Asia calls aloud, "Give us the scriptures." America is rousing from an indifference to Divine things. Many seek to know the truth, many advance; some to the threshold of religion; some have entered the sanctuary. The bible is more read; our churches are better attended; the table of the Lord has more guests than in former years. There is a growing distaste for folly, vanity and pleasure. From thence I derive hope. *That salt will preserve our land.* The period of trial

is come, but the fearers of the Lord multiplying, the period I hope will be shortened.

Do you love your country? Become righteous; righteousness exalteth a nation. Has freedom a thousand charms? Be thankful that you live in freedom. Be subject to the laws; be respectful to your rulers; be peaceful citizens. Rest not however contented with civil liberty; the tyranny of sin, is the worst of all tyrannies; throw it off. Seek the liberty where-with Christ makes you free. Fight under his banner. Your lusts and passions are deadly foes; make no peace with them; show them no pity; let them be resisted, brought under, and slain. Were these enemies slain, no enemy would remain on the earth. Men would find in men brethren, and be one in affection, having no contention but who should be most kind and useful. To restore men to God, and to one another, Christ has received the reins of Government. He approaches to overturn the throne of satan, and to fix his throne where satan has had his seat. Hail his approach; press forward and bend the knee; confess that he is Lord. Go forth prince of peace, conquering, and to conquer. Send thy Heralds to the east and west, to the north and south, and mark their progress with success.

C.

What has marred this world? What, blasting the verdure of Paradise, has turned it into a wilderness? What has planted thorns in our path, and scattered roots of bitterness so extensively pernicious? What else but the disbelief of God's testimony, the transgression of God's law, and the indulgence of sensual appetite. If you disbelieve God's testimony; if you transgress God's law; if you indulge sensual appetite, you are the troublers of mankind; the pests of society; the plagues of the world. One of two things shall most certainly take place; either a great change must be experienced in your sentiments and conduct, in your hearts and lives; or separated from the Israel of God, you shall be restrained under chains of darkness, from infecting the world with infidelity and irreligion, with debauchery and vice. Unless you *believe* you shall *perish*; unless you be *obedient*, *vengeance* shall fall upon you, *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord.... There is imminent danger; escape for your lives, The avenger of blood is at hand, get to a place of safety; there is wrath to come. Flee from it.

Would to God, your hearts were inclined to this; the period is near when multitudes shall be thus inclined; a nation shall be born in a day; a seed shall arise to serve Christ, his disciples and worshippers. Is such a period the object of desire? Study the

spirit and conduct which shall then prevail. It is a spirit of humility and self denial; of piety and usefulness; of mortification to this world and attachment to that world which is to come; the humble and self denied, the pious and useful, they who are mortified to this world, and attached to the world which is to come, enjoy the honors and happiness of those who shall live, to see the Gospel universally triumphant, and Christ in his greatest glory on earth.

Be assured your lives, your substance, your comfort are at his disposal:—shew your belief of this, living to his glory, honouring him with your substance, blessing him for the comforts which cheer your souls.

Trust not in the things of time :—The flood may sweep them away, the fire may consume them, the earth may swallow them up, they have wings and fly from you.

The God, who rules in heaven, and manages the affairs of men on earth, commands you to obey his Son. Let Angels worship him, let men receive his yoke and submit to his burden :—Then that sun may grow dark at noon day, the sun of righteousness will give you light; The storm may rage, and the tem-

pest be destructive, Christ is a cover from the storm, and a hiding place from the tempest ;—The earth may open wide her devouring jaws, you shall stand in peace, the Redeemer will snatch you from destruction. Be not afraid, ye friends of Jesus. “ Come, behold the
 “ works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made
 “ in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the
 “ end of the earth ; he braketh the bow, and cutteth
 “ the spear in sunder : he burneth the charriot in the
 “ fire. Be still and know that I am God ; I will be
 “ exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the
 “ earth. The LORD of hosts *is* with us ; the God of
 “ Jacob *is* our refuge.”

But men are not alarmed by the judgments of God, nor allured by his mercy. In the midst of danger, in the midst of death, they will persist in a thoughtless, unbelieving disobedient course. Earth, Earth, Earth hear the word of the Lord, “ vengeance is mine, *I* will repay.” It is fearful to fall into the hands of the living God. Air and earth, fire and water, Angels in heaven, men on earth, devils in hell, stand ready to avenge the cause of the Redeemer whom you forget, whom you disobey, whom you despise.

It is published every where, let all attend “ I have
 “ set my King upon my holy hill Zion. I will declare

“ the decree : The LORD hath said unto me, Thou
“ *art* my Son ; this day have I begotten thee. Ask
“ of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine in-
“ heretance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for*
“ thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod
“ of iron ; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a pot-
“ ters vessel. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings ;
“ be instructed ye judges of the earth. Serve the
“ LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss
“ the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish *from* the
“ way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Bles-
“ sed *are* all they that put their trust in him.”

Amen.

APPENDIX.

Dr. Buchanan, whose *writings* deserve deep attention, announces that *a light* hath appeared in *Arabia*, and *dawned even* on the Temple of Mecca itself.

“ Two Mahometans of Arabia, persons of consideration in their own country, have been lately converted to the Christian faith. One of them has already suffered martyrdom, and the other is now engaged in translating the Scriptures, and in concerting plans for the conversion of his countrymen. The name of the martyr was Abdallah; and the name of the other, who is now translating the Scriptures, is Sabat; or, as he is called since his Christian baptism, Nathaniel Sabat. Sabat resided in my house some time before I left India, and I had from his own mouth the chief part of the account which I shall now give to you. Some particulars I had from others. His conversion took place after the martyrdom of Abdallah, ‘to whose death he was consenting;’ and he related the circumstances to me with many tears.

“ Abdallah and Sabat were intimate friends, and being young men of family in Arabia, they agreed to travel together and to visit foreign countries. They were both zealous Mahometans. Sabat is son of

“ Ibrahim Sabat, a noble family of the line of Benī-
“ Sabat, who trace their pedigree to Mahomet. The
“ two friends left Arabia, after paying their adoration
“ at the tomb of their prophet at Mecca, and travel-
“ led through Persia, and thence to Cabul. Abdallah
“ was appointed to an office of state under Zemaun
“ Shah, King of Cabul ; and Sabat left him there, and
“ proceeded on a tour through Tartary.

“ While Abdallah remained at Cabul, he was con-
“ verted to the Christian faith by the perusal of a (Bi-
“ ble, as is supposed,) belonging to a Christian from
“ Armenia, then residing at Cabul. In the Mahome-
“ tan states, it is death for a man of rank to become a
“ Christian. Abdallah endeavoured for a time to con-
“ ceal his conversion, but finding it no longer possible,
“ he determined to flee to some of the Christian
“ churches near the Caspian Sea. He accordingly left
“ Cabul in disguise, and had gained the great city of
“ Bochara, in Tartary, when he was met in the streets
“ of that city by his friend Sabat, who immediately re-
“ cognized him. Sabat had heard of his conversion
“ and flight, and was filled with indignation at his con-
“ duct. Abdallah knew his danger, and threw himself
“ at the feet of Sabat. He confessed that he was a
“ Christian, and implored him, by the sacred tie of
“ their former friendship, to let him escape with his
“ life. ‘ But Sir,’ said Sabat, when relating the story

“himself, ‘I *had no pity*. I caused my servants
“to seize him, and I delivered him up to Morad Shah,
“King of Bochara.’ He was sentenced to die, and a
“herald went through the city of Bochara, announcing
“the time of his execution. An immense multitude
“attended, and the chief men of the city. I also
“went and stood near to Abdallah. He was offered
“his life, if he would abjure Christ, the executioner
“standing by him with his sword in his hand. ‘No,’
“said he, (as if the proposition were impossible to be
“complied with) ‘I cannot abjure Christ.’ Then one
“of his hands was cut off at the wrist. He stood firm,
“his arm hanging by his side with but little motion.
“A physician, by desire of the king offered to heal the
“wound if he would recant. He made no answer but
“looked up steadfastly towards heaven, like Stephen
“the first martyr, his eyes streaming with tears. He
“did not look with anger towards *me*. He looked at
“me, but it was benignly, and with the countenance of
“forgiveness. His other hand was then cut off.
“‘But, Sir,’ said Sabat, in his imperfect English, ‘he
“never *changed*, he never *changed*. And when he
“bowed his head to receive the blow of death, all Bo-
“chara seemed to say, ‘What new thing is this?’”

“Sabat had indulged the hope that Abdallah would
“have recanted when he was offered his life; but

“ when he saw that his friend was dead, he resigned
 “ himself to grief and remorse. He travelled from
 “ place to place, seeking rest and finding none. At
 “ last he thought that he would visit India. He ac-
 “ cordingly came to Madras about five years ago. Soon
 “ after his arrival, he was appointed by the English
 “ government a Mufti, or expounder of Mahometan
 “ law; his great learning, and respectable station in
 “ his own country, rendering him eminently qualified
 “ for that office. And now the period of his own con-
 “ version drew near. While he was at Visagapatam,
 “ in the Northern Circars, exercising his professional
 “ duties, Providence brought in his way a New Testa-
 “ ment in Arabic. He read it with deep thought, the
 “ Koran lying before him. He compared them toge-
 “ ther, and at length the truth of the word of God fell
 “ on his mind, as he expressed it, like a flood of light.
 “ Soon afterwards he proceeded to Madras, a journey
 “ of 300 miles, to seek Christian baptism; and having
 “ made a public confession of his faith, he was baptised
 “ by the Rev. Dr. Kerr, in the English Church at that
 “ place, by the name of Nathaniel, in the twenty-seventh
 “ year of his age.

“ Being now desirous to devote his future life to
 “ the glory of God, he resigned his secular employ,
 “ and came by invitation to Bengal, where he is now

engaged in translating the Scriptures into the Persian language. This work hath not hitherto been executed for want of a translator of sufficient ability. The Persian is an important language in the East, being the general language of Western Asia, particularly among the higher classes, and is understood from Calcutta to Damascus. But the great work which occupies the attention of his noble Arabian, is the promulgation of the Gospel among his own countrymen; and from the present fluctuations of religious opinion in Arabia, he is sanguine in his hopes of success. His first work is entitled, (*Nema Besharatil lil Arabi*), '*Happty News for Arabia*;' written in the Nabutte, or common dialect of the country. It contains an elegant and argumentative elucidation of the truth of the Gospel, with copious authorities admitted by the Mahometans themselves, and particularly by the Wahabians. And prefixed to it, is an account of the conversion of the author, and an appeal to the members of his well known family in Arabia, for the truth of the facts.

The following circumstance in the history of Sabat, ought not to have been omitted. When his family in Arabia had heard that he had followed the example of Abdallah, and become a Christian, they dispatched his brother to India, (a voyage of two months,) to assassinate him. While Sabat was sit-

“ting in his house at Visagapatam, his brother present-
 “ed himself in the disguise of a Faqueer, or beggar,
 “having a dagger concealed under his mantle. He
 “rushed on Sabat and wounded him. But Sabat seiz-
 “ed his arm, and his servants came to his assistance.
 “He then recognized his brother. The assassin would
 “have become the victim of public justice, but Sabat
 “interceded for his brother, and sent him home in
 “peace, with letters and presents to his mother’s house
 “in Arabia.

“And these, my brethren, are the instances I wish-
 “ed to lay before you, of the divine power of the
 “Christian religion recently exemplified in the East.
 “The conversion of Abdallah and Sabat seem to have
 “been as evidently produced by the Spirit of God, as
 “any conversion in the primitive church. Other in-
 “stances have occurred in Arabia of a similar kind,
 “and on the very borders of Palestine itself. These
 “are like the solitary notices which in other nations,
 “have announced the approach of general illumination.
 “John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, were not, per-
 “haps, more talked of in Europe, than Abdallah and
 “Sabat are at this day, in Bochara and Arabia.”



REPENTANCE,

OR

RICHMOND IN TEARS.



REPENTANCE,

OR

RICHMOND IN TEARS.

SERMON II.

LUKE XIII. 5,

“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish!”

“I am come” said our Lord “to send fire on the earth: and what will I if it be already kindled: But I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

It was foreseen and expressly foretold, that the inveteracy against the gospel, symptoms of which already appeared should break the ties of nature and friendship, and expose, to the greatest affliction, those who believed in Christ. But let the Jews beware of a perverseness which, in their experience, shall be found fatal in the highest degree. "When thou goest with
" thine adversary to the magistrate, *as thou art* in the
" way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered
" from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the
" judge, deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast
" thee into prison. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart,
" thence till thou hast paid the very last mite."

"There were present at that season," when these awful admonitions were given, "some that told him
" of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with
" their sacrifices." Gamaliel, a member of the Jewish Sanhedrim, had, sometime before, stated to that body, the case of Judas of Galilee, who, in the days of the taxing, drew much people after him, he perished; and all, even as many as obeyed him, were destroyed. Was not that the event spoken of in my text?—Believing that God was the only sovereign of Judea, These Galileans would not submit to the Roman power, nor pay tribute to Caesar. Worshipping at one of their Festivals, they took that opportunity when

the nation were collected in one place, to inculcate their obnoxious tenets, of which, Pilate, being informed, came upon them suddenly, and slew many of them, even in the Temple itself. This act of Pilate was now mentioned, probably with a view to insnare our Lord, who of necessity would incur much displeasure, whether the act was justified or condemned; but with his usual wisdom, he avoided the snare, leading his hearers, without deciding on one side or another, to improve this awful providence for their own benefit. "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

We cannot, at present, decide on the conduct of providence, since one event befalleth the righteous and the wicked, and in temporal calamities, the good and bad are equally involved. Of this, the calamity at Siloam, which without any human interposition, proceeded immediately from the hand of God, and, arresting numbers in the act of purification, overwhelmed them in destruction, was a more evident instance. Terrible was their fate whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices; and *their's* who were crushed, in a moment, as a moth, by the fall of the Tower of Siloam;—but let none impute aggravated offence to

the unhappy sufferers,—were these sinners above all others?—Pilate supposed they were, for no other supposition could justify his cruel act;—The pharisees supposed they were, for they were always ready to vilify others, and to boast of themselves—From the decision of Pilate, and of the Pharisees, I appeal to a higher authority. Let the head of the church, our great teacher decide, his decision is express, which he repeats once and again, “*I tell you Nay;*” and then adds the admonition in my text, which can never be forgotten, nor fail deeply to impress every soul,

“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

Repentance is required of *all* and *each* of the human race, otherwise their ruin is inevitable.

But what is repentance? What does it *suppose*? In what does it *consist*? How is it *effected*?

Repentance supposeth a law by which we are bound, and a power to which we are accountable. Was there no law there could be no transgression; was there no restraining power, following the desires and imaginations of our own hearts could be attended with no blame. Are we creatures? Of consequence we are subject to the creator: Has he impressed some laws

on the mind, and published others at different times, and with different degrees of evidence? both are obligatory, and imply punishment or reward, as they are neglected or observed. On this subject the Apostle Paul speaks with great clearness. All men are accountable to God; but allowances shall be made. You enjoy the advantages which the Gospel affords; He never heard the Gospel, each shall be judged according to his advantages.

“ There is no respect of persons with God. For as
 “ many as have sinned without law, shall also perish
 “ without law; and as many as have sinned in the law,
 “ shall be judged by the law. (For not the hearers of
 “ the law are just before God, but the doers of the
 “ law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which
 “ have not the law, do by nature the things contained
 “ in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto
 “ themselves: Which shew the work of the law written
 “ in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness,
 “ and *their* thoughts the mean while accusing, or
 “ else excusing, one another.) In the day when God
 “ shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according
 “ to my Gospel.”

None are destitute of some rule of life; it may be more, or less explicit, but so far as it goes it is binding.

and the regard payed to it shall be brought to a strict, solemn, and public review. Repentance supposeth the neglect of this rule; conduct has not come up to it; it has been the most opposite in the world. Such neglect, such opposition is chargeable upon each of the human race, "The imagination of *man's heart* is evil from his youth. If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us." The Apostle Paul has proved Jew and Gentile to be under sin, all the world are guilty before God, "for all have sinned."

In what does repentance consist? It consists in the renovation of our nature, beginning at the heart, and reaching to the conduct. If the evil ever be corrected, trace it to its source. Let the root of bitterness be plucked up. Let there be an entire change in the conduct, and in the principle whence conduct proceeds. John the Baptist speaks of "fruits meet for repentance;" assuring the Jews, "The axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." He called aloud, "Repent ye." The call was repeated by our Lord, and by all his Apostles, "The times of ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he

“ will judge the world in righteousness, by *that* man
 “ whom he hath ordained ; *whereof* he hath given as-
 “ surance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from
 “ the dead.” Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die ? As
 I live sayeth the Lord, “ I have no delight in the death
 “ of them who die, but would rather that they return
 “ unto me, and live.”

But, how is repentance effected ? By the mere ex-
 ertion of the individual himself ? No, “ Can the Ethi-
 “ opian change his skin, or the leopard his spots ?
 “ Then may” he “ also do good, who has been accua-
 “ tomed to do evil.” By the utmost effort of those
 who seek their welfare ? No, often they labour in vain,
 bitterly lamenting, “ who hath believed our report,
 “ and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed ? All
 “ day long have I stretched forth my hands unto a dis-
 “ obedient and gain saying people.” By the minis-
 tration of the Gospel faithfully executed, and wisely
 varied ? Ah ! in repeated instances, these make no im-
 pression, or if an impression be made, it is not lasting.
 The Jews received little benefit from the ministry, ei-
 ther of Jesus, or of his Apostles. A great proportion
 of the nation, growing worse, by the very means in-
 tended for their reformation, ripened fast for certain
 destruction.

It is not denied that the effort of the individual himself, and the preaching of the word, have in many instances been very effectual, but only in consequence of energy from on high. The head of the church bestows, and grace for grace; he rouses the sluggish; he blesses the faithful; moving the waters of the sanctuary, he gives them a healing virtue.

When David fell, how did David expect to rise? By the spirit of God renewing and sanctifying his soul. How was Israel recovered from practices, which drew down the judgments of God? They were recovered by the power of God. He announced, by the Prophet, his gracious design, which he executed to the recovery of Israel, and the admiration of the whole earth.

"Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye
 "shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all
 "your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will
 "I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you;
 "and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh,
 "and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put
 "my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my
 "statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do
 "them."

What are the works for which ancient prophecies celebrate so much the expected Messiah? In works of

grace and mercy shall he abound; he shall be "like a refiner's fire, and like the fuller's soap; he shall purify the sins of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness—pleasant unto the Lord as in the days of old, and as in former years. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; he came to seek and to save that which was lost."

Christ's power over men's bodies to strengthen, to perfect, and to heal, the weak, the maimed, and the diseased, was an emblem of a more wonderful power over their minds. Stretch out the withered hand; take up thy bed and walk; arise; was his command, and such efficacy attended the command, that weakness infirmity and disease immediately fled; obedience before was impossible, now it was easy; the hindrance was removed, and the afflicted were astonished to find themselves healthful and vigorous, in possession of perfect and robust constitutions.

Remember now thy creator; be sober minded; keep thy commandments—these, and similar exhortations, when addressed to the giddy, the dissipated, and the disobedient, are not more likely to be listened unto, nor executed than in cases of natural incapacity; habits are very obstinate; especially vicious habits; they are a

second nature; but the word of Jesus is a word of power; it is life and energy; the man is roused and animated; he shakes off every fetter; he breaks through every hinderance; he runs in the way of God's commandments. *He* speaks who once said let there be light and there was light. Peace be still, and the winds and the waves were calm. The effect is immediate and irresistible. Matthew the publican was thereby disengaged from a ruinous attachment to the world. The woman of Samaria was brought to hold her former dissipation in abhorrence. Mary Magdalene was set at liberty from a long and a degrading captivity to sin and satan.

But is Jesus still pleased to exercise his astonishing power for the benefit of man? Do sinners still hear his voice, rendering them, thoughtful, resolute and obedient? Yes, he is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance; to open men's eyes;—To turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God. This power he exerts, sometimes in a secret; sometimes in an open manner. Any means he can render effectual; It may be the man's own reflection;—It may be the ordinary course of Providence;—It may be the preaching of the word. No mean, however inconsiderable, but is sufficient, if he give it efficacy, and the most likely, without this efficacy can produce no abiding effect.

The reverend *Thomas Scott*, although ministering at the altar, was long in darkness which the light could not penetrate. He was inclined to examine ; one prejudice gave way after another ; he was gradually enlightened ; and is now one of the brightest luminaries in the church. It is impossible to read his book on "the force of Truth," and not acknowledge the rebellion of the natural heart ; and not adore the astonishing power which reduces the rebel, and lays him in the dust.

A tedious sickness chastened the mind of *Rochester*, and disposed him for sober thought. But his own reflection, aided by the experience, counsel and solid reasoning of able and pious divines could not convince him of the truth and excellence of the gospel. His judgment yielded ; but the enmity of his heart was not moved. What men could not do, God did ; it was his work ; and his glory he will not give to another. *Rochester repented*, but that repentance was *given him*, of which, we are assured from his own lips. The fifty third chapter of the prophecy of *Isaiah* was read in his hearing. "He felt an inward force as he heard it read, " which did so enlighten his mind and convince him, that " he could resist it no longer ; for the words had authority which did shoot like rays or beams in his mind ; so " that he was not only convinced by the reasonings he

E

“ had about it which satisfied his understanding, but
 “ by a power which did so effectually constrain him,
 “ that he did ever after as firmly believe in his Saviour
 “ as if he had seen him in the clouds.” He told Dr.
 Burnet that after this he had received the sacrament
 with great satisfaction ;—that he had overcome all his
 “ resentments to all the world, so that he bore ill-will
 “ to no person, nor hated any upon personal accounts.
 “ He had given a true state of his debts, and had or-
 “ dered to pay them all, as far as his estate, that was
 “ not settled, could go ; and was confident that, if all
 “ that was owing to him were paid to his executors,
 “ his creditors would be all satisfied. He said, he found
 “ his mind now possessed with another sense of things
 “ than ever he had formerly. He did not repine under
 “ all his pain ; and, in one of the sharpest fits he was
 “ under while I was with him, he said, he did will-
 “ ingly submit ; and, looking up to heaven, said, ‘ God’s
 “ holy will be done : I bless him for all he does to
 “ me.’ He professed, he was contented either to die
 “ or live, as should please God ; and, though it was a
 “ foolish thing for a man to pretend to choose whether
 “ he would die or live, yet he wished rather to die.”
 Dr. Burnet having understood all these things from
 him, and being pressed to give him his opinion plainly
 about his eternal state, “ told him, that, though the
 “ promises of the gospel did all depend upon a real

"change of heart and life, as the indispensable con-
 "dition upon which they were made; and that it was
 "scarcely possible to know certainly whether our
 "hearts are changed, unless it appeared in our lives;
 "and the repentance of most dying men being like the
 "howlings of condemned prisoners for pardon, which
 "flowed from no sense of their crimes, but from the
 "horror of approaching death, there was little reason
 "to encourage any to hope much from such sorrow-
 "ing; yet, certainly, if the mind of a sinner, even on a
 "death-bed, be truly renewed and turned to God, so
 "great is his mercy, that he will receive him even in
 "that extremity. He said, he was sure his mind was
 "entirely turned; and, though horror had given him
 "his first awaking, yet that was now grown up into a
 "settled faith and conversion."

Colonel James Gardener, having spent an evening in
 gay company, had an unhappy assignation with a mar-
 ried woman, whom he was to attend exactly at twelve;
 to kill a tedious hour, he carelessly took up a book,
 which his mother, without his knowledge, had put into
 his portmanteau. It was a religious book; "an unu-
 "sual blaze of light fell upon the book while he was
 "reading, which he at first imagined might happen
 "by some accident in the candle. But lifting up his
 "eyes, he apprehended, to his extreme amasement,

“ that there was before him, as it were suspended in
“ the air, a visible representation of the Lord Jesus
“ Christ upon the cross, surrounded on all sides with
“ a glory ; and was impressed, as if a voice, or some-
“ thing equivalent to a voice, had come to him, to this
“ effect, (for he was not confident as to the words),
“ ‘ Oh sinner ! did I suffer this for thee, and are these
“ thy returns ?’ He never once recollected the detes-
table assignation which the moment before engrossed
all his thoughts. He appeared the vilest monster in
the creation of God, who had all his life time, by his
sins, been crucifying Christ afresh. He abhorred him-
self and repented in dust and ashes. Not so much his
fear of hell, as his humble gratitude to the Saviour of
the world agonized his soul. This was a new æra in
his life : The joyful day when a son was born to
God : when the captive was set at liberty ; and the
heir of hell became an heir of God. Dr. Doddridge
speaking of this event, says,—“ I have known those of
“ distinguished genius, polite manners, and great ex-
“ perience in human affairs, who after having outgrown
“ all the impressions of a religious education, after hav-
“ ing been hardened, rather than subdued, by the most
“ singular mercies, even various, repeated, and asto-
“ nishing deliverances, which have appeared to them-
“ selves no less than miraculous ; after having lived
“ for years without God in the world, notoriously cor-

"rupt themselves, and labouring to the utmost to corrupt others, have been stopt on a sudden in the full career of their sin, and have felt such rays of the divine presence, and of redeeming love, darting in upon their minds, almost like lightning from heaven, as have at once roused, overpowered and transformed them; so that they have come out of their secret chamber, with an irreconcilable enmity to those vices to which, when they entered them, they were the tamest and most abandoned slaves; and have appeared from that very hour the votaries, the patrons, the champions of religion; and after a course of the most resolute attachment to it, in spite of all the reasonings or the railleries, the importunities or the reproaches of its enemies, they have continued to this day some of its brightest ornaments: A change which I behold with equal wonder and delight, and which, if a nation should join in deriding it, I would read as the finger of God."

"Except ye repent ye shall *likewise perish.*" Your ruin shall be *sudden, total and irreparable.*

Let it be remembered, wherein the particular danger of sin consists. Sin renders men odious to God, and liable to punishment: in consequence of the first the sinner is, in scripture, spoken of as *vile, as polluted;*

unclean; in consequence of the second, he is threatened with *stripes*, with *anguish*, with a *worm that dieth not*, and with a *fire that is not quenched*. A conscience, not yet seared as with a hot iron, is anxious and pained when overtaken in a fault, much more after every deliberate act of disobedience; a full proof that sin tends to *effect* our *misery* and *ruin*. How far repentance alone, would have availed, without any other interposition, I pretend not to examine, but believe, from the truths already established, that an instance of repentance as it has now been explained, in such circumstances, could never have occurred. Certain it is, that the scripture every where ascribes man's deliverance from the pollution, the tyranny, and punishment of sin to Christ's death. Renovation of nature is necessary to fit us for enjoying communion with God; and the death of Christ, to secure the honour of the Divine law whilst the guilty are received into favour. With neither will God dispense. Unless you believe, you cannot be justified; unless you become holy, you can have no fellowship with God. Evangelical repentance always supposes, such views as render sin detestable to the soul—as excite hope—as lead to obedience. He who believes, he who hopes, he who is obedient, exercises that repentance which the Gospel demands, and in consequence thereof, on the principles found in scripture, is no longer odious to God: no longer is he exposed to punishment.

No doctrine is more fully taught in scripture, nor illustrated with such a variety of expression, as this; that Christ's blood was shed for the remission of sin; but this doctrine was never meant to set men at their ease whilst they roll sin as a sweet morsel under their tongues. Such men *abuse* this astonishing dispensation for the recovery of a lost world; they are blind; they forget that they have been purged from their old sins: to these enemies of the cross of Christ, we speak no comfort; we afford no hope; we pronounce no pardon. But let faith in Christ withdraw the heart from the love and practice of sin; let it produce trust in God; let it excite hope of mercy. The Gospel will then be found, a dispensation the most consolatory and efficacious; it speaks peace to their souls; it promises pardon; for their sanctification they receive the holy spirit; for their encouragement the hope of immortality.

“Except ye repent, ye shall *all* perish.”

In the doctrine of repentance, men of every age, of every nation, of every character are immediately concerned; from the Jews, whom our Lord addressed on this occasion, to the assembly collected in this house; nay, were all now living in the world gathered together; had I the voice of the arch-angel, which shall rouse the dead, and reach from pole to pole, I should

preach repentance *to them all* in the name of Jesus, and the remission of sin. The commission, under which the ministers of the Gospel act, is unlimited. They can exclude none of whatever nation or colour; of whatever parentage or rank: of whatever endowment or occupation. Fidelity to their Lord compells them to assure all in general, and each in particular, that Jesus, when they submit to him, is ready to exert his power to regenerate their souls; to shew his mercy, pronouncing their sins forgiven. Cheerfully I repeat the assurance for the direction and comfort of all who now hear me; no circumstance of guilt or folly can be any hinderance. Come this day to Christ, contemptible for your folly, exposed by your guilt, you will find him, as willing as when he was on earth, to save from sin; and as mighty as ever to save to the uttermost.

God, now in his word, calls you to repent; lately he called you in his providence: you have heard of a multitude being consumed in flames. No apprehension of danger, and no warning. Like Christ's future coming, it was sudden and unexpected; his coming was *unknown*, until he had come. To this, and to similar events, the words of Christ well apply. "As the lightning, that lightneth out of the one *part* under heaven, shineth unto the other *part* under hea-

“ven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day. But
 “first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of
 “this generation. And as it was in the days of Noc,
 “so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man.—
 “They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they
 “were given in marriage, until the day that Noe en-
 “tered the ark; and the flood came, and destroyed
 “them all. Likewise also, as it was in the days of
 “Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they
 “sold, they planted, they builded: But the same day
 “that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brim-
 “stone from heaven, and destroyed *them* all. Even
 “thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man shall
 “be revealed.”

Leave the sufferers with a merciful Creator; you
 are forbidden to pronounce their doom: “Shall not
 “the judge of all the earth do right?”

Sympathise with the survivors whose hearts bleed:
 they mourn, let us mourn; but mourn not as those
 who have no hope. Where is the presumptuous man
 who dares to set limits to the mercies of God? They
 have no limit; they exceed even our conception:
 from this thought, and from this alone, can any of us
 derive hope.

They have *suffered* ! but why ? Because they were greater sinners than others ? Were the Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices ; were the Jews who, in an instant, were crushed to death by the fall of the tower of Siloam, sinners above all the Galileans, and all the Jews ? Our Saviour tells us Nay : His decision in this instance, applies to all others of a similar nature.

They have suffered, *that we may be warned by their sufferings*. If after such warning, any of you persist to lead unprofitable, careless, dissipated lives ; and thus to murder the few days which God has given you on earth, to prepare for heaven, you must be speechless when you stand before his bar, not having one single excuse to offer for your conduct.

The language of so awful a Providence is, I come quickly, prepare for my coming. Be not anxious for possessions which the fire may consume ; live not in pleasures which any moment may embitter ; engage in no pursuit, allow yourselves in no indulgence which would unfit you for appearing at the bar of God, and hearing, with calmness, from his mouth, your inevitable doom.

Thoughtlessness, dissipation and folly, the reproach

of crowded cities, are by this event, exposed to the detestation of all. Awake ye votaries of pleasure ; repent of the time which you have already lost ; employ your remaining days in the service of your God.

Were, our brethren who have been hurried into eternity, restored to us again, what would be their future lives ? No doubt, lives of faith, of spirituality, of mortification to the world : Such be your lives ; number your days so as to apply your hearts to wisdom. Pass the time of your sojourning on earth in the fear of God. You know neither the day, nor the hour when your lord shall return ; be, therefore, always ready. Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning. Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. Weigh well our Lord's decision concerning the sufferings of others, pronounced in my text ; and let the assurance founded on that decision influence and direct your future conduct. " Suppose
 " ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the
 " Galileans, because they suffered such things ? I tell
 " ye Nay : but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise
 " perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of
 " Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were
 " sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem ? I tell
 " ye Nay : but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise
 " perish."

Amen.

APPENDIX.

A RUMOUR reached Alexandria on the 28th of December 1811, that the inhabitants of Richmond had been visited by a terrible calamity on the evening of the 26th. The alarm was great and general, many having daughters and intimate acquaintances in that city, and *all* feeling for the affliction of fellow-men, and fellow-citizens. Tidings are the food of grief, whose appetite is voracious; no particularity is enough; another circumstance, and another, every circumstance, and that circumstance detail in the fullest manner, what went before, what was *attendant* and what was *consequent*, realize the melancholy scene, let us see it, less cannot satisfy the mind pierced with grief. In a *fever*, this is necessary to quench the thirst, and yet the thirst cannot be quenched. Alexandria sickened when the saddening rumour reached it. What! O! what has happened?

The tale of wee is short. The overflowing only of the heart runs off in a sigh—a word—a broken sentence.

The Theatre took fire, and eighty citizens are consumed.

F

Time abates the violence of grief, and enables the mind with sufficient calmness to listen, and to investigate ; to escape from an oppressive burden, but to escape as Israel did, enriched with the spoil of the enemy.

The calamity, which has laid a gay and flourishing city in the dust, ranks with those generally termed *accidental*. No man designed that calamity, nor actually brought it on the city. It was of God, who thereby executed part of his wise, but to us, mysterious plan: The ceiling of the Theatre was painted canvass, and the scenery highly combustible. An attempt to lower a chandelier, which was awkwardly hung, and, at the time entangled, threw it among the scenery, which took fire ; the scenery, the ceiling, and the roof were instantly in flames ; a thick cloud of smoke and vapour descended ; all was consternation ; the Pit, from which there was free access, was immediately emptied ; but the Boxes, from which there was only one narrow passage, could not soon be cleared. It was as easy to go through a wall, as through the croud ; the stair sunk under the pressure, throwing headlong a prostrate multitude in heaps. The vapour had extinguished the lights, and was found extremely suffocating. A blaze from the cloud of smoke, or from the clothes of those who were on fire, increased the horror. Some fainted ; some were suffocated ; some were consumed to ashes ;

some were trampled to death. A number reached the door, or throwing themselves out of the windows, escaped; but escaped, bruised—maimed—or severely burned. The vapour was so scorching, that, in one instance at least, although no part of the dress was even singed, the body was so burned as to issue, after lingering a few days, in death. Those who escaped know not how; some with safety; others with fatal or lasting injury. The sufferers could not have agonized long; with most death was instantaneous, dying in a faint, or by suffocation; and in all, less than nine or ten minutes put a period to their existence. The shrieks which at first were loud and from every lip, after that interval ceased, and all was still as the grave. A child at the first alarm, fell on her knees and called aloud for mercy, she was heard, and was snatched as a brand from the burning; another was thrown by the press from the Boxes into the Pit and thereby escaped. Some in each others arms, overcome by the smoke, sunk one in the direction of the window, another in the opposite direction, the one was lost, but the other saved. The more attentively I consider these facts, it forces on my mind a conviction that the *object* was precisely *marked*; the danger certainly was equal, but God had ordained the one for life, and the other for death. Rank and station, youth and beauty, wisdom and usefulness were of no avail. The commission

was given, and all, included in the commission, without any exception, fell. It was the moment, fixed in the decree of God for their departure from earth, and their departure could not be delayed. *Eighty* of the *six hundred* who were in the Theatre, became a prey to death.

I am the more convinced that this calamity was of God from many attending circumstances. The calamity was anticipated by some of the sufferers. I do not mean that any had an idea that the Theatre should that evening be their grave, but they were uneasy, they knew not why; and apprehended an unknown but fatal evil. Similar apprehensions have often in similar circumstances been experienced. God, in pity to men, gives secret intimations in a manner none can explain, of what he designs, that men may prepare to meet their God. It assures us that God governs the world in wisdom, and has connected man more intimately with the world of spirits than is generally believed.—Rochester mentions two instances of this kind which fell under his own observation, and, in his most giddy days, impelled him to pause and to reflect. Henry the IV of France was agonized at the approach of a certain day; but whence his agony? He could not tell.—It was the very day on which he was assassinated.

One very amiable, and who had for years past been solicitous to know and to serve her God, felt an unaccountable anxiety for the welfare of her husband, who was then absent. Nothing had occurred to excite anxiety, but it was excited, and in a degree that she was restless, until she had reached Richmond. Reluctantly she attended the Theatre, at the importunity of her young friends, declaring that for the last time she would tread forbidden ground, and sacrifice her own judgment to the gratification of others. She effected her retreat indeed, but so injured that in a few days she expired. The hand of God led her to the fatal spot, no doubt for wise reasons, which, for the present, are involved in impenetrable mystery

A young man of engaging manners, and tried courage was deterred from attending the Theatre by a dream, that he had been assassinated in the *Lobby*: in his dream he felt all the agonies of death; he awoke in terror, determined to avoid the accursed spot, but his resolution was shaken by the keen ridicule with which his apprehensions were treated. In the course of the representation, an actor entered with a hatchet in his hand. It threw *our youth* into an agony. 'That is the man whom I saw in my dream.' He rose to fly, but was severely rallied by his female friends. 'Stay you are going to the spot where you were assas-

‘sinated, stay *we* will protect you.’ He did stay, and when the alarm was given, generously afforded his friends every aid, but perished on the very spot, pointed out in his dream. Was not his fate foreseen? Were not intimations thereof afforded him? Who could foresee that fate, or afford these intimations but God who does in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth what he pleaseth?

A young woman, greatly lamented, for her generosity and cheerfulness, a victim on this fatal night, refused her attendance before she had made her will, no reason was assigned, but it was deemed necessary, as some impressions on her mind, indicated that it was not long, that she should be an inhabitant of this world; when her will was made, she attended her companions with her usual gaiety.

These instances, which I believe in general to be true, although it is extremely difficult to obtain an accurate detail, proclaim aloud that there is an “appointed time to man on earth: his days are determined, the number of his months are with God.” He requires our lives when, and where, and how he pleaseth.

Son of man, thou art born to die; at home, or abroad; in the house or on the way; engaged in wordly busi-

ness, or engaged in acts of religion; among the considerate or among the gay, thou treadest uncertain ground; the grave yawns to swallow thee up; be always ready.

In this event, also, realize that day when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, when the earth and the things which are therein shall be burned up.

Mr. Hill of Winchester improves this event, by a plain popular, and impressive address, to repent and to amend our lives: and Mr. Alexander of Philadelphia, by pouring balm into the wounded soul.

Dr. Samuel Miller of New York offers, in a concise, eloquent and enlightened discourse, motives, to lessen and to destroy the attachment of Christians to Theatrical amusements.

Mr. Dashiell of Baltimore raises his voice as a trumpet, to rouse the sons of pleasure, to excite a thirst for the waters of life, and to imbitter these polluted waters of which none can drink who regard their lives.

This is one of the signs of the times, which with many others, deserve serious attention. A circumstance unknown to me when I discussed that subject

has since come to my knowledge. A worthy member of Congress has assured me of the fact. The French prisoners in England, have received from that government, *Bibles*, and *Preachers*, who, in their own language, explain to them the scripture, many of them have been converted, and turned unto God. How the emperor of France, will be affected by this generous act I know not. It has conferred on his subjects a benefit, which he cannot easily repay. It eases their captivity. It has ennobled them more than their emperor could ever have ennobled them. They are become citizens of heaven; men of principle; more valuable subjects than ever; for those who fear their God, "will not be wanting in *honour*" to *their king*. A leaven is hereby thrown into the mass of the French empire which I hope will *ferment* and leaven the whole lump.

In confirmation that men sometimes have presages of death, and the conclusion which may be drawn from thence, the following quotation from Dr. Burnet's life of Rochester deserves attention :

"When Rochester went to sea in the year 1665, there happened to be in the same ship with him, Mr. Montague and another gentleman of quality. These two, the former especially, seemed persuaded that they should never return into England; Mr. Monta-

“ gue said he was sure of it ; the other was not so po-
“ sitive. The Earl of Rochester and the last of these
“ entered into a formal engagement, not without cere-
“ monies of religion, that, if either of them died, he
“ should appear, and give the other notice of the fu-
“ ture state, if there was any ; but Mr. Montague
“ would not enter into the bond. When the day came
“ that they thought to have taken the Dutch fleet, in
“ the port of Bergen, Mr. Montague, though he had
“ such a strong presage in his mind of his approach-
“ ing death, yet he generously staid all the while in the
“ place of greatest danger. The other gentleman sig-
“ nalized his courage in a most undaunted manner till
“ the end of the action, when he fell on a sudden into
“ such a trembling that he could scarce stand ; and,
“ Mr. Montague going to him to hold him up, as they
“ were in each other's arms, a cannon ball killed him
“ outright, and carried away Mr. Montague's belly, so
“ that he died within an hour after. The Earl of Ro-
“ chester told me that these presages they had in their
“ minds made some impression on him, that there
“ were separate beings ; and that the soul, either by a
“ natural sagacity, or some secret notice communicated
“ to it, had a sort of divination. But that gentleman's
“ never appearing was a great snare to him during the
“ remainder of his life ; though when he told me this,
“ he could not but acknowledge it was an unreasona-

“ble thing for him to think, that beings in another
“state are not under such laws and limits that they
“could not command their own motions but as the Su-
“preme Power should order them ; and that one, who
“had so corrupted the natural principles of truth as he
“had, had no reason to expect that such an extraordi-
“nary thing should be done for his conviction.

“He told me of another odd presage that one had of
“his approaching death in the Lady Warre’s, his mo-
“ther-in-law’s, house. The chaplain had dreamt that
“such a day he should die ; but, being by all the fa-
“mily put out of the belief, he had almost forgot it ;
“till, the evening before, at supper, there being thir-
“teen at table, according to a fond conceit that one of
“these must soon die, one of the young ladies pointed
“to him that he was to die. He, remembering his
“dream, fell into some disorder ; and, the Lady Warre
“reproving him for his superstition, he said he was
“confident he was to die before morning ; but he be-
“ing in perfect health, it was not much minded. It
“was Saturday night, and he was to preach next day.
“He went to his chamber, and sat up late, as appear-
“ed by the burning of his candle ; and he had been
“preparing his notes for his sermon ; but was found
“dead in his bed the next morning. These things, he
“said, made him inclined to believe the soul was a

“ substance distinct from matter ; and this often
“ returned into his mind. But that which perfected
“ his persuasion about it was, that, in the sickness
“ which brought him so near death before I first knew
“ him, when his spirits were so low and spent that he
“ could not move nor stir, and he did not think to live
“ an hour, he said his reason and judgment were so
“ clear and strong, that from thence he was fully per-
“ suaded that death was not the spending or dissolu-
“ tion of the soul, but only the separation of it from
“ matter. He had in that sickness great remorse-
“ ness for his past life ; but he afterwards told me that they
“ were rather general and dark horrors than any con-
“ viction of sinning against God. He was sorry he
“ had lived so as to waste his strength so soon, or that
“ he had brought such an ill name upon himself ; and
“ had an agony in his mind about it which he knew not
“ well how to express ; but at such times, though he
“ complied with his friends in suffering divines to be
“ sent for, he said he had no great mind to it, and that
“ it was but a piece of his breeding to desire them to
“ pray by him, in which he joined little himself.”



FELIX TREMBLING.



FELIX TREMBLING.

S E R M O N III.

ACTS XXIV, 25.

“As he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.”

Felix, the Roman governor, and Drusilla his wife, who was a Jewess, had sent for Paul, now for his attachment to the Gospel, a prisoner at Cesarea, that they might be informed from his own lips concerning the faith in Christ. The Apostle, through his whole discourse, kept the known character of his hearers in mind, insisting chiefly on the purity which Christianity requires, and enforces with the certain prospect of a judgment to come. Felix was greatly alarmed, and determined fully to examine the subject at a future period; but neglecting the present crisis, his alarm ceased, and the subject was no more thought of;—whereas Drusilla who had been accustomed, from her youth, to hear the oracles of God, was not alarmed, nor did any pious purpose arise in her mind.

Although Felix was an unrighteous and an oppressive governor, yet Tertullus, in a flattering address, spoke much of the great benefit which the Jews derived from his administration. He had, indeed, suppressed a banditti who infested the country, but was otherwise a scourge to the provinces over which he presided. He procured the assassination of Jonathan the High Priest, venerable for his age, and blameless character, because he could not bear the freedom, with which the good Pontiff expostulated against his cruelty and ill conduct. This was introductory to other crimes equally atrocious. The oppression became intolerable to the Jews, who complained to Nero, and would, had not Felix been protected by his brother Pallas, the particular favorite of the emperor, have effected his ruin. To a man of such a character, the Apostle spoke of *righteousness*, which, being a duty of natural religion, must be complied with, before men can either relish the Christian system, or be conformed to its pure and spiritual maxims. Jesus, whose example Christians follow, was "meek and lowly:" He loved mankind more than any ever did, or ever can do. In life, he went about doing good: in death he did men the most essential service. The badge of his Disciples is, that they love one another as he has loved them; becoming not only strictly just, but also, kind and useful, even laying down their lives, when in any

high degree this may promote the advantage of religious or civil society.

He renounces Christianity, who takes a malicious pleasure, to injure others in their persons; reputation, or property.

Governments are ordained of God to restrain men from violence, by which they would soon devour one another. Simeon and Levi, the sons of Jacob, at a time when government had little energy, allowing their passions, which were justly excited, to exceed all bound, fell under the heavy curse of their dying father.* If you be cruel to your slave; or hate your neighbour in your heart, you may pretend to be Christians, but the pretension is despised. He, who cherishes a disposition to injure another, could he do it with impunity, is as guilty before God, as he who has it in his power to gratify to the uttermost his malicious desire.†

To injure the *name* is much easier than to injure the *person* of another: You may lay concealed and do the one; but are liable to detection in doing the

* *Genesis, XLIX, 5, 6, 7.*

† *1 John III, 7th—15th 17, 20.*

other. The criminality, in either case is great, but greater where the reputation is affected, because the evil, may spread so far, that it may not be possible to counteract it, by any future exertion. The apostle James represents in glowing colours the mischief of a licentious tongue.† The scriptures every where, expressly commands "Speak not evil one of another Brethren;" and requires conformity to his example, who, "When he was reviled reviled not again." The Devil is characterised as the "Accuser of the brethren," who accuses them day and night before God. In his dispute with Michael the Arch-Angel, about the body of Moses, he seems to have uttered blasphemies which the celestial did not retort, using railing accusation, but with a calmness peculiar to a pure spirit, he referred the whole matter to God, "The Lord rebuke thee." Would God, that conduct so contrary to the Divine command; so unlike the example of Jesus; so correspondent to that of the Devil, were unknown on earth; but Alas! Alas! these secret assassins of the character, these pests of society, these kindred spirits to the great enemy of God and man, are too numerous, and every where receive too much encouragement.

The *property* of others may be injured, as well as their *reputation* or *persons*. How such injury is ef-

† James III, 2, to the end.

fectcd could not easily be exposed in many discourses. False measures and weights are used; every species of disguise and falsehood is practised, even blood is shed, and the peace of society is disturbed. § All who, at any time, or in any way, act to the injury of another, in his person, in his reputation, or in his property, evidently fall under the reproof given Felix, when, in his hearing, the apostle spoke of righteousness.

But the apostle spoke of *Temperance* as well as *righteousness*.

A becoming moderation to the world and to the things thereof, belongs to the christian character, and necessarily claims attention when discussing this class of duties. The world is an idol which has seduced multitudes from their obedience. The heart which the world possesses is destitute of religion. The service of mammon is preferred to the service of Christ—*both*, man cannot serve—a preference to *this* service is hostility to *that*—loving *mammon* you hate *Christ*. Felix had long made an unhappy choice; like Samuel's sons he turned aside after lucre and took bribes, and perverted judgment; even in the present instance, hearing that the Apostle was intrusted with offerings to a great extent, for the relief of his

§ *Proverbs* xx, 10, 17, 21, 23. *James* v, 1—9.

poor brethren at Jerusalem ; and knowing him to be much esteemed in the Church, he hoped " that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him : wherefore he sent for him the officer, and communed with him." You breathe the same spirit, and are actuated by the same principle, who perpetually inquire " who will shew us any good ?" who are ever anxious " what shall we eat and what shall we drink, and where with all shall we be clothed ?" who have nothing so much at heart from youth to age, as to buy, and to sell, and to get gain. The scripture addresses you in alarming language : you are unfaithful to God ; to whom you stand in an intimate and endearing relation.|| Suppose your success to equal your desire, which is very uncertain, still you are undone, " What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and loose his own soul ? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?"

But, the government of the lower appetites and passions is principally in view, when *temperance* is urged, in scripture, upon the consciences of men. Neither are given us in vain. Appetites remind us of what is necessary for the refreshment and sustenance of the body ; passions excite us to action. Were not the abuse of these familiar to us, we should never sus-

|| *James 17, 1, 2, 3, 4.*

pect that the body could be destroyed by what guards its safety, nor the mind thrown into a tumult by what originally was only intended to keep it awake. The drunkard and glutton exemplify abuses of the one kind, as the impetuous and lustful do of the other. Whether Felix classes with the first, I know not; but he certainly does with the second. His attachment to *Drusilla* was extravagant and guilty. This woman was the daughter of Herod Agrippa, who slew the Apostle James; who imprisoned Peter, and afterwards died a miserable death. *Euphanes* to whom she had been betrothed, refusing to be circumcised, she was given to *Azizus* king of Emesa, who, for her sake, submitted to that painful ceremony; but, her virtue bearing no proportion to her external accomplishments, Felix, a Gentile, and one of the worst characters, easily persuaded her to abandon her husband, and to be married unto him. The Apostle no doubt had his eye upon this irregularity, which, with others of the same class, are often and with much severity denounced in the Gospel.†

Such excess and immoralities are evident and shameful abuses of time; which is equally abused, and lost beyond recovery, by *slothful* or *trifling* conduct.

† *Philip*, *III*, 17—19. *I Corinthians*, *VI*, 9, 10] *Galatians*, *VI*, 7, 8.

Solomon draws the character of *the slothful* in such colours, that a man may well blush to find any trace of that character belonging to his own, "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone-wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as *one* that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man." A writer eminent for piety and learning, observes, speaking of the hours wasted in sleep, that the difference between rising at *five*, and *seven* in the morning, in the course of *forty* years, is equal to the addition of *ten* years in a man's life. Any of you may thus prolong his days, it requires some exertion at first; let it resolutely be made, you will then rank with the wise, the honourable and the virtuous.

Trifling is no less inexcusable than *slothful* conduct. Such triflers are all *gamesters*, and those who indulge in the past-times which an evil invention has devised to murder their days. The virtuous woman celebrated by Solomon was *too well*, and *too fully* employed to associate with *triflers*.* Idle and trifling practices are the gulph of time. You must renounce these, O! christian;

* *Proverbs xxx, 13, to the end.*

otherwise you endanger your standing in the church. For your idle moments, as well as for your idle words you must give an account. Why stand ye idle all the day? Why spend money for that which is not bread, and labour for that which profiteth not?—Why sow the wind, with no better prospect than reaping the whirlwind?

That the representation, given by the apostle of *righteousness* and *temperance*, might leave a deep impression, he brought in view a “Judgment to come.”

God—as a *Father*—as a *Master*, and—as a *King* has an undoubted right, and that right he will certainly exercise, to require of *his children*, of *his servants*, of *his subjects*, a public account of themselves, at a day appointed for that purpose. “A judgement to come.” powerfully persuades men to reverence him as a father; to obey him as a master; to be governed by him as a king. In this branch of duty Felix was shamefully defective. Many, among the Gentiles, had a respect for God, according to their apprehension of his nature; but this Gentile discovered none, even in him it was inexcusable, and exposed him to future vengeance: But for christians, either not to know, or not to acknowledge God; either to despise the Gospel, or not to obey it, is so reproachable, that a heavier punishment shall be inflicted upon them, than what was inflicted upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

The apostle did not rest, in a simple statement of the righteousness and temperance which the Gospel requires; nor in asserting the awful doctrine of "a judgment to come," by which the observance of these duties is enforced; he *reasoned*,—shewing, with convincing evidence, the necessity, fitness, and importance of these duties, which must uniformly be observed, else men must answer at their peril for the neglect.

Righteousness promotes the welfare of men, and guards with the greatest care their persons, their reputation, and their property.

The practice of righteousness is reasonable.

When we consider our relation to one another—The nations of men are the offspring of God, whom he made of one blood to dwell on all the face of the earth. "Have we not all *one father*? Hath not *one God* created us?"

This community of nature forms a near connexion; for wherever we meet any of the human species, we meet a brother or a sister, a member, with us, of that *one great family* which descended from Adam, who

is expressly called the Son of God.* The intimacy is more immediate among those who belong to the same nation; who inhabit the same neighbourhood; who dwell under the same roof. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity." It is like the oils upon Aaron's head, which spreading over his garments, perfumed his whole body, and filled the place with pleasure. It is like the morning dews which distilling plentifully on the hill of Hermon rendered it verdant and fruitful. The pleasure and advantage of such conduct persuades us, in as far as is possible, to live peaceably with all men.

To injure, to defame, to over reach is odious conduct, the malignity of which cannot easily be expressed in words. "Ye are brethren, why do ye wrong one to another?" If you hurt the body of others, you injure a fabric which your father in heaven erected; if you blacken their reputation, you place in an unfavourable light the mind, originally distinguished for the impression of the Divine image; if their circumstances be the worse through your over reaching wasteful conduct, you quarrel with Providence, and would, were it possible, take the management of the

* Luke III, 38.

world into your own hands : And who art thou, O man, who introducest such disorder among the Sons of God ? Thy hands were not made to injure, thy tongue to defame, thy rational powers to over reach. Thou thereby incurrst the frowns of thy heavenly father, who shall avenge himself, of a member, the disgrace of his family : cast out and degraded, thou canst, for the future, be, no longer, acknowledged, as one of his children.

Why did Christ, the Son of God, become flesh and dwell amongst us ? Why was he so familiar with men, and so kind to them ? Why did he submit to death, the death of the cross ? He did so to ennoble our nature ; to throw light upon the path in which he requires us to walk ; to unite man to man, and to cement that union by his blood. His incarnation, his life, his death plead effectually with men the cause of righteousness. They plead with Divine eloquence ; the heart must be harder than the stone which can resist. “ Put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts ; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind ; And put ye on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour : for we are members one of another. Be ye

“angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon
“your wrath; Neither give place to the devil. Let
“him that stole steal no more. But rather let him
“labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is
“good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.
“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your
“mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying,
“that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And
“grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are
“sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitter-
“ness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil
“speaking, be put away from you with all malice.—
“And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, for-
“giving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake
“hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore, followers of
“God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ
“also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an
“offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling
“savour.”

But where do hurtful qualities exist in the highest degree? Name the animals and persons who possess this ill pre-eminence that they may be stamped with infamy and carefully avoided. The most mischievous of all rational creatures, are apostate angels. In the practice of evil they are habituated; willingly would they destroy the human race; distressing them in ope-

degree or another is their greatest pleasure. Satan afflicted Job, in his person, bringing upon him a loathsome disease; in his reputation, accusing him of selfishness and hypocrisy; in his circumstances, destroying his substance, his servants, and his children. He was a murderer from the beginning; and when he speaketh a lie he speaketh of himself; whose works the Saviour came to destroy. Of irrational creatures, some are very noxious, such as serpents; others exceeding fierce, a bear, for instance, when robbed of her whelps. What is there here worthy of imitation? yet "a generation of vipers" often arise, a race of men whose conduct the scripture brands as earthly, sensual and devilish. Such has been the case, and still is when men bite and devour one another, and encourage bitter envying and strife in their hearts.—Such dispositions, and such conduct are as infamous as they are destructive: be ashamed of them; hold them in detestation, that the Gospel may rise in your esteem which, entirely changes man's corrupt dispositions and conduct. †

Temperance also, as well as righteousness, in all its branches, has its foundation in our nature, and particular circumstances, and of consequence, is fit for all

† *Isaiah, xi, 1—10.*

who possess human nature under existing circumstances uniformly to practise.

Moderation, to the world, which has been mentioned as one branch of temperance, is wise and becoming ; for happiness does not consist in the abundance of what we possess, or if it did, excessive care to attain an earthly portion has no tendency to secure us success. You may be diligent in business, and at the same time fervent in spirit serving the Lord ; but never undertake more business than you can accomplish ; and neither live nor trade beyond the limit which your circumstances prescribe. If you have much, be thankful to God, and kind to your brethren : if you have little, be submissive and contented. Cherish the disposition of strangers to the world and to all that is therein ; a disposition like Christ's when he visited our abode. Was he the heir of Augustus, or even a temporal prince over Israel ? Was his apparel splendid, or his table richly spread ? Were his friends dignified and enriched with the honours and possessions of this world ? No—a poor woman at Nazareth was his mother ; he appears in an ordinary garb, and was contented with common fare ; he died in a shameful manner on a cross, and far from promising his followers honour or wealth, he assured them of contempt and poverty. What mean thoughts had he of the world,

and how meanly ought his disciples to think of it. The heir of heaven cannot be satisfied with a portion on earth : God is his portion, he has none in heaven but God, nor on earth whom he desires beside him.

Concerning the government of the lower appetites and passions, let me observe, that every thing is beautiful in its place, but invert the natural order of things, and all that beauty is lost. A servant, for instance, in the master's place, or the master in the servant's place, is an unbecoming sight ; more unbecoming to see reason subjected to the meanest appetite, such perversion *the drunkard and glutton* permit. They are reproved even by a heathen, " I am greater," says Scenaca, " and born for greater things than to be a slave to the body, or to live merely to become a strainer of meats and drinks." How uneasy men feel when over charged with food ; how foolish they look when intoxicated with liquor. † Have you never seen the drunkard in an odious plight ? Is not the sight enough to forbid excess from your lips, and to disarm temptation of all its charms ? Let such boast of civil liberty, loaded with the disgusting chains which they have imposed upon themselves ; it is the boasting of a madman, who believes his cell to be a palace ; his rags, royal garments ; his fetters, badges of distinction.

† *Proverbs*, xxiii, 29—35.

Impure conduct, nearly allied to the indulgencies which I have been reprobating, is beyond expression mortifying and pernicious. It changes a celestial into a terrestrial ; a man into a brute ; The heir of heaven into an heir of hell. It has cast down many wounded, yea, many strong men have been slain by it ; it is the way to hell going down to the chambers of death. Behold Sampson, the champion of Israel and the Nazarite of God, reposing like a thoughtless fool on the lap of Delilah ! He fell head long from the height of glory, into slavery, blindness, and imprisonment. See the calamities which pursued David, when by impurity and blood he offended his God. Remember Sodom and Gomorah suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, because of their shameful and filthy conduct. Never O never forget these awful words, " No unclean person hath any inheritance in the kingdom of God," but because of this, " the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience."

Beside conduct so extremely criminal, they are not blameless, who dream through life, and by a thousand vain inventions trifle with the precious moments which their master in heaven has given them, to perform an important service. It is high time to awake out of sleep. Indulging bodily appetites introduced sin and misery into our world. Avoid these indulgencies....

They are forbidden by the laws of Jesus, and exclude from his kingdom ; of necessity, therefore, his disciples, according to his express command, keep under their bodies and bring them into subjection.

The doctrine of "*a judgment to come*" by which the apostle confirmed his directions concerning "*righteousness and temperance*," has an advocate in the breast of every individual, who assures them that it shall be well with the righteous ; but ill with the wicked. The wicked have no peace : they resemble the troubled sea ; a shaking leaf can disturb them. The tremor of Felix when his prisoner reasoned of righteousness temperance and judgment to come ; The uneasiness of Herod after he had killed the holy prophet, who reproved him for his unlawful deeds : The terror of Belshazzar when he observed the handwriting on the wall ; and the distress of the sons of Jacob, when affliction brought to their remembrance their cruelty to their brother Joseph, show the power of conscience. Its voice may, for a time, be disregarded, but it continues to admonish ; it speaks until it be heard ; it waxes louder and louder ; it disturbs the silence of midnight, and adds to the roaring of the tempest : It pains the most callous, and excites tormenting apprehension. If thine own heart condemn thee, O sinner, surely he will much more condemn thee who is greater than thine heart.

Revelation confirms a doctrine so agreeable to the natural apprehension of mankind. It was taught by Solomon "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil." Christ when ministering on earth, expressly declared, "the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." The apostles proclaimed in every place, "the times of ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

The best attested facts bring this doctrine down in some measure to the evidence of our senses. On the one hand, the utter destruction of the old world by water; and of Sodom and Gomorah by fire: the extirpation of the Canaanites; and the dispersion of the Jewish nation: and on the other hand, the preservation of Noah and of Lot: of Rahab and of the christians amidst these desolating judgments, show that God is not an unconcerned spectator of the conduct of men.

but "knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."

Such the apostle's reasoning concerning righteousness, temperance and judgment to come:—the effect produced on the mind of his hearer, claims particular attention, "Felix trembled."

Neglect and violence had rendered the conscience of Felix callous. A dangerous wound, through ill management, had closed before it was well probed; a lamp, through inattention had gone out: but the word of God, as a sharp instrument opened afresh the dangerous wound and probed it to the bottom; as a piercing fire rekindled the extinguished flame, and discovered every object in its true colours. Felix, who had presumptuously violated, by his constant practice, the sacred laws of righteousness and temperance, and of all men was the most unprepared to take his trial at a future judgment, found means to quiet his conscience and to enjoy a degree of peace; but it was a false quiet, and an ill founded peace, which could be disturbed, and broken by the discourse of a helpless prisoner at his own tribunal. Never were words uttered under greater disadvantage, a man of mean aspect and uncouth speech; in a common garb, and without the

countenance of friends; the prisoner of justice, charged with heavy crimes, addressed his judge on a tender and irksome subject: Great indeed must be the force of truth which, in such circumstances, humbled the judge, and left the prisoner in triumph.

A course of wickedness is so unnatural that it admits no settled peace. Made originally in the image of God, and made to enjoy him as our chief good, without him, like the unclean spirit mentioned in the gospel, we seek rest every where among created objects and find none: at the same time, the reflection of a sober moment; the hearing a serious discourse, or any unusual interposition of providence, brings guilt to the remembrance, and awakes the keenest sensibility. Felix was all alive, 'I am sensible that righteousness and temperance, in all their branches are duties which suit my nature; but in these I have been shamefully defective. I have wronged my neighbour, and injured myself: I have been the enemy of man: the beast of prey which ravages the forest never did half the mischief; the fierce spirit, who goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour has not more malignity. What a monster of wickedness! how vile! how despicable! I cannot bear the accusation of my own mind; much less the sentence of a holy and justly offended God.'

A man may bear his infirmity, but a mind thus wounded he cannot bear. Cain the murderer was thus agonized, and Judas the traitor; they were tormented with a fire which is not quenched; they were gnawed with a worm that dieth not: Felix was conscious of the fierceness of this fire, and of the gnawing of that worm.

But what steps did he take for his relief? How did he get clear of his conviction?—In what did it terminate?—

He suppressed his conviction, "Go thy way for this time;" Here the discourse may be broken off; thou hast exhausted thyself and gratified thy hearer; business calls me hence, and, for the present, withdraws my attention from a subject which I am sensible is of the highest importance: If the subject be of such importance, why, O Felix, attend to any before it; or why afraid that delay in that can be near so dangerous as in this. The enemy of souls did not urge that repentance and reformation were unnecessary, a delay was all he attempted, under a pretence of pressing business: the artifice succeeded and Felix was undone,

When the thought of his past conduct threw him into an agony; when the apprehension of future judg-

ment entered his heart and drunk up his spirit ; when the terrors of the Lord set themselves in array against him, had he sought relief from the Gospel, and put himself under its direction, he would have found it as effectual to heal, as to wound ; to make alive, as to kill ; to snatch the brand from the burning, as to stir up the fire in which the brand was ready to be consumed ; to proclaim an act of mercy, as to pronounce a sentence of condemnation. Let Felix, immediately, break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor ; let him set at liberty a prisoner whom a wrongful confinement detained at Cesarea ; let him restore Drusilla to her lawful husband, and relieve the Jews from a grievous yoke ; let him thus act, then, let him expect mercy ; then let him rejoice in the hope which the Gospel affords.

Felix was irresolute, he put off ; at a more convenient time he shall send for the Apostle, and be regulated by his advice. A mistaken judgment pleaded for delay. He was ashamed of his confusion. But was this a cause of shame ? His crimes were his disgrace, of which that confusion was the inevitable consequence. If he has done ill, the sense thereof, laying him in the dust, being the first step to reformation, was becoming ; but there is a natural pride or false honour attach-

ed to the heart, which impells the wicked, to justify their conduct both to themselves and others ; acting under this principle, Felix hushed the voice of conscience, and in the world, sought relief from his present trouble. Never was any thing more ruinous. Delay was the crisis of the disease which marked it as mortal ; it was the letting out of water which no after exertion could restrain ; it was like that parley which the first of women held with the serpent to her utter destruction. When a delay was determined the enemy began to triumph. Felix took leave of the persuasive preacher, and lost his serious convictions ; his mind was poisoned by the railery of Drusilla, and the scoffings of his loose companions. Corruption rallied all its force, and assumed its wanted sway, more confirmed, over his wretched heart.

A vigorous effort when the mind was tender must have prevailed : but, putting off was to give way ; hesitating was to yield ; doing to-morrow what ought to have been done to-day was to leave the enemy in full triumph, on the field of battle. So weak, so treacherous is the human heart. Lust is not easily controlled, nor sin forsaken ; pluck out the right eye, and cut off the right hand ; fight and strive ; be all faith, and all patience, otherwise, the Ethiopian may change his skin,

and the leopard his spots, sooner than you who have been accustomed to do evil, can learn to do well.

Felix, in the passage I have now explained, is brought in view, like these lights which forewarn the benighted seaman of a hazardous coast, or the marks which caution him against hidden shoals; particularly, you are forewarned and cautioned against neglecting the admonitions of conscience.

Conscience is the voice of God, which guards cannot silence, nor grandeur over-awe. It disturbs the intemperate in the midst of their cups; and renders odious the fond embrace of guilty lovers. It haunted the murderous Herod as a spectre, and agonized the heart of the impious Belshazzar. It imbittered the remembrance of what Joseph's brethren had done against him, and shook the soul of Felix in the presence of Drusilla and of the fawning Tertullus. It issues from the midst of blackness, and tempest; it speaks in thunder, and shakes the guilty soul, as Sinai was shaken. Hast thou never been alarmed, O sinner, as Adam was, with a voice, demanding, "where art thou"? Hast thou transgressed my command, and doest thou think to flee from my presence, or to be hid from my spirit? vain thought, "he that fleeth of them shall not flee away; and he that escapeth of them shall not be de-

“livered. Though they dig into hell, thence shall
“mine hand take them; though they climb into hea-
“ven, thence will I bring them down: And though
“they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will
“search and take them out thence; and though they
“be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence
“will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them;
“And though they go into captivity before their ene-
“mies, thence will I command the sword, and it
“shall slay them; and I will set mine eyes upon them
“for evil, and not for good.”

Should it throw thee into an agony turn not away
thine ear; should the soul fail before God when he
contends with thee, and the spirit which he has made,
review the whole controversy; allow thy heart to be
broken, and thy spirit to become contrite. If thou be
guilty, and have not repented of thy guilt; at enmity
with God, and have not made submission; one whose
sins have pierced the Saviour, and hast never looked
to him that thou mayest be saved; thou canst enjoy no
settled peace, but art ever exposed to terror and
alarm.

The Apostle in his address to Felix discovered un-
daunted resolution. He lay at the mercy of Felix who
could have ordered him to death, or have set him at liber-

ty. Regardless of his own safety or comfort, he improved a favourable moment when he had the ear of his judge, to reduce him to a becoming sense of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come ; rather than to prejudice him in his own favour, or to expose his enemies. Had he proclaimed exemption from the great duties of morality, Felix would have become a zealous disciple ; but he treated alike the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the bond and the free, declaring to all, and to each in the most positive and express terms, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

Faithfulness to our trust, and compassion for the souls of men, impell us to pursue the same course. Let it be remembered that the Apostle was sent for to explain what he taught concerning "the faith in Christ ;" and what account does he give of faith ? He speaks of it as a living purifying principle, actuating the disciples of Jesus, "to deny ungodliness, and "wordly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and "Godly in the world." If you be conscious of failure in any of the duties which have been explained, stand reprov'd, and determine, for the future, through the grace of God, to lead holy lives, assured that otherwise not only your standing in the Christian church, but also your eternal salvation is in danger.

I-2.

Perhaps you are ashamed to appear thoughtful; and afraid should it be known that you are reformed: ashamed of whom? afraid of what? not of God—He calls you to return to the path of peace:—not of Angels who anxiously expect your obedience to the heavenly call:—not of saints on earth, who are ready with open arms to receive you into their communion, and to congratulate your escape from a degrading thralldom. It can only be your licentious companions before whom you are ashamed; their reproach of which you are afraid: and is this more in your eyes, than the approbation of God—of Angels—and of holy men? Judging thus unworthily your ruin cannot be prevented. Go on in your accustomed course;—Revel with the companions of your choice in all the wantonness of sin and folly—cast off the fear of God, and regard for fellow men—oppress the body with surfeiting and consume it with drunkenness; but know to thy terror that thou purchasest the friendship of thy companions by making God thine enemy; thou refusest reproof for the present, but provokest a more terrible reproof for the future; thou livest in pleasure, but shall die in despair.

May God bless his word.....Amen.

APPENDIX.

A better illustration of the power of conscience I cannot produce, than what is recorded of the Jews, who brought unto Jesus a woman taken in adultery, saying, "Master, This woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not*. So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them. He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard *it*, being convicted by *their own* conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, *even* unto the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst." These Jews could not acquit themselves of the crime which they now clamorously reprobated in this offender, but were chased in disgrace, from the presence of a holy God who resided in the temple, by the scourge of an enraged conscience.

Lewis the XIV. of France, bestowed a delicate encomium, upon one of his Bishops, which shews the power of the gospel when faithfully preached ‘Father, ‘I have heard many great orators in this place, and eloquent discourses,—I have gone away charmed with ‘the orator and enraptured with the discourse,—but ‘when I hear you I always go away *displeased with myself*’.

A stranger once came into our worshipping assembly and was accommodated with a pew. The text was read “*Thou shall not kill,*”—a deep blush overspread his countenance;—*Duelling* was mentioned, he became restless—*Duelling* was exposed as a *breach of God’s law*—as *ruinous to society*—as *fatal to the soul*—his consternation was visible, he could not keep his seat, but moved from pew to pew; his behaviour astonished all present,—who is this was the inquiry? what could occasion such conduct? It was found that he was a fugitive from a distant state, who had fled, having slain his friend in single combat; a son of Cain upon whom the curse of Cain had fallen.

Dr. Henry Hunter of London was remarkable for a flowing and irresistible eloquence. He was once addressing a vast multitude, with a glowing tongue and piercing eye,—‘Were I to descend from this place,

‘ I might perhaps put my hand upon the head of a wretch, who like an apostate spirit, had during the week blasphemed his maker ; or by the poisonous fumes of the accursed cup had degraded himself from a rational to an irrational creature, from a man to a brute—’ one of his audience was extremely terrified, conscious of being a blasphemer and a drunkard ; pierced with the fire of the preacher’s eye, and agonized with his words, dreading exposure before such an assembly, for he imagined that the preacher would descend and mark out the detested offender, he fled, and sought concealment.

I knew a man remarkable for a turbulent disposition, who always kept the neighbourhood in a ferment ; he attended worship, on the Lord’s day, after a week of broils ; the preacher who knew nothing either of him or of his conduct, was led in the course of his ministration severely to reprobate the practice of which he was guilty ; ‘ the preacher must have me in view,’ was his conclusion, ‘ his eye singles me out, his words expose me :’ he was extremely irritated, and, in his heart, determined to take the life of the preacher. In this humour he left Church, and could scarcely be pacified by assurances that the preacher could have no knowledge of him, and spoke for the benefit of all.

This sermon was delivered at New York, in the year 1789 and not without effect ; an instance thereof came to my knowledge, some years after. A gentleman who had long been under my pastoral care when officiating at Bermuda, was then on a visit to New York. The sermon arrested his attention, and impressed his mind : on his return to Bermuda he was taken sick and his sickness issued fatally ; during his sickness he ascribed, to this sermon, his first religious impressions, which were never lost, but deepened, until the divine life was matured in a better world. It is singular that having for long been a *careless* hearer, he should now by the same ministry, in a distant country, *hear with such advantage*. It leads us to ascribe all to God, who gives efficacy to his word, *when, and where, and how* he pleaseth.

But convictions, whether produced by reflection ; by some alarming providence ; or by the preaching of the word, do not always issue well. Brutus through the pride of a vain philosophy acted without control. He had murdered Cæsar, and was meditating his own death. The murderer and suicide cannot be supposed to have been happy. He boasted of both acts, alledging in his defence, reasons of state for the one ; and the preservation of his honour, when his affairs became desperate for the other ; but the boast was vain, he had

no right to dispose of either his own life, or the life of another; under an imposing appearance, he was a wretched man, vilifying the practice of religion as “an empty name;” and terrified when alone in his tent, with the apprehension of an angry spectre, which was nothing but an evil conscience, imbittering reflection whether he looked back on what was past, or anticipated what was to come.

Voltaire was not stained with human blood, but he had perverted many souls; in the height of his ill pre-eminence he was seized with a mortal disease;—he became the most miserable of all human beings; rage and remorse agonized his dying moments. To this Cowper alludes :

- “ The Frenchman first in literary fame,
- “ Mention him if you please—Voltaire?—The same.
- “ With spirit, genius, eloquence supplied,
- “ Liv’d long, wrote much, laugh’d heartily, and died.
- “ The scripture was his jest-book, whence he drew
- “ Bon-mots to gall the Christian and the Jew.
- “ An infidel in health; but what when sick?
- “ Oh then a text would touch him to the quick.”

Payne’s last days were marked with every circumstance which can excite disgust and terror: if alone

for one moment he would roar in distraction. The ministers of religion were the objects of abhorrence; yet with a strange inconsistency he was heard to call upon "Christ"; but he would not acknowledge his belief in him; the prayers of the church were read to him by his nurse, and its lessons; he listened and encouraged the reading thereof; but gave no assent either to their truth or service. Every circumstance discovered a mind restless and uneasy. He had gone astray, and knew it, but would obstinately persist.—Such wretchedness is an awful warning. "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour be not thou united."

GOD'S CLAIM UPON THE YOUNG.

GOD'S CLAIM UPON THE YOUNG,



S E R M O N IV.

MALACHI I. 6.

*“ A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master : If then I be a father, where is mine honour ?
“ And if I be a master, where is my fear ?—”*

MALACHI lived at the same time with Nehemiah : The second temple was built, and the worship of God completely settled : The prophet blamed the priests and Levites for inattention to public worship ; and the people for offering a corrupt thing, the sick, the lame and the blind. All orders were ungrateful to God, performing worship in a careless and irreverent manner. Expostulating with them, the prophet, in my text, refers it to their own consciences, “ A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master : If then I be a father, where is mine honour ? And if I be a master, where is my fear ?—”

The *doctrine*, in my text, is, that we ought to maintain a disposition and conduct, correspondent to God's character; and to the relation in which he stands to us.

This doctrine, I mean, through Divine assistance, to illustrate, for the benefit of all, particularly of the young, expostulating with them, that they may feel their obligation to God, and may devote their best days to his service.

Is God a father? How can we honour him?—Is he a master?—What is the fear which he requires?

God is a father to all, and to each of you; For you are his offspring. Cast your eye upon *the body.....* Whence these members, and these organs?—David tells you, he praised God saying, “I will praise thee; “for I am fearful and wonderfully made: marvellous “*are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right* “well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I “was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the “lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my “substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all “*my members were written, which in continuance were* “fashioned, when *as yet there was none of them.*” Job bears testimony to the same truth, “Thine hands

" have made me, and have fashioned me together
 " round about. Thou hast clothed me with skin and
 " flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews.
 " thou hast granted me life and favour." The body, in
 its formation, as the apostle Paul declares, has every
 mark of contrivance and wisdom, " The body is not one
 " member but many. If the foot shall say, Because I
 " am not the hand, I am not of the body ; is it there-
 " fore not of the body ? And if the ear shall say, Be-
 " cause I am not the eye, I am not of the body ; is it
 " therefore not of the body ? If the whole body *were*
 " an eye, where *were* the hearing ? if the whole *were*
 " hearing, where *were* the smelling ? But now hath
 " God set the members every one of them in the body
 " as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one
 " member, where *were* the body ? But now *are they*
 " many members, yet but one body. And the eye can-
 " not say unto the hand, I have no need of thee ; nor
 " again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you."
 " God hath tempered the body together, that there
 " should be no schism in the body ; but that the mem-
 " bers should have the same care one for another."

It is the prerogative of God to give the body such
 modifications as he hath judged best. Rachel was
 very beautiful, and the daughters of Job the fairest in
 the land. Samson possessed the strength of winds. Saul

and Jonathan were swifter than the eagles; they were stronger than lions. The eye of Moses was not dim when he was an hundred years old, neither was his natural strength abated. Aaron could speak well. But these gifts are by no means common to all. Leah had no pretension to the beauty of her sister Rachel; nor Mephibosheth to the swiftness and strength of his father Jonathan. Moses could not speak like his brother Aaron. Barzillai felt the infirmities of age, and the decay of all the senses. God distributes variously these his gifts. To take the advantage which the defects of others gives us over them, is strictly forbidden, as an insult to God and highly criminal.* We are too apt to despise those who have great natural defects as the objects of the Divine displeasure, even the disciples of Christ fell into this error, which their master checked, by his words, rebuking the error; and by a kind act, restoring the man who laboured under defects which rendered him despicable, to a level with others.

The formation of the body, and the qualities with which it is distinguished, are not only of advantage to the individual himself; but, also, enable him to become serviceable to society, and to acquire a certain influence.

* *Leviticus XIX. 14. Deut. XXVII. 18. Jo. IX. 1—7.*

You honour God, when, on your tongue, is the law of kindness ; when your feet carry you about to do good ; when lessons of wisdom are received through the medium of the eyes and ears. Let our youth be sensible that God has given them great advantages, and from gratitude to him, let them improve these advantages. But if your tongue be used to deceit ; if your feet forsake the path of peace ; if you despise knowledge, and have no fear of God before your eyes, you are unprofitable. God is dishonoured by a race degenerated from the faith and piety of their ancestors. This is particularly the case, if the body be enervated through idleness ; besotted through intemperance ; corrupted through lust. Is it thus you requite God ? Is that the honour you owe him ? Are you willing to rank with the beast, whose natures are rapacious ; whose pursuits are grovelling ; whose habits are abominable. The body was built a temple where God may reside, polluting this temple, you shall be miserably destroyed. Let the youth avoid practices fatal in time and in eternity ; and let them glorify God with their bodies which are his.

God is the father of your spirit.

The mind was originally distinguished, receiving the impression of the divine image. A resemblance

to God was the chief glory of Adam in a state of innocence. That image by the fall was defaced ; that glory much tarnished. Something of the original impression still remains ; an obscure ray from that glory is still visible. A spiritual nature—superior understanding—high capacities continue to be our distinction.—In understanding, and in capacity, one has much the advantage of another ; but what principally claims the attention, under this particular, is, that the mind whether more or less distinguished is of God, who has in it an original right, and to whom it belongs to direct the operation of its various powers. “ Who hath put “ wisdom in the inward parts ? or who hath given understanding to the heart ? There is a spirit in man ; “ and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.” Hence the just complaint of Elihu, “ But none saith, where is God my Maker ? who giveth songs in the night ; Who teacheth us more than “ the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the “ fowls of heaven.”

Of irrational creatures, each has its peculiar excellency. The strength of lions and the swiftness of eagles ; the keenness of the serpent's eye and the beauty of the peacock's feather ; the courage of the war-horse, which mocketh at fear, and the prudence of the ant, which provideth her store for winter, are not to be

equalled even by man. Instinct in many instances is very perfect. In memory, in gratitude, in attachment, domestic animals are far from being defective. Is it not then a vain thing to boast of beauty, or strength ; of external accomplishments, or external attachments ; in which you are equalled and surpassed by the animals around. The mind gives you a superiority—a capacity to know, to serve and to enjoy God—that understanding the inspiration of the Almighty. The fear of God that is wisdom ; to depart from evil that is understanding : but if you do not fear God, nor depart from evil ; if you neither know, nor serve him ; if you be ignorant of the pleasure which communion with him imparts ; you descend from the rank assigned you, and come on a level with the brute. The excellence of that nature which you degrade gives you pain. You seek rest, where rest is not to be found. Days, and weeks, and months, and years pass over in a dream. Real knowledge is despised, but you thirst—for what ? For the writings of Moses and the Prophets ; of Christ and his Apostles ? No, but for the novel or the romance, which transports you into a *wild, airy region*, where you converse with *phantoms*, and become unfit to live in the region of truth, and to receive the satisfaction and improvement which they receive, who are much conversant with God's word and works. Rouse thoughtless youth ; assert the standing which God has

given you ; feel your superiority to the beasts which perish ; search the scriptures ; take them as a light to your feet and a lamp to your way ; let them dwell in you richly ; meditate on them day and night ; then claim kindred with angels ; then anticipate the happy moment when you shall have your dwelling among them.

The right which a *father* has in *his son* ; or a *master* in *his servant*, God has in you, since the *body* and the *mind* are the *care of his providence*.

He feeds us with food convenient for us ; his visitation preserves our spirit ; the minutest circumstance escapes not his notice, even the hairs of our head are all numbered. To him we are indebted for health of body, and for soundness of mind. The Apostle declares that God is the saviour or preserver of all men, but that he exercises a special providence over them who believe. A particular providence was expressly asserted by the Apostle Paul, when he was conversing with the Athenians ; and it is the foundation of our Lord's reasoning against solicitude for the future in his discourse delivered to a vast multitude assembled around him on the mount.†

† *Acts xvii. 24. end. Matthew vi. 25. end.*

The right, which God has in what he has made, and in what he continually supports, must be very evident. He does not always appear, and assert this his right: it has been done on some occasions, and these are sufficient to answer, for the present, the design of his wise and holy providence. The heart of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon exulted at the view of his great magnificence, and extensive dominion, believing that all had been obtained by his own wisdom and application, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" what language in the mouth of a frail, dependant mortal creature! He who sits on the throne of the universe derided his folly; he beheld the proud monarch and debased him; he stripped him of every vestage of royalty, nay, of every trace of reason. "He was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs had grown as eagles feathers, and his nails like birds claws." This sad event produced the best effect. It humbled the proud man, and laid him in the dust. He confessed his folly, and by a confession publicly announced in a decree, sent to his subjects, in every province of his empire, he glorified God, the decree itself deserves all attention, "I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto

" me; and I blessed the most High and I praised and
 " honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is
 " an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from
 " generation to generation: And all the inhabitants
 " of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth
 " according to his will in the army of heaven, and
 " among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can
 " stay his hand, or say unto him, What does thou?
 " At the same time my reason returned unto me; and,
 " for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and
 " brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors
 " and my lords sought unto me; and I was established
 " in my kingdom; and excellent majesty was added
 " unto me. Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and ex-
 " tol, and honour the King of heaven, all whose works
 " are truth, and his ways judgment: and those who
 " walk in pride he is able to abase."

The subjects of Herod of Judea approached him
 with abject flattery. They shouted when he spake, say-
 ing, "It is the voice of a God, and not of a man." His
 haughty soul was pleased with the impious adulation:
 But God knew him afar off; he commissioned an An-
 gel to smite him, and the Deity of Tyre and Sidon de-
 voured with worms gave up the Ghost.

Pharaoh of Egypt would acknowledge no power su-
 perior to his own, even in the heavens. Alarming

events roused his attention, but did not subdue his rebellious heart ; what language, especially in his circumstances, more bold and presumptuous ; he set omnipotence at defiance. " The enemy said, I will * pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my " lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my " sword, my hand shall destroy them." It was a vain boast " Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters. " The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. For the " horse of Pharoah went in with his chariots, and with " his horsemen, into the sea, and the Lord brought again " the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of " Israel went on dry *land* in the midst of the sea."

It is extremely dangerous to forget that we have a master in heaven. He enervates the body ; he distinguishes the mind ; he places us in circumstances, favourable for the exercise of these powers both of body, and of mind, which he communicated at first, and continually supports. They honour him who reverence his greatness, and put themselves under his guidance and care. Often have such obtained a complete triumph over all the weakness of flesh and blood, in situations too the most untoward and hazardous.†

† *Hebrews xi. 34—38. 2 Corinthians xiv. 8—end.*

The claim which a parent has upon his children, and a master upon his servant, God has upon you, whom, having purchased by his blood, he rescues from ruin.

You are the degenerate descendants of a degenerate parent. Represented by Adam in the covenant of works, in him you sinned, and in him you die; but you are also represented in a better covenant. Disobedience proved ruinous to men. It has degraded their nature, and exposed them to punishment. We are degraded and perishing creatures, who have destroyed ourselves; but in God is our help found. He has contrived the means of our safety; he has published these in the Gospel; he renders them effectual. "As
" Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even
" so shall the son of man be lifted up; That whoso-
" ever believeth in him should not perish but have
" eternal life.

" For God so loved the world, that he gave his only
" begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should
" not perish, but have everlasting life. For God
" sent not his Son into the world to condemn the
" world; but that the world through him might be
" saved.

“ He that believeth on him is not condemned ; but
“ he that believeth not is condemned already ; because
“ he hath not believed in the name of the only begot-
“ ten Son of God.”

You honour God when you believe his testimony concerning his own Son ; your fear of him is best expressed, when your obedience is cheerful, ready, and universal ; but the unbelieving, and the disobedient, by questioning his veracity, by throwing contempt upon his authority, rank among Apostate Angels ; and repeat the crime of Adam, which lost him Paradise, and has deluged our world with sin, misery and death. Tremble ye who are old ; tremble ye who are young ; let all tremble at the thought, and avoid what has been hitherto, what is now, and what shall continue to be fatal to the happiness and safety of men in life and death, in time and in eternity.

The doctrine contained in my text claims the attention of all, particularly of the young, to whom I now address myself, in hopes of gaining their ear ; would God that lasting impressions may be left upon their hearts.

You have been dedicated to the service of God.—
Every Jew, when eight days old, was marked out, as

an heir of the promise, and entered into covenant with God. On the one part, God engaged to be his God ; to send a deliverer from sin and misery ; and to give him an inheritance in the earthly, an emblem of the heavenly Canaan : on the other part, the Israelite renounced the Gods of the nations ; embraced the promise of a Saviour to come ; and received, from the God of Heaven and of earth, his respective allotment. The infants of Christian parents have the same advantage from *baptism* ; which the infants of Jewish parents had from *circumcision* : They too are marked out as the heirs of the promise, and are entered into covenant with God. God engages to be their God ; as their God, he has provided them a Saviour from sin and misery, and an inheritance in the heavenly Canaan :— they renounce the devil, the world and the flesh ; they embrace the Saviour whom God has provided ; and receive from his hand, their respective allotment in this world, and in the world which is to come. The act of the parent, became the act of the child, when, attaining the years of discretion, the Jew repairing to the temple, complied with the ritual prescribed in the law of Moses ; and when the Christian, in similar circumstances, worships according to the rule of worship found in the New Testament, especially, when he eats bread, and drinks wine in memorial of the once crucified but now exalted Redeemer. By this act you honour God,

coming out, at his command, from a world lying in wickedness, and appearing among his sons and daughters. Let not such an act be put off. Why rob God of what he requires, and to what he has an unquestionable right? Why attach yourselves to a world destined to destruction? Do you mean to let your youth pass in the service of sin and folly, and to reserve the dregs of your lives for religious services? Is not this to offer God a corrupt thing? to bring to his altar the sick, the lame and the blind? It is an insult not to be borne. God claims your immediate service, "Remember *now* thy creator in the *days of thy youth*.— "My Son give me thy heart. I love them that love me, and they, that *seek me early*, shall find me."

Follow not, I beseech you, a multitude to do evil; Do not consent, should sinners entice thee. One after another is escaping from the camp of Satan. Christ's subjects multiply. Great numbers offer to enlist under his banners. Soon you shall be left among an *accused* and a *despicable group*, unless you also escape; unless you take the oath of allegiance, and immediately enter your names among the soldiers of the cross.

I beseech you, my young friends, fear God and keep his commands; I assure you of acceptance; and in God's name promise you the highest marks of distinc-

tion; whilst they, who neither fear God, nor keep his commandments, are exposed to the terrors of that day which "shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, "all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day "that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of "hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor "branch."

APPENDIX.

That infants are included in the covenant of grace ; and have their place in the visible church, are delightful truths, affording a hope of their happiness should they die in infancy ; and a security against the snares laid for them in the maxims and practices of a world lying in wickedness, should they be continued on earth. None, who have considered the covenant with Abraham, can doubt of its being a dispensation of the covenant of grace, it promises pardon to the offender ; triumph over every enemy ; the restoration of life and immortality. These assurances, announced to Adam after the fall, were to Abraham gloriously illustrated. But infants received the seal of this covenant, whether descended from Abraham, or not. If, the servants and children of those who resembled Abraham in faith and obedience.

By the express command of God, infants were acknowledged to be God's children, and stood in a close and immediate relation to the church. This command was acted upon from Abraham's day until our Lord's appearance.

Christ's death, indeed rendered the Mosaic economy of no further use; It was abolished: But the covenant with Abraham, being an everlasting covenant, remains, under a new dispensation, and with new seals. The principles established in that covenant are the same. - The right of infants to a participation therein is one of these principles, which cannot be denied without an express command. Where is that command? No where in the New Testament, therefore infants stand in the same connection with the church under the present dispensation, as they did with the church under former dispensations. It is their inalienable right, which they have received from God himself; It must neither be denied them, nor depreciated as of little consequence. Advocates for a different doctrine, are so sensible of the weight of the argument from Abraham's acting under a dispensation of the covenant of grace, into which infants were received, that they explain that covenant as different in its nature and tendency, and, in their zeal for a favourite system, have in some instances depreciated entirely the old Testament: such a course, being resorted to, as necessary in their own defence, brings the cause, which requires such defence under great suspicion.

Our youth, being the children of the church, and

having attained the years of discretion ; if they be sensible of their lost and helpless state by sin, and depend upon the atonement of Christ for pardon and acceptance with God ; If they be instructed in the gospel doctrine, and have a competent knowledge to discern the Lord's body ; if they desire to renounce their sins, and determine to lead holy and godly lives ; may certainly claim as a privilege the communion of the church ; and participating therein is a pressing duty. The act of the parent thereby becomes their own act. It fixes religious principles, and guards them against a thousand snares in which otherwise they might be entangled. " Take a view of man in his low estate." says a late intelligent writer on the culture of the heart, " Think if it be godlike to send glad tidings to the poor, if it be godlike to console the miserable, and if the sympathy of an affectionate and powerful friend be a strong consolation ? Man is mortal, and Jesus passed before us through death, not with an awful insensibility, which leaves the feeling heart behind.

" Does the doctrine of a resurrection fall in with our predilection for these bodies, and open as it were to the eye of sense the prospect of immortality ? And does the doctrine of judgment accord with the natural feeling, that we are accountable ?

“ Do the sufferings of Christ, and the glory which
“ followed, illustrate and ratify his important doctrine of
“ a state of trial, preparatory to a state of retribution ?

“ Judge Christianity by its effects. Does it kindle
“ love to God and man, and establish the authority of
“ conscience, and reconcile man to his lot ?

“ If your child be satisfied that Christ is a teacher
“ sent from God, and is willing to be his disciple, it is
“ meet to confess him before men. The celebration
“ of his death is a proper testimony of regard. Such a
“ benefactor deserves to be had in everlasting re-
“ membrance.

“ The hearts of the young, when first introduced to
“ communion with the faithful, are accessible and soft,
“ Parents might avail themselves of this season to re-
“ call their early dedication to God, to explain the wis-
“ dom and love which inspired the discipline through
“ which they have to pass, to foretell its influence on
“ their future conduct, to anticipate the time when
“ that conduct shall be judged, and to devolve the care
“ of it on themselves.”

Our youth are not aware how much they lose, when
they despise, and by despising forfeit their religious

privileges. I once knew *a boy*, not more than *fourteen* years old, whose mind had been long exercised with religion. He was urged to approach the table of the Lord as a privilege which he might claim. The solemnity of the service arrested his thoughts for many days. Books were recommended to assist him in his preparation; but he found most assistance from the scripture. He approached with fear and trembling, The words, '*my body broken for you, my blood shed for the remission of sins,*' could not be resisted. They were clear as day. 'I am a sinner, here is a Saviour from sin; I have felt pain, and may yet feel it; but Christ suffered for me; I must die, and the thought of death is terrible to me; Christ died, and by death destroyed him who had the power of death, that is the devil, and delivered those, who, through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage. Thou art such a Saviour as I need; I believe help my unbelief; I resign myself to thy guidance—to thy service—to thy disposal—guide me—employ me—dispose of me.' It was an humble—a cheerful—an entire resignation of the soul to Christ, who alone has power to sanctify—to invigorate—and to save. The effect was astonishing. He went from the holy table in rapture. Is this to believe? and is faith so delightful an act? Does it produce such a change; give such hopes; inspire such triumph? What is this? I never

felt before, as I now feel, I never was so completely happy. For some days his joy was unspeakable ; the world has no such power ; gives no such satisfaction ; never raises such transport. During his future life this happy moment was never forgotten, nor could the conviction be lost, that there is a reality in religion—Come, O come—young men, young women, taste and see that God is good. You never knew what pleasure is, and never shall know, until you participate in the pleasures of a Godly life.

Religion so enobles and invigorates the mind, that the righteous become bold as lions. I have known even a child pacified, during a thunder storm when panic had seized its breast, by an assurance that it is God who rides upon the wings of the wind, and directs the tempest ; that the lightning is the "glory flashing from his countenance ; that he speaks in the thunder, saying to the righteous, ' my power is your defence ; these terrors are warnings to the wicked, * that they may repent before they are consumed.'—No season is more favourable to speak to children of the majesty of God ; to make them sensible that he has power to defend, and power to destroy.

It is impossible to read the firmness of that woman and her seven sons whom no threatening and no tor-

ture could seduce, whose *heroism* is perpetuated in one of the apocryphal writings, and whose *eulogy* is pronounced by an apostle, without concluding, that religion raises even the weakest, the youngest, the most tender, above human infirmity; they feel that they are immortals, and as immortals smile at the vain attempt of the king of terrors to alarm them.

That religion, destroys the fear of death, and assures us of a blessed immortality is so clearly demonstrated in a narrative, I some time ago had the happiness to communicate, that I cannot answer my present purpose better than offering it anew to the most attentive and serious consideration.

Mrs. *Mary Davis*, possessed a mind well adapted to receive and retain serious impressions, being free from that versality which sometimes renders it difficult to fix the attention of the young to any one object, and yet sufficiently discerning and active to perceive the value of instruction, and to feel its influence. For such amusements and gayety as dissipate the mind, and are a sad abuse of time, she never had any taste. She was decent in her appearance, and regular in her conduct; unsullied by their vices, who treat religion with contempt, and neglect its public institutions. In regular, correct, becoming habits she was confirmed by the

sentiments and behaviour of him who was the friend of her bosom. The form of religion may, nay, often, does exist, where the power is altogether unknown. It was not yet felt by this, otherwise amiable youth, nor was there the least idea of what it meant.

A happy change was effected in her state, by the means of a mortifying and afflictive providence, which she could not foresee, and had she foreseen it, which it was not in her power to prevent. The impression was deep. It awoke all the mother's feelings and produced the most painful sensations. If a child sicken or die, the sensations are acute; but never to be named with those which arise at viewing an infant under calamities, which threaten an afflicted and helpless life. Such the event which first wounded the feelings of this young woman, and cherished the latent seeds of a consumptive habit. Her health, was not for sometime, apprehended to be in danger; but when this could now no longer be concealed, it alarmed her exceedingly, and gave entirely a new direction to her thoughts... She began to think of death, of judgment, and of eternity, and found that she was not prepared to meet God in scenes so terrible to the guilty; and now, for the first time, she was sensible that her nature was fallen and polluted. For some months she continued in a melancholy frame; during which, the scriptures were

as a sealed letter; she could recollect nothing whence she could derive comfort, being bewildered, and at a loss what to think, or say, or do.

Religious conversation, and religious exercises were now to her as her meat and drink; and in their company only who were capable of conversing on these subjects, and assisting in these exercises, did she take delight. It was her happiness to have such around her, particularly her mother; one of her brothers, and her worthy Pastor, whose visits were frequent, acceptable and useful. They offered her consolation which she refused to receive, until she could find it in God reconciled to men through Jesus Christ. Speaking to her of death, she observed, "I know, I must die, and I have no desire to live any longer than when I can feel a full assurance of pardon for my sin; and who would be willing to die without that assurance?"

A sense of ignorance, and of hardness of heart disquieted, and cast her down. This was her burthen and complaint, the more so, as she could remember no promise of scripture, whence she could derive comfort. Suddenly the sun of righteousness arose upon her soul with healing under his wings. The shades of night all fled, and the clouds were dispersed.

Joy cheered her heart, and an unusual lustre sparkled in her eye, she was in raptures; finding Christ precious to her soul; assured he would not cast her off, for he has promised to cast none off who come to him, she came to him, and was delighted to think "he is mine and I am his." Tongue cannot tell, nor can the heart of a stranger to such joy, conceive feelings unspeakable and full of glory. The spirit bore witness with her spirit that she was a child of God, and an heir of heaven; kindling a flame which acquired strength in this land of darkness, and at last blazed gloriously in the regions of light.

It was pleasing to remark the existence of the graces which adorn the Christian character, and their lively exercise. The love of God, and of man had taken full possession of her soul, which prevented any murmur at the afflictive providence under which she languished; and excited renewed, vigorous, unceasing attempts to bring all with whom she conversed to an immediate repentance, and to a cheerful submission to the gospel. She acquiesced in the will of God, believing she was brought low, that in her a giddy youth might see on what they depend. Her language was the language of a considerate and of a devout mind. "I know not but that God has made me an example to the young, and called me away in my youth to be a

"warning to them." To be satisfied to suffer, and to die, that others may thereby be benefitted is no mean attainment, it proceeds from the same principle, which in different circumstances has animated the martyr, and the patriot in their glorious career; and is equally acceptable to God, and honourable for the individual.

The love of God can in no instance be separated from the love of man. The one produces the other, They act in concert, and together form the leading characteristics of the disciple of Jesus. The heart of this dying Christian overflowed with love for all, and for each without exception. She was observed to pray earnestly for those who were present, and for those who were absent; for the young and for the old; for the church of God, and for the whole world of mankind.

Intending for a distant country, the inquiries concerning the manners, habits and circumstances of the inhabitants of that country, are diligent, repeated and particular. We study their language, and furnish ourselves with the information and acquirements which may be for our advantage. This immortal soul great delight in the hymns in which the redeemer's honours are celebrated. Still one question or another was stated concerning the future circumstances of

the Saints, whether they would know their friends, and whether they were acquainted with what was transacting on earth. It gave her pleasure to think that she would know again the friends who were now so dear to her, and she was anxious should the transactions of men on earth, but communicated to Saints in heaven, that none of these whom she esteemed should be known to forget the God of their fathers, and to forsake his way. Eternity was a word she often repeated and the thought filled her with awe, and amazement.

The fear of death was so far surmounted that she could converse familiarly on the subject, and even at times desired to depart, anticipating the blessed state to which she should be removed; she directed what persons she wished to be about her at her last moments; she beheld her shroud with a serene and pleasant aspect; she suggested the subject of her funeral sermon, and the tune to be sung. In a sprightly vein she accosted a pious brother, whose heart was ready to break at parting with one so much the object of his affection. "Come, will you go along with me?—come," she said, "go;" and wished, throwing her trembling arms about those who were near, that they might altogether be removed to Immanuel's land. Once when she expected her last hour, it was suggested that she might survive for some time. She replied with regret, "Do you

“think this is good news? No, I long to be with Jesus.”
 “Had I the wings of a dove, that I might fly and be at
 “rest.—Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.” The dis-
 tress of her friends was matter of concern to her; of-
 ten would she beseech, “Grieve not for me, I shall
 “soon be happy; let not my mamma grieve; my
 “friends comfort her when I am gone.—Why should
 “she grieve? we shall not be long separated.” Tell
 me ye sons of riot and mirth; of dissipation and folly,
 could you face the king of terrors without dread? Could
 you at his approach, preserve equal composure?—
 Could you defy his power, and undaunted pass his
 gloomy territory?—No; distress and anguish would
 seize your souls; you would die with fear, and be con-
 sumed with terrors. It is the disciple of Jesus, who
 knows that his redeemer liveth, who can triumph.—
 “O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy
 “victory?” Thanks be to God, who giveth us the vic-
 tory.

A few days before her departure, she appeared more
 an inhabitant of Paradise, than an exile in this horrid
 land. Once after remaining some time with her eyes
 closed, with seeming composure, and a smiling coun-
 tenance, she suddenly exclaimed, “O what sweet,
 “what heavenly music! the sweetest I ever heard!”
 “There were multitudes of voices singing.”—Her

transport on another occasion was very great. "I see
 "it—I see it—the blessed ones all around the throne,
 "in row above row—surrounded with light and glory,
 "and crowns upon their heads." The moment pre-
 ceding her dissolution, she broke out into strains which
 astonished all who were present. "What do I feel—
 "how sweet! how very sweet! I never before felt any
 "thing like this! O sweet—sweet—sweet! There is
 "nothing like it on earth, nor under the earth, nor in
 "the whole world. There is nothing like it under the
 "sun, nor above the sun. My dear creatures what is
 "it that I feel? I cannot stay here—I must go to my
 "Saviour—I am going—let me not return. O what do
 "I feel? I cannot comprehend it—I cannot express it.
 "What can I say? What can I do? I can do no more."
 The vivacity of her eye, the expression of her counte-
 nance, a general effort of her whole body shewed that
 it was her wish to be gone, and that she was on the
 wing to a better world.

The mortal bands, stretched to the utmost, were
 ready to snap asunder, when she, with every one pre-
 sent, sunk into a profound and solemn silence. After
 a short pause, she raised her eyes in surprise.....
 "How frightened I am to find myself still here.....
 "I was at the gates of heaven, just going in—I am
 "now sure of happiness."—She began to converse de-

Lightfully of her God—of her Saviour, and of the heavenly rest. She desired that the chamber might not be too much crowded. She observed, “that the clouds were passed over, and it would be a fair day.” Whispering, she promised her mother, “when I see more, I will tell you, if I can.”

The dejected countenances of the by-standers drew her attention. “Why you all look melancholy! O be cheerful—go sing—sing that sweet tune again.”—*Sherburne*, a tune of which she was very fond, was sung to an appropriate hymn. During this act of praise she was perfectly composed. After it was finished, her lips were observed to move, but it could not be understood what she said. Once more her voice was audible. With a solemnity, and with a tone of voice, which no words can express, she pronounced, so as to be distinctly heard over the whole chamber, the sacred name, “God—Lord—Jesus.” No more was intelligible. It was the language of prayer—perhaps the prayer of the Saviour expiring on the cross, “In to thy hands I commend my spirit.” She said no more, but without a single groan, or the least struggle, she fell asleep in Jesus, leaving on the deserted clay an engaging and an expressive smile.

She died at Bermuda, on Saturday the 16th April.

A. D. 1621, in the 23th year of her age, and was the next day attended to the grave by a multitude of weeping friends, whom the impressive circumstances, which have been related, filled with uncommon solemnity.

If a person of decent life, untroubled with the vices of the age, and no ways addicted to any extravagance or folly, felt herself a perishing sinful creature, whose hopes of deliverance arose from the merits of the Redeemer, and the power of his efficacious grace; it may universally be concluded, that external attainments however specious, as a foundation of hope, will deceive the man at the hour of death, and at the day of judgment. The fabric built on the sand must give way.— There is no name by which men can be saved but the name of Jesus. Happy that dispensation of providence, however mortifying and afflictive; happy that word, however terrible, which convincing any of their diseased state, leads him to inquire after the balm of life, and to put himself under the physician who is there.

If the whole of mankind, in their original state, those who comparatively are blameless and regular, not excepted, be in diseased and dangerous circumstances, what aggravations attend the disease, what threatening appearances the danger, in their case, who are stained with vice, immersed in dissipation, and think of no-

thing but dress, gayety and folly. Like insects of the moment, who live in the sun beam, if a cloud intervene, they die.—they are dispersed with the least breath of wind. Thoughtless mortals you sport with death, and prepare for yourselves torments of mind, in comparison of which, any torments which the body can endure are not once to be named.

Let none disbelieve a future state of happiness or misery. One rising from the dead could not afford a more convincing evidence that the soul shall survive the body, and exist in a separate state, than the behaviour of this, our fellow mortal, at her departing moment. Standing on the line where time ends, and eternity begins, she calmly bids terrestrial objects a long farewell, and in rapture partakes of the joy which celestial objects offer to the disciple of Jesus. If the film fall from her eyes, and the earthly impediments be so far removed, that she should see, and feel, and act, as if already invested with the celestial body, was this an incredible thing? Or if it be surprising, what room is there for ridicule and contempt? Shall any venture, as I am told has been done, to impute the whole to the delirium of a fever, or the fancies of a disordered brain? Whence this rash conclusion? She derived hope, from the merit of the redeemer—security, from the faithfulness of God, and a meetness for heaven,

from the spirit changing, sanctifying, ennobling her whole nature. The flame of love warmed her soul, and animated all her actions. Let her joys be imputed to the distinguishing grace of God, who was thus pleased to support her under the agonies of death; and to call the attention of others to the interesting, the awful scenes of eternity, that believing, they may also have hope in death, and an entrance ministered for them abundantly in the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.



RELIGION

RECOMMENDED TO YOUTH

FROM THE

INFIRMITIES ATTENDING OLD AGE.



RELIGION RECOMMENDED TO YOUTH

FROM THE

INFIRMITIES ATTENDING OLD AGE.



S E R M O N V.

ECCLESIASTES XII. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

*“ 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 : While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or
“ the stars be not darkened, nor the clouds return after
“ the rain : In the day when the keepers of the house
“ shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow them-
“ selves, and the grinders cease because they are few,
“ and those that look out of the windows be darkened ;
“ And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the
“ sound of the grinding is low ; and he shall rise up at
“ the voice of the bird ; and all the daughters of music
“ shall be brought low ; Also when they shall be afraid
“ of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way,*

“ and the almond-tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper, shall be a burden, and desire shall fail ; because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets : Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern : Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was ; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”

Solomon, in these words, addressing the young, gives them good advice. The imagination in youth being lively, the preacher offers instruction in figurative language. A godly life is recommended, “ Remember now thy creator,” and the recommendation involves a motive urging compliance. Gratitude, a feeling alive in youth, is roused. Life is then greatly relished.— Every scene being new displays all its charms. A capacity for happiness is of God, who has not bestowed this capacity in vain. Wisdom’s ways are pleasantness, and her paths are peace. Great peace have they who keep God’s commandments. The faith and obedience of the gospel inspire a peace, and joy, which is unspeakable and full of glory. But let youth be lost in dissipation and folly, and a religious life can commence at no other period, with such advantage. Of this Solomon was well convinced, and did what was in his

power to do, to produce in others the same conviction. He speaks of "evil days ;" and of "years in which we have no pleasure." The body may be the prey of disease, and the mind may be soured through disappointment. The tale of life is generally a tale of woe.—*Few* and *evil* are the days of our pilgrimage on earth. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, and vexation of spirit. The oppression of age imbitters the spirit, so much, that the exclamation of Job often escapes, from a heart worn out and broken. "I would not live always—I chuse strangling and death rather than life—I lothe it." If a cheering ray brightens our morning, clouds overcast our noon, and a deluge of misery pours upon our evening.

The description of misery found in my text, I shall, through divine assistance, illustrate, that thou mayest learn the *advantage* and *necessity* of remembering "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."

The recital of evils begins with the mind, when the *sun*, and the *light*, and the *moon*, and the *stars* are obscured in darkness. What more striking in the creation, than the lights which God made to rule the day, and the night ; they add splendour to our system, and

are acknowledged to afford universal benefit. Gloom and horror must follow were they withdrawn. These glorious objects were too striking to be neglected in bold and figurative description. To these, have princes, arrayed in honour and power, been compared.— The government of the *just one*, ruling in the fear of God, is spoken of, as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the sun of righteousness arising upon a benighted world with healing under his wings. The powers of the mind, also, whereby human nature is so distinguished, often appear under the same figure. “Father of lights” is a characteristic of God, descriptive of the moral perfections of his nature. He, who inspired man with a rational and immortal principle, is on that very account, called “the light of the world.”— They who neglect the peculiar characteristics of their nature, or abuse them to unworthy purposes are said to “walk in darkness,” and in the shadow of death.— In youth, the faculties of the mind are vigorous and shining; but, in old age, they are feeble and obscure. The understanding is dull, the memory treacherous, and the affections languid. The fire of genius is extinguished, and the spirit of enterprise is lost. The night is come, a night wherein neither sun, nor light, nor moon, nor stars appear.

Of the mind Solomon still speaks, "The clouds re-
 " turn after the rain." In southern climates, at parti-
 cular seasons, one cloud is scarcely dispersed, and the
 tempest which it contains, blown over, when another
 overcasts the sky, and the tempest rages again with
 increasing violence ; beautifully descriptive of the
 vexations and troubles, with which the mind in old age,
 is generally overcharged. In reference to these, Ci-
 ciro, in his treatise on old age, represents an old man,
 with Atlas on his shoulders, bending under the op-
 pressive load. The young are too thoughtless, the
 old too thoughtful ; the one a stranger to the road of
 life, carelessly traverse the flowery path ; the other,
 having trode many a rugged step move along timid and
 apprehensive ; here no danger is dreaded ; there ima-
 ginary dangers spring up. Youth, intent on pleasure,
 makes no prudent observations ; age, having out lived
 pleasure, makes these observations when now too late :
 the one provides not with sufficient care for a tedious
 journey ; the other is anxious to provide when the
 journey is now nearly at an end.

From the mind, the inspired penman passes on to
 the body. He informs us in general, that the " keep-
 " ers of the house shall tremble, the strong men shall
 " bow themselves, and the grinders shall cease because
 " they are few." The limbs and firmer parts of the

body are much damaged, the hands and knees, through the relaxation of the nerves, feeble, and unpliant, can afford the body little support, and little protection.— The teeth, few, and decayed, unable to comminute solid food, refuse that service which they once gave, and leave the exhausted traveller, a prey to various inconveniences.

Defects in the respective senses is particularly specified.

The sense of *seeing* is first mentioned, which, of all the senses, as the aged, in sad experience, well know, is soonest subject to decay. “Those that look at the “windows are darkened.” When Isaac was old his eyes were dim. The prophet Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were set by reason of his age. It is spoken of as altogether uncommon, that when Moses was an hundred and twenty years old, his eyes were not dim, nor his natural force abated.

Food becomes tasteless and insipid. It is received without desire, and prepared with difficulty for digestion. Comminuted by the gums the operation is attended with no noise. “The sound of the grinding is “low.” The tedious manner in which the process goes on, expressed by the doors being shut in the

street, gives an appearance of indifference for food, which actually exists. The loss of appetite produces wakefulness. Sleep, refreshing to the young, and undisturbed; is less refreshing to the aged, and is easily disturbed. "They rise up at the sound of the bird." By cock crowing are they awake, and enjoy not the repose, which, their weakness, and multiplied infirmities require.

"All the daughters of music shall be brought low." The modulation of the voice depends upon the ear..... This organ, impaired through age, distinguishes not the melody of sound; and to the sweets of conversation it is also shut. The ear has lost the relish for music; and the voice that clearness by which it is produced.

Seeing, tasting, hearing, are evidently pointed out, in the expressions which have already been explained, as defective in advanced life. We expect to find the sense of "*Feeling*" next in the enumeration. This sense is diffused through the body, and has an important office. It gives the alarm, and puts us on our guard. Its defects are clearly marked, when the aged are said to be "afraid of that which is high, and fears 'are in the way.'" Old people walk with an unsteady step, even on a smooth road; but suppose the road to

be rugged, this sense is too dull to give timeous notice of the various elevations and depressions; they stumble and fall, they dread a journey over rugged or rising ground; their progress exposes them to inconvenience and danger: their fears are awake, and keep them in pain.

Having specified four of the senses, and shown their defects in old age, it is not to be imagined that the fifth, impaired as the rest, should escape notice; it is not overlooked, but brought in view, with all its defects, when "The almond tree is said to flourish." The flower of this tree has been represented of a whitish colour, and is here explained as an emblem of gray hairs; but the hoary head is no certain indication of old age: Beside, the flowers of the Almond tree have more of a purplish, than whitish hue. What seems immediately in view is that as the Almond tree flourishes in winter, it is a perpetual winter with the old man, who perceives not the agreeable odours exhaled from flowers and herbs. To him, the vine, with the tender grape, give no good smell.

These defects in the senses were felt by Barzillai the Gileadite, who "came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan. Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even four-

"score years old: and he had provided the king of
 "sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he *was* a
 "very great man. And the king said unto Barzillai,
 "come thee over with me, and I will feed thee with
 "me in Jerusalem. And Barzillai said unto the king,
 "How long have I to live, that I should go up with
 "the king unto Jerusalem? I *am* this day fourscore
 "years old; *and* can I discern between good and evil?
 "can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink?
 "can I hear any more the voice of singing-men or
 "singing-women? wherefore then should thy servant
 "be yet a burden unto my lord the king?"

An affection, peculiarly grievous, and mortifying as it
 is grievous in consequence whereof desire fails, is im-
 mediately in view, when the grasshopper is said to be
 a burden. Crushed under the pressure of accumulat-
 ed infirmities, and aggravated evils, men go to their
 long home, and the mourners go about the street.

From the outward infirmities which strike the eye,
 Solomon looks within, where he observes an universal
 failure. The vitals are affected; the animal economy
 is deranged; the earthly tabernacle is ready to fall to
 pieces. The spine of the back, the power of its mus-
 cles and ligaments having been diminished, posses-
 ses not its usual firmness. An old man cannot, for

this reason stand upright, but bends to the earth, which is soon to receive him. The vertebrae, of which the spine is composed, resemble rings, or links through which passes the medula oblongata, of a whitish colour; the defects whereof are plainly described by the looping of the silver cord.

The head, holding a dignified place in the body, on that account, is not improperly compared to a "Golden bowl;" and defluxions, from the head to the eyes—the nose—the mouth—the lungs, have an easy resemblance to water issuing out of a bowl when broken.... Not from the head only, but from all parts of the body, secretions, by different organs, flow with unrestrained irregularity, which is well expressed under the metaphor of "the pitcher broken at the fountain."

"The wheel is broken at the cistern." The principle of life sinks, having lost that force which impells the circulation of the blood, the course thereof being interrupted, difficulty of breathing, apoplexy, lethargy, and death, immediately follow. The ancients, indeed, were unacquainted, with a doctrine, which has, by moderns, been fully established, concerning the circulation of the blood; but they knew enough to render the phraseology in my text proper. They knew that the blood moved through the body; they knew that the

viscera and the members were cherished by its heat; they knew that it concreted and grew cold in death.

The information with which Solomon concludes, claims marked attention. Exhausted with labour, infirmity and disease, the body returns to the dust from whence it was taken; but the spirit, an immaterial and immortal substance, surviving the ruin of the body, returns to God, from whom it proceeded, to give an account of the work, which, he assigned this his servant to do on earth. Solomon's description of the ills of life, and of the issue of these ills, may, profitably, be contrasted with what his father David said, in plainer language on the same subject, "Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, return ye children of men. For a thousand years in thy sight *are but as* yesterday, when it is past, and *as* a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; and they are as a sleep: in the morning *they are* like grass *which* groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, and withereth. For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret *sins* in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath; we spend our years as a tale

O

“that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they are fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow: for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.”

In my explanation of this passage of scripture, I differ greatly from all the commentators which I have seen. I am indebted to Dr. Mead for elucidating a description so highly figurative. His scheme is natural—it gives unity to the whole—and brings in a regular order, into the enumeration, a variety of infirmities, too well understood by all who are far advanced, in this the vale of tears.

After reviewing the *evil days*, and the *years* in which you can have no pleasure, the exhortation in my text, presses with irresistible force upon the mind, “*Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth.*” Can it be questioned by any, of whatever age, capacity, or means of information, that the *Creator*, the *Preserver*, the *Redeemer*, has a most undoubted claim upon his attachment and service? Let that attachment be felt; let that service be given in early life. Begin in time to number your days, and to apply your hearts unto wisdom. To such conduct my text moves you by four motives; *evil days* are coming upon you—*years* are drawing nigh in which you shall have no

pleasure—you shall go to your long home—God will bring you to an account for your conduct during the mortal state. In some of these events you enter with every disadvantage upon a religious life ; in others of them your entering upon such a life at all, shall be found impracticable.

If you remember not your creator *now in the days of thy youth*, when will you remember him ? when *evil days come upon you ?* But what days are these ? Are they not the days of sickness, and the day of death ? Inquire after those who have grown up with you from childhood ; some of them languish, at this moment, on beds of sickness ; some of them are not to be found on earth ; their names have been erased from the list of the living. To sickness, and to death many of the same age with yourselves have been subjected, and why not you ? Have you made a covenant with death, and with the grave have you made an agreement ? When the overflowing scourge passes through, shall you escape ? Of the evils incident to human nature, be assured, you shall have your share. Suppose you were sick, and in the jaws of death ; you have forgotten God, shall you not be forgotten of him ? and can a situation be imagined more forlorn and more desperate ? With understanding you are required to serve God ; it is a cheerful gift, of which he accepts ;

but what knowledge can you have of God's nature and will, who have remained ignorant of him, until the moment of death? Is it to be supposed that you should at once be attached to what you have long been averse? You have not learned the first principles of religion, and how can you expect the consolation, which establishment therein alone can produce? The night has arrived; then you cannot work: The master of the house has arisen and shut the door; then no importunity, no effort, can gain you admission. You shall be treated with contempt, and be left in darkness, to weep, to wail, and to gnash your teeth.

At "*the evil day*," the day of sickness, and the moment of dissolution, is not the period to commence a religious life; much less the year wherein you have no pleasure. Old age steals a pace on man; misery and ruin fill its train. Human nature is a mere wreck. The tree rotten at the core trembles before the rising storm, and is prostrated on the ground. The body is frail and perishing, it is crushed before the moth, the food of worms, the subject of corruption. As the period of dissolution approaches, infirmities and decay compel men to retire from society, and from business of every kind. Is it *now* for the *first* time, you are to think of God, and to engage in his service? After prostituting your best days in the service of sin, do you

reserve the dregs of your life for God? To insult him, with a vile and corrupt offering, is an offensive determination. Offer these services to the state, sick, lame and blind you can render no service, the offer would be rejected with disdain; and can you put off God, with that, at which even fellow men would spurn? See that you have more reverence for God. Remember that his name is dreadful among the nations.

As evil days, and years in which you have no pleasure is not the season to begin a religious life, much less is the hour of death or the day of judgment. In the one case, the probationary state is just ending; in the other, the state of rewards and punishments is beginning; every consideration urges upon the conscience the command in my text, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." It is seed time, sow the seeds of religion. It is spring, cultivate with care the celestial plant. Would you do well either in this world or in the next, "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any prairie" you must think of these things and do them.

Our *youth* fond of gaiety and mirth, rejoice ; they cheer their hearts ; they walk in the ways of their hearts, and the sight of their eyes ; but forget that for all these things they must give an account unto God. It is painful for them to hear of sickness or of death ; but as they must sicken and die, and may sicken and die any day, any hour, any moment ; the subject cannot be trifled with, nor put off : it is your honour ; it is your life ; it is your all for eternity.

Ornament and *show* attract the youthful mind.... What more ornamented than flowers ; or what more showy than the beautiful and lively colours of the rainbow ? but what so fading ! or what of such short continuance ! All that is ornamental or showy in life, at the touch of sickness, or at the stroke of death ; immediately fades and vanishes. Let not such ornaments, and such show amuse you to your ruin. Lay religion to heart, you will then have no inclination for the follies of life : Give God your hearts ; you will then renounce with disdain the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life : Be faithful unto death ; you will then shine in immortal youth and unfading beauty. In figurative language, but language well adapted to rouse the attention ; The honour, the beauty, the transport which is attached to the disciple of Jesus, is displayed in one of the Psalms, in a glory, which darkens the

glory at any time attached to carnal objects, or to any
 of the votaries of carnal pleasure " My heart is in-
 " diting a good matter : I speak of the things which I
 " have made touching the king ; my tongue *is* the pen
 " of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children
 " of men : grace is poured into thy lips ; therefore
 " God hath blessed thee for ever. All thy garments
 " *smell* of myrrh, and aloes, *and* cassia, out of the
 " ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.
 " King's daughters *were* among thy honourable wo-
 " men : upon thy right hand did stand the queen in
 " gold of Ophir. Hearken, O daughter, and consider
 " and incline thine ear ; forget also thine own people,
 " and thy father's house ; So shall the king greatly de-
 " sire thy beauty ; for he *is* thy Lord, and worship
 " thou him. And the daughters of Tyre *shall be there*
 " with a gift ; *even* the rich among the people shall
 " intreat thy favour. The king's daughter *is* all glorious
 " within : her clothing *is* of wrought gold. She shall
 " be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work :
 " the virgins her companions that follow her shall be
 " brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing
 " *shall* they *be* brought : they shall enter into the king's
 " palace. Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children,
 " whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.
 " I will make thy name to be remembered in all gene-
 " rations ; therefore shall the people praise thee for

“ever and ever.” What is dignified in being of the race of kings; attractive in beauty, in rich attire, or splendid accommodation; gratifying in the sweetest odours; or valuable in the purest gold; all is yours, and more than all, who, united by faith to Christ, attain holiness in heart and life. Children of God, and heirs of immortality, you are lovely and adorned; blessed in yourselves, and a blessing to the world.—What has rendered the name of Josiah so illustrious in the sacred pages?—what else but his fearing God from his youth, and his steady attachment to his service!—How came Timothy to be so useful to society, and such an ornament to the church?—By the knowledge of the scripture, which he read when a child, upon which he formed as he grew up, and which was the rule of his conduct during the whole of life. Why was John the favourite disciple?—No other reason can be assigned but that he was the youngest of all the disciples.

When I recommend religion to the attention of our Youth, I speak of the doctrines which the scriptures teach, and the precepts which they inculcate: of what they require you to believe, and of what to practise: of your duty to God, to your neighbour, and to yourselves, in all its branches, and to all its extent. I have known men of benevolent dispositions, who were very active in relieving the distresses of their fellow-men;

but they discovered little or no veneration for the name, the service, or the word of God. They despised the mediatorial government; establishing a righteousness of their own, they did not submit to the righteousness which is of God by faith. An opposite character has also come under my observation. I have seen persons strict, very strict in all the externals of religion. They were attached to a favourite system, which they even idolized: but they possessed little if any good will; beyond a narrow circle, they were neither kind, forbearing nor useful. Persons of both of these characters are greatly to be pitied: they do something, and something considerable, but it is to be feared that the defects are such as shall blast their hopes, and prevent their acceptance. I recommend to my young friends a perfect character. Know God, and obey the Gospel. Believe what God says to you, practise what he commands. Cultivate love to God and man; abound in the conduct which springs from these principles. This is the clothing, which must adorn you, ornamental as a robe and diadem. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil."

The subject, which has claimed our attention, leads me to address myself to those who are advancing in life. You have lost the relish for these enjoyments in which during youthful days you took pleasure. You totter on the brink of the grave. When bodily infirmities croud upon you, you stand in need of inward consolation. None can he expect who has grown old in sin. A sinner an hundred years old is accursed. An infirm body and an wounded spirit render his situation intolerable. Were any such hearing me, although I cannot address them with the same prospect as I address the young, yet let me assure them, that there is yet hope; the door of mercy is yet open, some, even at the eleventh hour, have entered in, and you are not forbidden, nay you are invited and earnestly pressed; but delay not, a moment's delay may be fatal. Redeem the time which you have lost. Return, O return to the path of righteousness, then your grey hairs may yet adorn you as a crown of glory.

I hope I address some who have continued patient in well-doing. Your lives have been lives of faith and of obedience. Be calm, and let patience have her perfect work. God will not cast you off in old age, nor forsake you when your strength faileth you. "The
" righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree; he shall

“ grow like the cedar in Lebanon. Those that be
 “ planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the
 “ courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit
 “ in old age ; they shall be fat and flourishing ; To
 “ shew that the Lord *is* upright : *he is* my rock, and
 “ *there is* no unrighteousness in him.” God giveth
 power to the faint, and to them, who have no might
 he encreaseth strength, “ Even the youths shall be
 “ faint and weary, and the young men shall utterly fall :
 “ But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew *their*
 “ strength ; they shall mount up with wings as eagles ;
 “ they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk
 “ and not faint.”

“ *Even to your old age I am he ; and even to your*
 “ *hoary hairs will I carry you : I have made, and I*
 “ *will bear ; even I will carry, and will deliver you.*”

APPENDIX.

An Italian nobleman, enticed by his youthful companions, indulged in every species of dissipation, which destroyed his constitution, and brought him to the brink of the grave. He was in danger, and lamented the folly which had been his ruin. The awful moment demanded more than lamentation. Strengthened by the grace of God, he changed his whole conduct, and began a new course of life. The attempt was difficult, but every obstacle gave way, and he succeeded. He recovered his health and spirits, and his shattered constitution was so far renewed, that he lived to a great age, enjoying in a high degree, health and cheerfulness.— He wrote a book on old age, in which it appears, that the decays of nature cannot disturb the peace of those, whose lives have been actuated by a spirit of piety. Had this young man persisted in a ruinous course, certainly he had never lived half his days, but perceiving his danger, he timeously escaped. From his example, a thoughtless youth derive encouragement, to stop short in a fatal career; and to return to the path of peace.

Adrian, possessed many excellent qualities both

P

natural and acquired; he was an accurate scholar; a just ruler; forgiving to his enemies; and kind to his friends. But these attainments, valuable in themselves, and useful to others, were not sufficient, whilst destitute of the faith of the Gospel, to bear the mind up, under the pressure of bodily infirmities, which were so insupportable, that he vehemently "desired some of his attendants would dispatch him. Antoinus, however, would by no means permit any of his domestics to be guilty of so great an impiety, but used all the arts in his power to reconcile the emperor to sustain life. His pains increasing every day, he was frequently heard to cry out 'How miserable a thing it is to seek death and not to find it!' In this deplorable exigence he resolved on going to Baiae, where the tortures of his disease increasing, they affected his understanding. Continuing for some time in these excruciating circumstances, he was at last resolved to observe no regimen, often saying that kings died merely by the multitude of their physicians.

"He was convinced of the immortality of the soul, and seemed apprehensive of its future state, as appears from the celebrated verses which he composed and uttered a little before he expired, inquiring of his soul, *whither it designed to go.*

- “ Poor, little, pretty, flutt’ring thing,
 “ Must we no longer live together ?
 “ And dost thou prune thy trembling wing,
 “ To take thy flight thou know’st not whither !
 “ Thy hum’rous vein, thy pleasing folly,
 “ Lies all neglected, all forgot ;
 “ And pensive, wav’ring, melancholy,
 “ ‘Thou dread’st and hop’st thou know’st not what.’”

A Christian can bear infirmity with resolution, having not merely the hope, but the certainty of immortality, of this, the following examples is a sufficient evidence.

“ *Dr. Leechman* of Glasgow, employed faithfully and
 “ usefully the talents entrusted by Heaven to his management. A sense of God had habitually and thoroughly possessed his mind. The stream of his religious principles and feelings had ever intermingled with the current of his ordinary thoughts ; had run calm, evenly and deep in his soul ; and given a new force to every exertion he made for the good of mankind through the course of a long and laborious life.

“ About the 80th year of his age he had a violent
 “ and sudden shock of the palsy. His disorder took
 “ various turns, and once or twice flattered his friends,

“ even his medical friends, with some slight hopes of
“ recovery. His own hopes, however, were very dif-
“ ferent from theirs ; he knew that the time of his de-
“ parture was at hand ; he saw death full before him.
“ But the frightful spectre was disarmed of all its ter-
“ rors. He beheld it, not only without pain and fear,
“ not merely with a well-founded hope, but with the
“ most perfect assurance of enjoying a glorious immor-
“ tality ; an assurance founded, as he frequently de-
“ clared, not upon the consciousness of any merit, or
“ of any thing he had done to entitle him to it ; but
“ upon the goodness and grace of God, put beyond all
“ doubt by Jesus Christ. To the very few intimate
“ friends who had the happiness of conversing with
“ him on his death-bed, his mind appeared much de-
“ lighted with the grateful recollection of all the un-
“ deserved mercies of God, which he had experienced
“ during his past life, and quite transported with the
“ unbounded and endless prospects of divine goodness
“ that were before him.

“ Professor Richardson called on him one evening,
“ and brought to his bed-side a young Oxford student,
“ the son of a worthy nobleman, who had placed him
“ at Glasgow college for the early part of his educa-
“ tion, very much under the eye of Dr. Leechman. He
“ took the young gentleman by the hand, and with a

“venerable placid aspect, an animated eye, a distinct
“though feeble articulation, he spoke to him, as near
“as can be recollected, in the following words. Mr.
“C—, I am always happy to see you, and particularly
“so at present. You see the situation I am in. I have
“not many days to live; and I am glad you have an
“opportunity of witnessing the tranquillity of my last
“moments. But it is not tranquillity and composure
“alone; it is joy and triumph; it is a complete exul-
“tation. His features kindled, his voice rose as he
“spoke. And whence, he continued, does this exul-
“tation spring? From that book, pointing to a Bible,
“that lay on a little table, by his bed-side—from that
“book, too much neglected, but which contains invalu-
“able treasures—treasures of joy and rejoicing, for
“it makes us certain that this mortal shall put on im-
“mortality. He shook hands again, and parted with
“his young friend, who was not a little affected with
“the scene.

“On a Sunday morning, during the time of divine
“service, not many days before his death, he looked
“remarkably ill: his pulse sunk lower than usual.
“Mrs. Leechman having observed to him, that he
“seemed to be drawing near his journey’s end,—So
“much the better. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.
“Then after a short pause. Into thy hands O Father!

“ I commit my spirit. Thou canst make me happy in
“ ten thousand ways which I cannot now conceive. O
“ death ! where is thy sting ? O grave ! where is thy
“ victory ? Thanks be to God, who hath given me the
“ victory through Jesus Christ our Lord. And a good
“ deal more in the same strain. Finding himself re-
“ vive a little, and expecting, probably, that he should
“ not have another opportunity, he desired his servants
“ might be called up. He shook hands with them all,
“ thanked them for the attention and concern they had
“ shown, and the toil they had about him ; gave his
“ advice and blessing to each of them, and to every
“ other person in the room. After this he prayed.....
“ This was the longest exertion he was able to make
“ on his death-bed ; for he continued speaking a con-
“ siderable time with astonishing distinctness, vigour,
“ and fervour.

“ He lived several days after this, spoke very little,
“ by reason of increasing sickness and distress ; but
“ the calm, humble, and heavenly state of his mind
“ continued unvaried. On the first of December he
“ recovered so much as to surprise every body, and
“ conversed again with his friends in the most easy
“ and cheerful manner imaginable. But this ray of
“ hope was soon extinguished ! For the next day he
“ had another attack of his disorder over his whole

“ body ; such that it was thought impossible he could
“ come out of it. He did recover, however, in an
“ hour or two ; and though he said nothing that even-
“ ing, but yes or no, when a question was put to him,
“ he seemed easy or free from pain ; his countenance
“ resumed its wonted sensibility and placid serenity.
“ His eyes, however, were for the most part shut ;
“ when opened, it was only to lift them up to heaven,
“ regardless of every thing around him, except Mrs.
“ Leechman, who repeated to him a passage or two of
“ Scripture, and a hymn that he was fond of. Thus he
“ continued till very early in the morning, December
“ 3, when he *fell asleep*, and that in so easy a manner,
“ that no body about him knew the exact time when it
“ happened.”

The old man's comforts are happily expressed in the following verses, and the source whence they flow :

“ You are old, Father William, the young man he
“ said,
“ The few locks that are left you are grey,
“ You are hale, Father William, a hearty old man,
“ Now tell me the reason I pray.

“ In the days of my youth, Father William replied,
“ I remember'd that youth would fly fast,

" And abus'd not my health and my vigour at first,

" That I never might miss them at last.

" You are old, Father William, the young man he

" said,

" And pleasures with youth pass away,

" And yet you lament not the days that are gone,

" Now tell me the reason I pray.

" In the days of my youth, Father William replied,

" I remember'd that youth could not last,

" I thought of the future, whatever I did,

" That I never might grieve for the past.

" You are old, Father William, the young man he

" said,

" And life must be hastening away,

" You are cheerful, and love to converse upon death :

" Now tell me the reason I pray.

" I am cheerful young man, Father William replied,

" Let the cause thy attention engage—

" In the days of my youth, I remember'd my God,

" And he hath not forgotten my age."

Dr. Isaac Watts, who was much afflicted, is an in-

stance of the effectual support which religion affords, "Has not my spirit been depressed," was his language, "by a sickly constitution, and confined to a feeble engine of flesh under daily disorders? Have I not sustained many sorrows on this account, and wasted some years among the infirmities of the body, and in painful idleness? Are there not several souls favoured with a more easy habitation, and yoked with a better partner? Are they not accommodated with engines which have more health and vigour, and situated in much more happy circumstances than mine? What then? Shall I repine at my lot, and murmur at my Creator, because he has made some hundreds happier than I, while I survey whole nations, and millions of mankind that have not a thousandth part of my blessings?"

"In this excellent spirit did he wade through the depths of his afflictions, and glorify God in them.—How instructive, how animating his example!—The same man that he was in the pulpit, and active life, he was also on the couch of sickness, and at the brink of the grave.

"There is a hymn, entitled, *Complaints and Hope under great Pain*, in which there is such a mixture of dutiful resignation to the divine appointments, and

“ earnest pleadings with the Almighty to relieve him
“ from his sorrows, as bears a noble testimony to the
“ excellency of his spirit, and affords a bright pattern
“ for the imitation of the saints of God under his gov-
“ recting hand.

I

“ Lord, I am pain’d ; but I resign
“ To thy superior will ;
“ ’Tis grace, ’tis wisdom all divine
“ Appoints the pains I feel.

II

“ Dark are thy ways of Providence,
“ While those who love thee groan ;
“ Thy reasons lie concealed from sense
“ Mysterious and unknown.

III.

“ Yet nature may have leave to speak,
“ And plead before her God,
“ Lest the o’erburden’d heart should break
“ Beneath thy heavy rod.

IV.

“ Will nothing but such daily pain
“ Secure my soul from hell ?

" Canst thou not make my health attain
" Thy kind designs as well ?

V.

" How shall my tongue proclaim thy grace,
" While thus at home confin'd ?
" What can I write, while painful flesh
" Hangs heavy on my mind ?

VI.

" These groans and sighs, and flowing tears
" Give my poor spirit ease,
" While ev'ry groan my Father hears,
" And ev'ry tear he sees.

VII.

" Is not some smiling hour at hand,
" With peace upon its wings ?
" Give it, O God, thy swift command
" With all the joys it brings."



THE OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT,

THE SEAL OF HEAVEN

TO THE TRUTH OR CHRISTIANITY.



THE OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT,

THE SEAL OF HEAVEN

TO THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.



S E R M O N VI.

ACTS I, 5.

*“ Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many
* days hence.”*

John the Baptist assured the Jews, “ I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance : but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear ; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” After his resurrection, our Lord, being assembled together with the Apostles, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John tra-

“ly baptized with water ; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” The *assurance*, given by John the baptist, which our Lord after his resurrection repeated and confirmed, is the subject which I am at present, through divine assistance, to illustrate and enforce.

Christ was put to death at the passover, a festival among the Jews, in commemoration of a memorable era in their history : he rose from the dead on the third day, and appeared to his disciples, remaining with them for forty days, after which he ascended up into Heaven, and having received gifts for men, now conferred these upon them according to his express and repeated assurances.

“When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them : And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance.” Pentecost was a festival, which the Jews observed, fifty days after the passover, in memorial of the law given from Sinai. At this festival,

the rod of the Redeemer's strength proceeded from Zion. All the disciples of Jesus, then at Jerusalem, men and women, amounting to *one hundred and twenty*, received the gift of the Holy Ghost.

When the disciples multiplied, the Apostles, whose success alarmed the Jewish rulers, were imprisoned, and severely threatened : but being released to gratify the multitude, “ they went to their own company, and “ reported all that the chief priests and elders had said “ unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted “ up their voices with one accord, and said, Lord thou “ art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the “ sea, and all that in them is : Who by the mouth of “ thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen “ rage, and the people imagine vain things ? The kings “ of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered “ together against the Lord, and against his Christ.— “ For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou “ hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with “ the gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered “ together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy “ counsel determined before to be done. And now, “ Lord behold their threatenings ; and grant unto thy “ servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy “ word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal ; and

“ that signs and wonders may be done by the name of :
“ thy holy child Jesus.

“ And when they had prayed, the place was shaken :
“ where they were assembled together ; and they were
“ all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the
“ word of God with boldness. And the multitude of
“ them that believed were of one heart and of one
“ soul : neither said any of them that aught of the
“ things which he possessed was his own ; but they
“ had all things common.” The disciples were now
increased to eight thousand, upon all of whom the Holy
Ghost fell, for mentioning that multitude, the Evan-
gelist adds, that “ great *grace* was upon them all,” a
term in the New Testament, expressive of *the gifts of*
the Spirit, then communicated according to the service
required of each.

Saul of Tarsus, arrested by Christ in his mad career,
was filled with the Holy Ghost, in consequence where-
of, he immediately preached in the synagogue, con-
founding the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, proving
that this is indeed the Christ.

Peter being questioned by his brethren, for going to
the family of Cornelius, and for eating with them, in
his vindication declared “ As I began to speak, the

"Holy Ghost fell upon them, as on us in the beginning.
 "Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that
 "he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye
 "shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch
 "then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto
 "us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was
 "I, that I could withstand God? When they heard
 "these things they held their peace, and glorified God,
 "saying Then hath God also to the gentiles granted
 "repentance unto life."

The gentiles at Antioch in Pisidia, who believed,
 are spoken of, as filled with joy, and with the Holy
 Ghost.

In all these instances the Holy Ghost fell *immediately*,
 on all who believed at Jerusalem, and at Antioch in
 Pisidia: on Saul of Tarsus at Damascus, and on Cor-
 nelius and his friends at Cesarea. In other instances,
 the Holy Ghost was given, by the Apostles, through
 imposition of hands and prayer; but given only to
 those who believed, and to all who did believe.

Philip preached Christ, successfully at Samaria, and
 baptized them who believed, both men and women, in
 the name of Christ. "Now when the Apostles, which
 "were at Jerusalem, heard that Samaria had received

“ the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and
 “ John : Who, when they were come down, prayed for
 “ them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. (For
 “ as yet he was fallen upon none of them ; only they
 “ were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then
 “ laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the
 “ Holy Ghost.” For whom did the Apostles pray ?
 On whom did they lay their hands ? Who received the
 Holy Ghost ? No doubt, the men and women, who be-
 lieving the Gospel, preached by Philip, had by him
 been baptized.

Paul found certain disciples at Ephesus unto whom
 he said, “ Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye
 “ believed ? And they said unto him, We have not so
 “ much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.—
 “ And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye bap-
 “ tized ? And they said, unto John’s baptism. Then
 “ said Paul, John, verily, baptized with the baptism of
 “ repentance, saying unto the people, That they should
 “ believe on him which should come after him, that is
 “ on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were
 “ baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when
 “ Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost
 “ came on them ; and they spake with tongues, and
 “ prophesied.” And all the men were about twelve.—
 Timothy was required to stir up the gift which was in

him by the laying on of the hands of the Apostle. It appears, that, when any of the Apostles were present at the baptism of believers, the Holy Ghost was always given. On the day of pentecost, the Apostle Peter addressing the multitude, said "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The call to repentance was addressed to each, and the promise was as extensive as the call, which they, who submitted to baptism, the rite which initiates into the church, well knew in their delightful experience. The Holy Ghost fell like rain upon all who believed at Jerusalem, and at Antioch in Pisidia. He was universally given, at baptism, when any of the Apostles were present, according to Peter's assurance, which Paul, in his epistles directed to various churches, confirms, always speaking of it, as a fact which could not be questioned.

But what were the gifts, imparted by the Holy Ghost? They were various, distributed to each, according to the station assigned him in the church.—They were all necessary and valuable, but some of them were of peculiar excellence, communicated only to those who filled the first ranks, and most distinguished stations. The Apostle Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians, gives a full enumeration of these.

gifts. "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another *diverse* kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the self-same spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

The word of wisdom, was a gift peculiar to an Apostle.

During our Lord's personal ministry, his Apostles could not bear instruction concerning many truths.—They were still dreaming of a temporal kingdom; the vain expectation was cherished by them, even after Christ's death; but light attended the gift the of Holy Ghost, they instantly perceived the nature of his kingdom, and had a full acquaintance with the christian system in all its extent. The attainment of that happy moment was complete. It exceeded any attainment which they could have reached during a life of incessant study. What power could, instantaneously, enlarge, illumine, and strengthen the mind? No power, but the power of God. They were enriched with a

fund of divine truth, which enabled them on all occasions to instruct a benighted world.

The *word of knowledge*, gave them full insight into the meaning of the Old Testament, and belonged in common to Apostles, and to Prophets of the highest rank. This was of great advantage. It enabled them to meet the Jew on his own ground. They could maintain from scripture, that Christ must suffer before he could reign ; and reigning, that the gentiles were claimed, as his subjects, on an equal footing with the Jews.— They hereby, knew the rejection of the Jews, and the conversion of the Gentiles : the extensive spread of the Gospel, and an apostacy which for ages should darken its splendor : the restoration of the Jews, and the fullness of the Gentiles : they were well assured, that the Gospel should maintain its ground, and bless the nations to the remotest periods.

Faith, is next mentioned, which was such a persuasion of the truth, and of the impulse under which they acted, that they spoke and acted with boldness and authority. They could not be moved by threatening, nor overawed by danger. They became new men. Cowardly before, they were now firm as a rock ; they were respectful, but undaunted, either when questioned by the Jewish Sanhedrim, or resisted by the Roman power.

Gifts of *healing* and of *miracles*, roused the attention of a dreaming world, and inclined men to listen, and to receive the truth in the love thereof.

By "Prophecy" they could foretell events of less consequence, than what they could foretell by the word of knowledge already explained. By the one events of general concern were known; by the other what concerned an individual, or a particular country, or community of men. Indeed all the public acts done in the church, by an individual, are spoken of as prophesying. The Corinthians were exhorted to covet prophecy as one of the best of gifts. Accordingly, a *doctrine* was, thereby, suggested, to *some*, in the assembly, which may mean any truth, concerning faith, or manners, for the conviction, the establishment, and comfort, of the erring, of the weak, and of the depressed: A Psalm was suggested to *others*, and a *correspondent tune*, suited to present circumstances; of which we have an example, in the hymns uttered or sung, under divine influence by Zachariah, Elizabeth and Mary..... *Praying in spirit*, was an *inspired prayer*, such the prayer offered up by the church, when the apostles were liberated from prison; and the prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple, in which, the matter, the order, and the expression of the prayer were immediately suggested.

Discerning of Spirits, mentioned among the gifts conferred at this period upon the church, was a capacity of penetrating the views which brought men to the place of worship; and of discriminating the nature of the gifts to which each laid claim, whether divine or human. At a time when false prophets were common, and satan, as an Angel of light, did vast mischief, such a power, as this, was absolutely necessary: By this power, Peter detected the falsehood of Ananias and Sapphira; it struck the adversary with dread; and put the faithful themselves on their guard. In this connection, I mention, *Helps and governments*; gifts, by which some acquired an ascendancy over the public assembly, calling upon those who had a doctrine, a prayer, a hymn, when to use these gifts, that without confusion, the service might be conducted decently, and in order.

The Gift of Tongues, enabled, the possessor thereof, to speak languages which he had never learned, with the ease, fluency and correctness of a native; but the interpretation of Tongues, shows that this gift was distributed in various degrees, one tongue might be known, whilst ignorant of another. The Corinthians valued themselves much on this gift, which, to mortify their pride, the apostle places last in the enumeration,

R.

that anxiously they might seek what was useful, rather than what was ostentatious.

The gift of the holy Ghost, in such a fulness of light and energy, was a convincing proof that Jesus, who died on the cross, who rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven, was indeed advanced to the throne, a prince and a Saviour; with power firmly established, and ever ready to crush all opposition. The apostles were well furnished for their work: they possessed wisdom which none could gain say; utterance which could not be resisted; a boldness which nothing could intimidate. Even the Jewish Rulers, hardened in the last degree, were struck with panic. They saw the spirit of their master in these his servants, and notwithstanding the rancour of their hearts, and their threatening words, they, for a time, proceeded with a caution, which discovers a lurking suspicion, and a gnawing dread, that they were still in danger, from that very person, whom they had crucified and slain.

Three thousand had been converted to christianity on one day, and five thousand on another, all of whom were enlightened, by the spirit, in the knowledge of the truth, and received the gifts of tongues, that wherever they went, they might declare the great things of

God. What a glorious company of witnesses, brought together from the remotest region, to carry with them to their respective homes, the glad tidings of peace. The apostles themselves were soon dispersed through every country, and wherever they went they preached Christ; such as believed their report, were baptized, and being baptized, received, through the imposition of their hands the Holy Ghost, distributing to each, gifts for the benefit of the whole. Worshipping assemblies were immediately formed, and there could be no difficulty in conducting every part of worship; for *one* was furnished with knowledge, and a fluency of speech to instruct: *another* had a prayer which he uttered; *another* a Psalm with a proper tune; *another*, could discern spirits, pointing out, who should officiate, and in what order. At once the assembly was completely organized, and had persons able to preside over all their affairs. The apostles could not continue long at any one place, nor considering these extraordinary advantages enjoyed by the church, was it at all necessary: but still they maintained a general superintendency over the whole, having young men, in their service, whom, as evangelists, they sent to inquire after the churches which they had planted, and to confirm them in the faith.

The christian church, in such circumstances soon

obtained a footing in every country. Its establishment was not of man, but of God. It was a new creation; the earth brought forth at once; a nation was born in a day. The apostles, after Christ's death, had no inclination to attempt to proselyte the world, nay, the attempt, had not been made, or if made, had been made in vain, covering them with disgrace, until they received the promise of the father, which cleared their way and marked their progress with success.

These gifts of the spirit, of which I have been speaking, were, like the gifts of nature, improved by exercise. Thence the caution, "Quench not the spirit;" and the exhortation, "Stir up the gift which is in thee." This dispensation of the spirit was so convincing, and so glorious an attestation to the truth of christianity, that the Jews, opposing, what was thus attested, are charged with sinning against the Holy Ghost, a crime of the blackest dye, and attended with very terrible consequences. Hear what the apostle Paul has said on this subject, and what he has said is in perfect unison, with what has been said by the other apostles, and by our Lord himself, during his personal ministry, "*It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the*

"world to come; If they shall fall away, to renew
 "them again unto repentance: seeing they crucify to
 "themselves the Son of God afresh, and put *him* to an
 "open shame." *The gifts* differ, vastly from the *graces*
 of the spirit. They are bestowed in common upon the
hypocritical and upon the *sincere*. Judas was as well
 furnished with *gifts* for the apostleship as any of his
 brethren; but Judas was naught at heart. At the
 great day many will say to Christ, "Lord, Lord, have
 "we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name
 "have we cast out devils? and in thy name done many
 "wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them
 "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work ini-
 "quity." The apostle having mentioned the gifts of the
 spirit, declares, that without love to God and man,
graces of high value, these *gifts* can nowise avail the
 possessor, "Though I speak with the tongues of men
 "and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as*
 "a sounding brass, or a tinckling cymbal. And though
 "I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mys-
 "teries, and all knowledge: and though I have all
 "faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have
 "not charity I am nothing. And though I bestow all
 "my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my
 "body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth
 "me nothing.

The gifts of the spirit were necessary in the degree already explained, that the christian church might be established in our world, that end having been completely accomplished, these gifts have long since been withdrawn; but the *graces* of the spirit, essential in all ages, to illumine, change, and sanctify a degenerate nature, remain; be anxious for the attainment of these, then you shall belong to Christ, and be enriched with the blessings of eternity. Great things has God done in establishing Christianity; The work is his; opposers fight against God: what an unequal contest! The clay against the potter! Earth against Heaven! A worm of the dust against omnipotence! The opposer shall be dashed to pieces; consumed to ashes, crushed as a moth.

The day of pentecost was a glorious day to the Church. To that day we are indebted for the christian religion in our world; never, otherwise would it have been heard of beyond the limit of Judea; it could never have survived that age. It had expired on the cross, and been buried in the tomb. The few followers, whom Jesus had attached to his person, during his abode on earth, dispersed to their usual employments, would have abandoned the idea of persuading the Jewish nation, that he, whom they had slain, was their Messiah; or of procuring him disciples among the

other nations, whom in common with their countrymen, they held in great contempt : but, the pouring out of the spirit corrected their mistakes ; enlarged their views, and armed them with weapons, which neither hell, nor earth could resist. They awoke from sleep, and arranged under the banner of the once crucified, but now exalted redeemer ; they went forth to fight the battles of the Lord, and to extend their conquests far and wide.

The powers, communicated to them from above, were exerted not in *private* only, but in populous cities, and in the view of astonished multitudes ; both where the true God was known, and where the grossest, and most abominable idolatries had prevailed. At Jerusalem and Samaria ; at Antioch and Rome ; At Corinth and Athens, thousand thousands, being convinced, renounced their former prejudices, superstitions, and abominable deeds ; and, professing themselves to be the disciples of Christ, they maintained their profession unto the end, even when, through the iniquity of the times, that profession brought their ease, their safety, and their lives into the utmost jeopardy. This fact, as well substantiated as any fact can be, is of itself a sufficient evidence, that powers, beyond the ordinary course of things, must have existed ; and what these powers were, has already been explained. How long

these continued in the Church is not precisely known. This much is known, that they continued as long as one of the Apostles lived; or any of those to whom the Apostles, by laying on of their hands, had communicated the Holy Ghost. This was the whole of the first century, and a great part of the second. During that period christianity was so well established, that it could not be shaken. It took root, and became a large tree. Well might it now withstand the most rough and violent tempests.

God, by a series of uncommon events, having established the Mosaic economy, these uncommon events ceased, and that economy was maintained, during the period prescribed for its continuance, in the ordinary course of Providence. It is the same with christianity. It was established by extraordinary means, but is perpetuated by means more common. The scriptures contain every necessary information concerning the nature and design of christianity; what it requires us to believe, and what it requires to practise: the scripture then is our guide, a light to our path, and a lamp to our way.

Before the Gospels were written, and dispersed; or any of the epistles, the Church received the knowledge of christian doctrines, and christian practice,

from immediate inspiration. *Thus* their worship, *was* in all its parts, regulated and conducted; and *thus* also, they who presided in worship, were qualified and furnished for their respective offices: but now, men are prepared for filling stations in the Church, as teachers, and office-bearers of different ranks, and for different purposes, as they are prepared for filling other useful stations in life, by *reading*, by *meditation*, and by *suitable preparatory exercises*. None can now, as at first, pretend, by immediate inspiration, to have a doctrine, a psalm, a prayer, a tongue; but the Church has doctrines, and psalms, and prayers, and tongues, suited for all occasions, and for all circumstances; and men have been found in every age, and always shall be found, furnished with piety, with talents, and with information to fill every department of the Church, so that the Church shall continue until time be no more.

The primitive Church, as described in the Acts of the Apostles, and in their epistles, is the great model for the Church, in succeeding ages. But let it not escape notice, that circumstances are vastly changed:—Because, *then*, in an *instant* by a *supernatural agency*, some were qualified for being teachers of christianity; that, now, in the same time, and by the agency, men are qualified for being teachers of christianity, has been asserted, but can never be proved. The present cir-

circumstances of the Church do not require such an agency, and it is well known that it is not now exerted.— Although the agency of the Holy Ghost, in a manner necessary for the introduction and establishment of christianity, is neither now to be expected, nor is it now enjoyed: yet he has not forsaken the Church.— His presence and energy is still enjoyed. He actuates every believer, and causes the Gospel to triumph.— Notwithstanding all that Christ has done for us, and is doing, we could receive no benefit, without an influence sufficient to *rouse*, to *enlighten*, and to *invigorate* minds naturally in a *torpid*, *dark*, and *enfeebled* state. Eyes men have, but they do not see; ears but they do not hear; hearts but they do not feel. The spirit of God alone can open the blind eyes, unstop the deaf ears and give feeling to hearts harder than the rock.

The presence of the spirit with the Church in every age, and his energy, always exerted, and always felt, deserve marked attention.

Man holds a distinguished rank in the creation.— The Lord God formed him of dust, and bestowed on him an animal nature, by which, he was on a level with other creatures, already existing, swimming in the water, flying in the air, or moving on the earth: but he was raised above this level, when breathing into his

nostrils the breath of life, man became a living soul.— There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding. Upon this spirit was impressed the image of God. The understanding was light, and the affections pure. It was his pleasure to do God's will. The extent of this gift bestowed originally on man, by the inspiration of the Almighty, cannot be fully appreciated. In infancy, the powers of the soul appear for a long time in a dormant state, which gradually awake, as we advance in years, in a degree proportioned to the circumstances which call them into action: but life itself is only a state of infancy; during which, many powers, which shall afterwards be brought into exercise, are hardly known to be possessed. Beside, sin is as fatal, in its effect, upon the soul, as disease, in its effect upon the body. It weakens, it obscures and perverts all the powers. Adam was not the same after the fall, that he was before. His understanding was no longer light, his affections no longer pure, he had no pleasure in doing God's will. He supposed he could be hid from omniscience; his defence, when questioned after his disobedience, threw the blame upon God; deep rooted enmity both to the creator, and to the creature, are too apparent. Behold the image of Adam, which his descendants visibly bear. The fact is unquestionable. Men of all ages, and of all nations, whether enjoying a Divine Revelation, or

destitute thereof, are a *thoughtless, inconsiderate, perverse* race, whom awful dispensations of Providence; whom the faithful discharge of the ministry may vex, disappoint and irritate, but of themselves, without God's spirit, can never reclaim.

The spirit of God rouses the soul. He quickens those who are dead in trespasses and sins. He brings to their remembrance their evil ways, and their doings which are not good, and places them in such a light, that they abhor themselves, and repent in dust and ashes. Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? were, through the good spirit of God, irresistible words, which brought a bold persecutor to the ground, and entirely changed his savage disposition, so that in meekness and submission he exclaimed "Lord what wouldst thou have me to do?" The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, to receive the doctrine of the Gospel falling as the rain, and distilling as the dew. The Jews on the day of pentecost became extremely anxious, "What shall we do to be saved?" In each, and in all of those instances, the attention was roused and fixed, through a divine influence; and the same influence continues always with the Church, under which, men listen, examine and investigate; and while they listen, examine and investigate, a great point is gained. Such are not far from the kingdom of Heaven.

The Holy spirit not only rouses, but enlightens the soul. The Gospel is seen with different eyes. It appears important beyond what it appeared before. It is a light which leads to heaven. It illuminates a benighted world. Having the scripture read, and publicly explained, from youth to age, the Gospel was not unknown, but it had no excellence; it was a stumbling block; foolish; a dead letter. The light shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.— But the spirit of God dispells that darkness. Things appear in a new light. No longer can men withhold a full assent to their excellency and importance. It astonishes them to think, that they should so long have groped in the dark. They now see their *danger*, and their remedy; and they seize the truth, with the same earnestness, that the man who is perishing, seizes the hand that snatches him from ruin. To influences so effectual, the Apostle Paul, and all the Apostles ascribed their success in the ministry. “We use great plainness of speech; and not as Moses, *which* put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for unto this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; *which vail* is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless

“less, when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be
“taken away. Now, the Lord is that Spirit : and
“where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. But
“we all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the
“glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image,
“from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord.
“Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have
“received mercy, we faint not ; But have renounced
“the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craft-
“tiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully ;
“but, by manifestation of the truth, commending our-
“selves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.
“But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are
“lost : In whom the God of this world hath blinded
“the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of
“the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image
“of God, should shine unto them. For we preach not
“ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves
“your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who com-
“manded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined
“in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of
“the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” To
arrive at a full assurance that Christ is the son of God,
and the Saviour of the world ; that he died, and rose
from the dead ; that he is exalted a Prince and a Sa-
viour to give repentance and remission of sin, it is ne-
cessary, not only to read and hear the word, but also

that, whilst we read, and whilst we hear, the spirit of God, illuminate our minds, so that we may read and hear with advantage. This is promised, and the promise is more immediately given to those who live in these last days, the days of the son of man, when all are taught of God, whereby, all may know him from the least even to the greatest.

But the spirit of God, not only rouses and illuminates, but also enervates the soul. Mankind are without strength. How often have they been roused to attend to divine things; how often do these things appear excellent, and necessary; but *resolution* is wanting to do the will of God in all its extent. A young man is introduced in one of the gospels. His zeal was fervent; he was all on fire; at all risks he was determined to enter into life. But Ah! how ignorant of his own weakness! Ordered to sell what he had, and to follow Christ, with a strong assurance that he shall completely gain his end: did he comply? and complying live forever?—no—he did not comply, he grew cold, and we hear no more of his submission to Christ; nor of any further attempt to secure immortal honour. Many who walked with Christ, for a time, as his disciples, withdrew and returned no more. A goodness, resembling the morning cloud, and the early dew, has been so common at all times, and in all ages, that it

strongly marks the human character. Men are sunk into the lowest state of degeneracy, from which they will never arise, without strength from above, fixing their resolution, and rendering it effectual. This the spirit of God communicates. He strengthens with might in the inner man. He gives the *will*, and the *power* to do good. He excites to faith, to repentance, and to new obedience. He makes men sensible of the utter ruin in which sin has involved them; of the suitability of the Redeemer's character; and of the power of the Gospel to produce the new creation, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

These influences of the spirit, being always necessary, extend to every age of the world; to every nation of men; and to every individual of these nations. Wherever Christ's name is named, there, are these influences enjoyed; and the enjoyment thereof is the great security that his name shall endure for ever—that his name shall be continued as long as the sun.

It cannot be incredible, that the spirit, to whose inspiration we owe our rank in creation, should be able to rouse, to illumine, to strengthen the soul which proceeds from him, at any time, and to any degree: and his animating, illuminating, strengthening influences are expressly promised in the Gospel.

Believe the promise, and pray for its accomplishment. Attempt the performance of duty in all its extent, assured of constant and effectual assistance, ever present, and ever operative. It is the spirit, who inclines men to worship; who furnishes the ministers of the Gospel with any gift which they possess, and with any grace which adorns their character; who renders the reading of the scripture, the preaching of the word, the attending ordinances of divine appointment, instructive, edifying and refreshing. The Holy Ghost has not withdrawn, for had he withdrawn the light of the Gospel had long before now been extinguished. But Ah! how languid! how indifferent! how backward? God has given us the Gospel, and we know not the value of the gift. It is a manifestation of his wisdom, but we are not thereby made wise. It is his power for the salvation of men, but they resist his power, and continue in the bondage of sin. We need divine influences in a higher degree, these are of God, who will be inquired of to give us what we need. Parents give good gifts to their children, much more will he give his spirit to them that ask him: ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. God delights in our happiness. Go to his house, engage in his service, plead his promises, you will meet with him there, you will be made glad. None of his promises can fail, the promise p

particularly encouraging to worshippers shall render your worship delightful, " I will pour water upon him that
" is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground ; I will
" pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon
" thine offspring : And they shall spring up *as* among
" the grass, as willows by the water-courses. One shall
" say, I *am* the Lords ; and another shall call *himself*
" by the name of Jacob ; and another shall subscribe
" *with* his hand unto the Lord, and surname *himself*
" by the name Israel."

Amen and Amep.

APPENDIX.

It is difficult to illustrate *that doctrine*, the subject of this sermon, with examples, such as illustrate the subjects which have already been discussed; or which may yet be the subject of discussion. Who can produce instances of men, acquiring in a moment a complete acquaintance with an extensive system of which before they had been ignorant—speaking fluently foreign languages which they had never learned—healing all kinds of diseases—discerning spirits—foretelling future events. That a former age beheld such men, and received benefit from their instruction and gifts, is attested beyond doubt, and the effect remains visible to all in the extensive spread of the Gospel; in its successful struggle against opposition from earth and hell; and in its being perpetuated, even to this day, the hope, the joy, the triumph of multitudes of different nations, capacities, and ranks.

God possesses the same power at all periods, which he exerts, when, and how, and to what extent appears best. I am not sure, but solitary instances might be alledged, bearing *some resemblance*, to what once was common, so far at least, as to confound those who wish to gain-say.

The Reverend *William Tennant*, in a severe sickness, lost attainments the labour of years. He had been a good linguist, but could not now comprehend even the power of letters. Books were useless to him. He was put to learn his A. B. C. but proceeded slowly, when of a sudden he recovered all he had formerly known, and lived to be a distinguished labourer in the gospel vine-yard.

A pious woman, labouring under a disease which was pronounced incurable, had been meditating upon the miracles which Christ performed when on earth, it occurred to her, Is not Christ's power the same now, that it was then? In heaven does he see his servant and know her pains? Let him say, *I will, be thou restored*, I shall be restored, I believe in his power, and feel a trust that it shall be exerted for my benefit—Lord save me, that I may live to praise thy name. She felt her mind at ease and fell asleep, when she awoke, she was in perfect health. This is well attested, and has gained full credit, by some who had an opportunity to ascertain the fact.

I had the following account from my friend GENERAL DANIEL ROBERDEAU. It came within his own knowledge, and he mentioned it, as a fact of which he was well assured.

A gentleman in Philadelphia, celebrated for his powers of *minickry*, was welcome in most companies, from the entertainment which he always afforded.— Once at the governor's table, when many were present he was called upon to mimic an *eminent preacher*.— He began, but from the *mimic* he became the *preacher*, pouring forth a torrent of divine eloquence which bore all before it. The company were visibly agitated. The governor found it to be too serious, and ordered him to be silent; but it was impossible; he proceeded with a vehemence which shook the room. The governor left the room in perturbation; and one, after another withdrew. A young man was present, who was very profligate, although a pious education had invited to lead a different life. He was agonized at the thought of his folly, and determined to return to God; but afraid of his own weakness, he left Philadelphia, lest bad company might be a snare to him; and was afterwards distinguished for the regularity and Godliness of his life. The mimic himself could not account for the impulse under which he acted, but was so affected thereby, that he could never after be prevailed upon to attempt the exercise of so dangerous a power. Of that impulse so extraordinary in itself, I cannot determine, I only observe that the tree is known by its fruit. The reformation of a youth, who had gone far astray is certainly a work of God, who could use means, for that

purpose, uncommon in themselves, and for which we pretend not to offer any explanation.

An amiable young lady Miss *Susan Wormley* of Frederick county Virginia, in the eleventh year of her age, suddenly, without any previous sickness, lost entirely the power of speech. Her hearing continued, as perfect as ever. She was educated by the reverend *William Hill* of Winchester, and notwithstanding this great and mortifying defect under which she laboured, made rapid progress in different branches of learning. She used frequent exertions to speak, without effect. Being lately on a visit to her friends in the country, having now, been deprived of the power of speech for seven years she was reading alone, when, feeling an unusual sensation, she attempted to speak aloud, and succeeded. Her own voice startled her; she ran, in transport, to her friends, to announce the restoration of her long lost speech; of which she has enjoyed the perfect possession ever since. Her recovery awoke the most grateful feeling, for the mercies of her God, and has deeply impressed her mind, with a just sense of the importance of religion.

These instances are extraordinary, and assist our faith in events, beyond the common course of Provi-

dence, to which we are indebted for the establishment of christianity in our world.

Instances of these influences of the spirit which are always enjoyed, and by every christian, are so numerous, that many volumes are not sufficient to preserve the record. I appeal to the experience of any christian. How come you to believe? What determined you to obey the Gospel? What discovered to you the value of Christ's character, so that to you, he is the chief among ten thousands, and altogether lovely? The spirit of Christ has shown you his excellence, and bent your will to submission, else you had still continued to see no beauty in him, and had still refused him obedience.

The following fact I have from the reverend *James Lawrie* of the City of Washington, which shews that the common influences of God's spirit are not withdrawn. A brother and friend of his was in his closet meditating on the service of the Lord's day, with *notes* of his discourse before him. Something withdrew him for a moment. On his return his *notes* could not be found. Every search after them was vain. The subject he intended to discuss entirely escaped him. He could fix his mind on no subject, but the *sixth command*. The hour of worship had arrived, and he must

appear. It astonished him—he saw nothing suitable in the subject to his audience, but he could speak of no other. He had freedom in the service but was by no means satisfied with himself. He returned after service to his closet, without being able to account for what had happened. Entering his closet, he found his notes which cost him such search on the table where he had left them. Soon after a stranger called to see him, but was refused access, assured, that company were not received on the Lord's day; but the stranger insisted, I must see him, and was admitted. The discourse that day had roused his conscience; he *had murdered his elder brother and taken possession of his estate!* He was in an agony, and determined to deliver himself up to justice. Demanded was the murder known? 'No,' was his answer, 'not even *suspected*, and could never be either suspected or known.' He was counselled to say nothing of the murder, but to live, and repent of the atrocious crime. He followed the counsel and became very eminent for the humble, watchful and useful life which he afterwards led.



A COVENANT,

SECURING TO MEN

TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS.



A COVENANT,

SECURING TO MEN

TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS.



SERMON VII.

ISAIAH LIV. 7, 8, 9, 10.

*For a small moment have I forsaken thee ; but with
“ great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath
“ I hid my face from thee for a moment ; but with
“ everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee,
“ saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the
“ waters of Noah unto me ; for as I have sworn that
“ the waters of Noah should no more go over the
“ earth ; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth
“ with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains
“ shall depart, and the hills be removed ; but my
“ kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall
“ the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the
“ Lord that hath mercy on thee.”*

The Prophet, in the preceding chapter, fortells the suffering of Christ for mankind, and the glorious consequence thereof. In this chapter, he applies these prophecies for the direction and comfort of the Church, "Sing O barren thou *that* didst not bear ;
 " break forth into singing, and cry aloud thou *that* didst
 " not travail with child: for more *are* the children of
 " the desolate than the children of the married wife,
 " saith the Lord." This verse, the apostle assures us, has a respect to the calling of the Gentiles ; the call shall be universal, and shall be complied with by multitudes, who had not, hitherto, stood in a covenant relation to God. "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let
 " them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations :
 " spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy
 " stakes : For thou shalt break forth on the right hand
 " and on the left ; and thy seed shall inherit the Gen-
 " tiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." The people of God, formerly, dwelt in tents, which, let them enlarge and strengthen, for the reception of multitudes, whom, they are required to acknowledge as the sons and daughters of Abraham ; who, in time past, ignorant and depraved ; sitting in darkness, and in the shadow of death ; shall in time to come be wise and holy, light in the Lord, and heirs of immortality. " Fear
 " not ; for thou shalt not be ashamed : neither be thou
 " confounded ; for thou shalt not be put to shame :

“ for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt
 “ not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any
 “ more. For thy Maker *is* thine husband ; the Lord
 “ of hosts *is* his name : and thy Redcemer the holy
 “ One of Israel ; The God of the whole earth shall
 “ he be called. For the Lord hath called thee as a wo-
 “ man forsaken, and grieved in spirit, and a wife of
 “ youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.” The
 disgrace of the Jewish nation in Egypt, in Babylon, in
 their present dispersion through the earth, shall be
 forgotten, in that happy event which *shall restore* them
 to themselves—to God—and to the Church. The
 promise of God is the only foundation of hope, on which
 men can rest ; it restores to them blessings whether
 temporal or spiritual, which, by disobedience, they had
 forfeited : and what God promises is certain, especially
 when secured to us by a solemn covenant, and a bind-
 ing oath. It is evident, from scripture, that men re-
 ceive favour and blessing through Christ, the great
 mediator. In him the promises are yea and amen.—
 Under different dispensations of this covenant, *tempo-
 ral blessings* were promised to *Noah* ; and *spiritual
 blessings* to *Abraham*. The promises under both were
 distinctly announced and can never fail.

I shall speak of the dispensations of this covenant,
 both with *Noah* ; and with *Abraham*.

What did God promise to Noah? When was this promise given? How was it confirmed? With what restriction was it guarded?

What did God promise to Noah? He promised, "that seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease."

"Seedtime and harvest" include whatever is immediately connected with sowing and reaping. A variety of soils, adapted to the nature of different seeds; skill in man for husbandry in all its branches: such seasons as preserve vegetation, and bring it to maturity. In a variety of soils adapted to the nature of different seeds; in the skill of man for husbandry in all its branches; in such seasons as preserve vegetation, and bring it to maturity, recognize the hand of God who, thereby, fulfills the promise given to Noah, in the name of his descendants. The science of agriculture was communicated to Adam by revelation, and improvements therein, arise from skill, derived from above. The husbandman, is a medium, through which, many blessings flow to men; and he may expect the guidance, and countenance of a wise, and an efficient providence.

§ Cold and heat" have their influence both in pro-

moting vegetation ; and in preserving the animal economy in health and vigour. Unceasing cold would soon lay waste the earth, and spoil it, of its inhabitants ; nor would the continuance of intense heat be less destructive in its consequence. Let it not be supposed that men are altogether secured against the extremes of heat and cold, debilitating the constitution, and giving rise to various disorders ; this cannot be reconciled with the fact. Jacob complaining of Laban's treatment, says, " In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, my sleep departed from me." Celestials hunger no more, neither thirst any more : neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat ; which implies that once they were subjected to hunger and thirst ; that once they panted beneath a burning sky ; but cold and heat are so modified, that men may drag out the mortal life, until they are prepared for the enjoyment and rest of the immortal.

" Summer and winter" were secured, in the promise to Noah. Sudden transitions, from cold to heat, and from heat to cold, frequently experienced, would have the most ruinous tendency. Vegetation must cease, and animals die, and return to the dust. To prevent such desolation and ruin, *the seasons* have been established, in which the one or the other prevails for a convenient length of time ; and the transition from the

one to the other, takes place in a gradual, and in almost an imperceptible manner. In *summer*, heat more generally prevails, and cold in *winter*; in spring and autumn, the severity of the foregoing season is greatly abated, and there is a gradual preparation for the succeeding heat or cold, which may now, be sustained, not only without danger, but even with advantage.— This temperature of nature bespeaks his wisdom and goodness, who, as the scripture assures us, “has made summer and winter.”

“Day and night” are specified, as new modifications of nature, with which great advantages are connected. The night, in summer, refreshes the earth, with the distilling dew, and the cooling breeze; the day, in winter, diffuses such heat, as checks, in some degree, the rigor of that season: Day and night, both in summer and winter, mark out the hours, for application and refreshment, for activity and rest. Contemplating this subject we are impelled to exclaim, “The day is thine, “the night also is thine; thou hast prepared the light “and the sun.”

Such the promise given to Noah: but when was this promise given?

God had just destroyed the whole of mankind, ex-

cept the family of Noah, by a flood, to punish their daring profligacy. The patriarch, to express gratitude to God for his goodness to him, and to his family, " builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every " clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt " offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a " sweet savour ; and the Lord said in his heart, I will " not again curse the ground any more for man's sake ; " for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his " youth : neither will I again smite any more every " thing living, as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, " and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not " cease." God saw that the evil was rooted in the heart ; and knew that it would repeatedly break forth, in conduct equally deserving the same punishment.— In pity for these who were so weak and guilty, God restrained his wrath, and secured, in an everlasting covenant, a continuance of life ; and of such necessities and conveniences as life requires. This was an accepted time, and a day of salvation, which they were strongly excited to improve, by that awful judgment from which they had just escaped.

This covenant was established with Noah, in the name of his decendants, to the remotest periods of the world. The promise, contained therein, is repeated again and

again. Other covenants have tokens by which they are confirmed. The token in this, is the bow visible in the clouds. Some suppose that this was no new appearance, but only appointed for a new purpose. For this supposition there is no ground, clouds, air and light, indeed existed before the flood; but the peculiar disposition of them, necessary to the production of the rain-bow, did not exist until now, and that, by the immediate direction of God, for an important purpose. The glorious bow bent by the hand of the Almighty, leads our thoughts above all second causes, to him who governs universal nature. It reminds us of what God has done, and assures us, of what he shall do, whenever the destined period may arrive. In the mean time, much forbearance is exercised, and much mercy displayed. The sun ariseth upon the evil and the good; and rain is given to the just and unjust. Let men repent, and amend their lives, whilst repentance and amendment of life are possible.

The promise, given to Noah, was given under certain restrictions; What were these? "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." Our world is destined to destruction from which it can never recover, of this mankind were warned by the flood. Then, it was overflowed with water;

now, it shall be burned with fire : *then*, the course of nature was interrupted ; *now* it shall be entirely destroyed : *then* a few escaped, *now*, none, remaining on the earth, shall escape. All shall die, and with the earth itself, be consumed to ashes. Until this period, men are permitted to live, and in circumstances which render life very supportable ; the suspension of that sentence which shall return us to the dust ; and the kindness which we experience, during this interval, are favours conferred, in consequence of the covenant of grace, that receiving grace of God, we may not receive it in vain, but may make such improvement of our opportunities, as affords a prospect of a happy immortality beyond the grave.

Times and seasons, in as far as we can judge of futurity, suit the present state only ; being a merciful contrivance to moderate the extremes of heat and cold ; to provide for the necessities of man and beast ; and to give refreshing interruptions to the labour and toils of life. The seasons were blendid during the whole year that the flood was upon the earth ; which may be considered as one severe winter ; one dismal night ; one constant succession of chilling colds, and dangerous damps. Such an interruption to the course of nature shall never again take place.

The stipulation of the covenant made with Noah, is restricted to calamities universal in their extent, and ruin ; “ neither will I again smite *every living thing* “ as I have done : neither shall *all flesh* be cut off.” Floods have partially prevailed, and there have been partial interruptions to the course of nature, in every age of the world, and among every nation of men. In Elijah’s day, they neither sowed, nor reaped, through the land of Judea, for three years and six months : there was neither dew, nor rain ; The spring had no moisture to nourish vegetation ; summer scorched the earth ; Autumn stript of grass for cattle, and herb for the use of man lay waste and desolate as winter. The succession of day and night was once withheld from the Egyptians, who were involved in darkness which was severely felt. The sun and moon stood still at Joshua’s command, that Jehovah might glorify his great name among the heathen. Mid-night darkness prevailed at noon-day, when the Saviour of mankind suffered on Calvary. These calamities prevailed to a certain extent only, leaving the rest of mankind, in full possession of seed-time and harvest ; of cold and heat ; of summer and winter ; of day and night.

Such the *temporal blessings*, promised to mankind, in the covenant of grace, as it was made known to Noah. Under a dispensation of this covenant, bles-

sings, also, of a *spiritual nature*, were promised to Abraham and to his seed.

But what blessings were promised to Abraham and to his seed?—*Renovation of nature* is the first which I mention: “All thy children *shall be* taught of the Lord; and great *shall be* the peace of thy children. “In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt “be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and “from terror; for it shall not come near thee.” Depravity involves in darkness so gross, that light cannot penetrate. It erases from the mind the law of God, which ceases to influence and direct the conduct. Adam, at the fall, experienced a sad reverse. He thought that the trees of the garden could conceal him from *his view* who is every where present, and knows all things. He felt the deepest enmity to God; and looked upon Eve with an accusing eye. He did not acknowledge that the law of God was binding upon him; nor was he self-condemned when disobedient.—Ah! brethren, men too exactly bear the image of Adam. Ignorance overspreads their mind; they are a prey to violent passions; they live, as if no law existed to bind, and no power to punish. This promise relieves, from such a state. He who commanded light to shine out of darkness, shines into the heart, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face

of Jesus Christ. At his word turbulent passions cease, and there is a great calm : Love to God, and love to man become the ruling principle ; they live in unity as brethren : there is nothing to hurt, nor to destroy : they receive both the inclination, and the power to do good. These are blessings expressly stipulated in the covenant of grace, “ I will put my laws into their mind, “ and write them in their hearts : and I will be to them “ a God, and they shall be to me a people : And they “ shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every “ man his brother, saying, Know the Lord : for all shall “ know me, from the least to the greatest.” When this promise is accomplished in any degree, an evident change appears in the disposition and conduct of the individual ; but it shall have an universal accomplishment, then “ the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, “ and the leopard shall lie down with the kid ; and the “ calf and the young lion, and the fatling together, and “ a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the “ bear shall feed ; their young ones shall lie down together ; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.— “ And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the “ asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the “ cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in “ all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of “ the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the “ sea.” “ In the last days it shall come to pass, that

" the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be esta-
 " blished in the top of the mountains, and it shall be
 " exalted above the hills ; and people shall flow unto it.
 " And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let
 " us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the
 " house of the God of Jacob ; and he will teach us of
 " his ways, and we will walk in his paths ; for the law
 " shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from
 " Jerusalem.

" And he shall judge among many people, and re-
 " buke strong nations afar off ; and they shall beat their
 " swords into plow-shares and their spears into pru-
 " ning hooks : nation shall not lift up a sword against
 " nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But
 " they shall sit every man under his vine, and under his
 " fig-tree ; and none shall make *them* afraid ; for the
 " mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it."

Another blessing, promised in the covenant of grace,
 is *justification* at the bar of God.

" For a small moment have I forsaken thee ; but
 " with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little
 " wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment ; but
 " with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee,
 " saith the Lord thy redeemer. For this *is* as the wa-

" ters of Noah unto me : for as I have sworn that the
 " waters of Noah should no more go over the earth ;
 " so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee,
 " nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart,
 " and the hills be removed ; but my kindness shall not
 " depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my
 " peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on
 " thee." " Every tongue that shall rise against thee
 " in judgment thou shalt condemn." Although these
 promises may have a respect to the mercy of God, ex-
 exercised on earth ; yet, they ultimately respect the mercy,
 which he shall exercise at the judgment of the great
 day. Possessed of the righteousness which is of God,
 by faith, whatever may have, once, been their depravi-
 ty, a sentence of acquital shall pass in their favour. In
 this sentence mercy shall prevail. Wrath prevailed
 for a moment, mercy shall prevail forever. " I will be
 " merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sin, and
 " their iniquities, will I remember no more."

Pronouncing sin forgiven, is the prerogative of God,
 acting as judge. It is a mistake to suppose that this
 sentence shall pass before the great day, or that it is
 the consequence of any good inherent in guilty man,
 or attainable by him : It is the consequence of Christ's
 death. It is an act of grace. " Their righteousness is
 " of me, saith the Lord. The just by faith," whom

God accepts through the merit of his son, "shall live," they shall escape the wrath which their sins deserve. This, to rebellious man, is the only foundation of hope. Other foundations are sand, this is a rock. Men are acting for eternity, to mistake the sand, for the rock, is an irreparable, and ruinous error. A caution on this subject, is necessary, to prevent men from rearing an airy fabrick, unknown in scripture, and which, assuredly, shall pass away as a vision in the night. The Apostle states this matter with great accuracy, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God, *which is by* faith of Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, *I say,* at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Abraham believed God, "and it was counted to him for righteousness. It is of faith, that it might be by

“ grace ; to the end the promise might be sure to all
 “ the seed : not to that only which is of the law, but to
 “ that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the
 “ father of us all.”

The certainty of a sentence of acquittal, passing of grace, upon all who are excited by the grace published in the Gospel, to the exercise of faith, and to the practice of obedience, is as great as the word, and oath of God can make it. A flood shall not again destroy *every living thing*. God hath promised and sworn that it shall not. Thousands of years have passed, during which men have found God faithful : and his faithfulness never was, and never can be impeached. The word and oath, that God justifies those who believe in Jesus, afford strong consolation. They have fled for refuge to a place of safety, and they shall be safe. In this let men trust : Trust not in *frames* variable as the wind ; trust not to *feelings* which are easily excited, and which as easily subside ; but trust in the truth of God, solemnly pledged in the covenant of grace. Let this be your confidence ; let this be the subject of exultation and triumph.*

A *blessed immortality*, is promised in the covenant of

* *Romans VIII. 31.*

grace, "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, *and* not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundation with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones." This is descriptive of the heavenly Jerusalem, and corresponds to the Apostle John's account, in the book of Revelation. At present the children of God are tossed on a stormy ocean, but they steer a direct course to Immanuel's land, where, after the voyage of life, they shall assuredly arrive, and be welcomed to the city of God, their future and lasting habitation: of which, the stipulation, "I will be their God," as our Lord himself has explained this term, is a solemn pledge. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, they shall all live; and shall die no more; they shall be equal to the angels; children of God, they are children of the resurrection.

The possession of the earthly Canaan, or the most prosperous state which the Church ever did, or ever can experience on earth, is only a type or emblem, of what God has prepared for his people after the resurrection, such as eye has not seen, nor ear heard. This was known to Abraham, who sought a city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God: It was known to believers under the Old Testament dispensa-

tion, who " All died in faith, not having received the
 " promises, but having seen them afar off, and were
 " persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confess-
 " ed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.
 " For they that say such things, declare plainly that
 " they seek a country. And truly if they had been
 " mindful of that *country* from whence they came out,
 " they might have had opportunity to have returned :
 " But now they desire a better *country*, that is, an hea-
 " venly ; wherefore God is not ashamed to be called
 " their God ; for he hath prepared for them a city." It
 is well known to Christians, who faint not, but keep in
 mind " Though our outward man perish, yet the in-
 " ward man is renewed day by day. For our light af-
 " fliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a
 " far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory :—
 " While we look not at the things which are seen, but
 " at the things which are not seen ; for the things
 " which are seen are temporal, but the things which
 " are not seen are eternal."

"The *perpetuity of the Church*, existing, on earth, in
 an imperfect state ; but in heaven, in a state of high
 perfection, is *another*, and the *only other promise*, in
 the covenant of grace, to which at present I claim your
 attention.

Men have a revelation of God's will ; and there never has been, and there never shall be a period, when that revelation was, or can be, unknown. That body of men, who preserve this revelation, believing what it teaches, and practising what it commands : embracing what it promises, and worshiping as it directs, are peculiarly honoured. They are the Church and people of God : Such were Adam's family. They were entrusted with the great promise, " The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent : " they had directions, both, for the worship of God, and for their general conduct in life. Cain's unbelief, and wicked conduct threw him, and his descendants out of the church. The church flourished when kept apart. A defiling union with *men*, a world lying in wickedness, corrupted the whole mass of the church, existing under the characteristic appellation of " sons of God," in such a degree, that in Noah's family alone, was any good thing found. Noah's family, after the flood, falling off from the worship, the purity, and knowledge which God requires. Abraham was raised up to advocate the cause of God. To this family belonged, " The adoption, and " the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the " law, and the service of God, and the promises ; Whose " *are* the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, " Christ *came*, who is over all, God blessed forever." when Christ appeared, the descendants of Abraham had

so corrupted the truth, and were become so extremely wicked, that they slew the Prince of life. It drew down upon them the vengeance of heaven. They were cut off as withered branches, and the gentiles, who, at this time, believed and became obedient, were invested with these privileges, which the Jews had forfeited; and have been the channel, through which, the glad tidings of peace have flowed among succeeding ages, until the present. The Jews who remain until this day a distinct people, shall, according to the promise of God, be re-united to the church; They shall believe, and become obedient; and be used, by providence, as a powerful instrument to subject the nations, who are yet enemies to Christ, to the obedience of the faith. Of these great events the Prophet speaks in this chapter, and the apostle Paul's reasoning concerning them, in the Epistle to the Romans, is strong, and conclusive.

Attempts have been made, and still may be made to conceal, to corrupt, or to destroy the truth, but they are vain. The seed of the serpent is at enmity with the seed of the woman. It is a contest between truth, and falsehood; between Christ and Satan; between the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness: the contest has been maintained age after age, nor is it yet terminated. Let not the friends of Jesus be discour-

aged. Hell may threaten, may rage, may oppose all its power in the seen or unseen world ; but believe not that it can prevail. You behold a foe who was conquered by Christ on his cross, and began to fall as lightening from heaven, his head was bruised. Permitted for a season to vex the church, he is curbed by a power he cannot resist. So far he may proceed, but no further. He bites his chain, and blasphemes the restraint from which he cannot escape. He is led captive, yet thoughtless men allow themselves, to their disgrace and ruin, to be led captive at the pleasure of *the captive*.

Speaking of the enemies of the church, it is said, in this chapter, " Behold, they shall surely gather together, *but* not by me ; whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake. Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work ; and I have created the waster to destroy.

" No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper ; and every tongue *that* shall rise against thee in judgment thou shall condemn. This *is* the heritage of the servants of the Lord ; and their righteousness *is* of me, saith the Lord." The professors of religion, among whom the scriptures are preserved in their pu-

rity; who believe what they say; who practise what they command; who worship as they direct, are, *the visible church*. It cannot be destroyed; sometimes it is depressed; at other times it is exalted. It consists at one period of few; and at another period of multitudes: But it is the care of God: It keeps his people separated from the world. Chaff, for the present mixes with the wheat; for the future, there shall be no chaff. The distinction shall be total and lasting. No wicked person shall be admitted among the righteous, nor shall any righteous person be lost among the wicked. There can in no wise enter into heaven, "any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life. Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city, For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and *whosoever* loveth and *maketh* a lie."

Such the spiritual blessings promised in the covenant of grace: But when were these promises given?

In one of the prophet's we read of "the counsel of Peace," to which mankind is so much indebted. It

existed before Christ appeared in the flesh, for he says, "I come in the volume of the book, it is written of me, "to do thy will, O God." We discern here an evident reference to a previous engagement. "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," was his language, when leaving the world; then, he prayed, "Glorify thou me, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." These passages suggest a plan devised for the recovery of fallen man. The son agreed to become man; to honour the law, which we had dishonoured; and to die, that he might expiate our offences. His interposition was accepted: our affairs were put into his hand. Through him we are received into favour, and recover the immortality which we had lost. To him were promises given, so beneficial to mankind. Are we regenerated? It is by his spirit. Are we justified? He rose again for our justification. Are we restored to immortality? He that believeth in him though he were dead, yet shall he live again, and he that liveth and believeth on him shall never die. Is the church perpetuated through every age? It is because he reigneth, and shall reign until every enemy is put under his feet. This gracious plan being of God, could only have been known by revelation. It was communicated to Adam, at the fall; To Noah after the flood; To Abraham when he was constituted the father of the

faithful; and to the world, by the son of God tabernacling in the flesh.

But how was this covenant confirmed? By sacrifices; by types; by emblematical rites and institutions. As sure as the sacrifice bled and died, so sure should the promised seed bleed and die, and by his death rescue man from death, and cause them to live in a better world, far removed from death, or the grave. As sure as Abraham and his descendants received circumcision, and an earthly possession in Canaan, so sure shall their faith be imputed to them for righteousness, and a possession in heaven be their everlasting inheritance. As sure as we are baptized in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost; and eat bread, and drink wine in memorial of Christ's body broken for us, and of his blood shed for the remission of sin, so sure are we safe in him when the wicked are destroyed and receive the great, the distinguishing, the lasting benefits which spring from his sufferings and death. It is the same covenant, which has, *thus*, been confirmed to men, in different ways, and by different rites adapted to the state of the Church; and to the dispensation under which it existed.

But are the promises given with no restriction?—
Shall the wicked receive equal benefit from Christ, as

the righteous? the unbeliever, as the believer? they who will not serve God, as they who do serve him? In Abraham, we have an answer to these questions.—When God called him to leave his native country, and to go, he knew not where; with the promise of protection, of blessing, and of a goodly heritage; he readily obeyed the command; and had the fullest confidence in the assurances which were given him. When commanded to offer on the altar, his son, his only son, Isaac whom he loved, his joy, his hope, his heir, he did not hesitate. That act threatened to destroy all his prospects, and to render the promises on which he had long depended, entirely void; but he could not reason against an express command; God would fulfil his promises: Were Isaac dead, and consumed to ashes; he could raise him from the dead, and cause him to spring to life, from these ashes, into which he had been consumed. Abraham continued during the whole of his life, to believe all that God said to him; and to do all that he had commanded. God constituted him the father of believers. His example, is a pattern for men of all ages, and of every nation. Copy after that pattern. You shall become the sons and the daughters of Abraham. Thereby, you consent to the covenant of grace, and shall be enriched with the blessings which it promises. Others live, and have a day of mercy; for this privilege they are indebted to Christ; but they live in

vain, and despise the day of their merciful visitation ; they will neither believe nor be obedient ; they abuse the patience of God, and must abide the terrible consequences.

The destruction of the world by the flood, with the exception of a single family, is a fact expressly related in scripture. Even this exception was of peculiar favour, to preserve our race ; and an exemption from such a calamity for the future, is an instance of the singular goodness of God, who thereby gives men an assurance of his faithfulness, and of his mercy. Let the continuance of our forfeited lives be carefully improved. It gives us space to repent ; let us repent, and amend our lives. The impenitency of the old world, and their irreclaimable conduct was inexcusable. But in us it is attended with peculiar aggravations. We see that God can, and will punish the wicked. We live by an act of grace, which spares a guilty world. It is only a *suspension of the sentence*, a *reprieve* for an unknown but a limited period. It may be executed against the individual any day, any hour, any moment ; not by water only, but by a thousand other means ; the earth may deny us sustenance ; disease may weaken our strength ; the sword may kill us ; the merest accident may be fatal, and the slightest touch push us into the grave. It is because God is faithful that we have an accepted

time, and a day of salvation ; but the same faithfulness which secures to us such a mercy, is equally pledged, that beyond a certain period, and a certain day, mercy shall no longer be extended to any of the human race. Let the belief of this rouse the soul ; you are acting for eternity, and shall be happy or miserable, as you improve or neglect the present opportunity.

Be sensible, that the mind of man in his natural state, is dark, and his affections grovelling ; that he possesses neither the will nor the resolution to do good ; that he erred, and delights to err. Listen to the sentence of the Divine law, “The wages of sin is death ; cursed “ is every one that continueth not in all things written “ in the book of the law to do them.” “ In the day “ thou” sinnest “ thou shalt surely die.”

Let the awful sentence alarm the soul. Become anxious, extremely anxious, “ What shall I do to be saved ? Who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death ? ”—A sense of your perishing circumstances is favourable, it is the first step to your recovery. Pray earnestly, what I know not instruct me : and although I have done ill may I do so no more. Put yourselves under the guidance of God : Leave yourselves at his disposal. In humility of mind determine, that if you perish, you shall perish prostrate before the foot stool

of mercy. I proclaim to such, peace and good will. The son of God came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. You are sick, he is the Physician whom you need; like lost sheep you have gone astray; he seeks and saves that which was lost: A sentence of condemnation is passed upon you; through him the world are saved; there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. He speaks to you in his word; he calls upon you, earnestly he invites you, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden light."

Multitudes know, in their experience, that Christ is a mighty Saviour; that he saves from sin, and that he saves to the uttermost. Such, with one voice, express their faith, their gratitude, and their obedience. They renounce the devil, the world and the flesh. The number of such has hitherto been great; it is increasing, and shall increase, until the amount exceed all calculation. Join yourselves to this number. In membership with the church of God, expect great advantages. God is present with the church. To this God, they stand in a covenant relation. He is their God, and acknowledges them to be his people. He will be merciful to their

unrighteousness, and their sins, and their iniquities he will remember no more. He will protect them in the midst of danger; he will cause them to triumph over every enemy, and conduct them to the full possession of eternal rest.

May God bless his word.....*Amen.*

APPENDIX.

One fact, which testimony may be produced to establish, is, that there has been a *deluge*, universal in its extent and ruin, and *one* only of this description.

An universal destruction by water, is related in the Chaldean records; the Indian and Persian tradition mentions it. It was not unknown to the Egyptians; "The Greeks gave an account of the universal deluge which they often confound with that related of Deucalion."

Men have for four thousand years been guarded against such a calamity, and shall certainly be so, the world shall be consumed to ashes by fire, but can never again be deluged with water. This is an express stipulation in the covenant of grace, and by those who consent to this covenant, and in a course of faith and obedience, expect the spiritual blessings which it promises, these blessings also shall be enjoyed. This has been the assured confidence of the righteous at all times, of all nations, and of every distinction.

One example may suffice. The reverend Dr. Isaac Watts, could rest on nothing in his last hours but on the

promises of the gospel. He declared " I bless God
 " I can lie down with comfort at night, not being soli-
 " citous whether I awake in this world or another.
 ' Again,' " I should be glad to read more, yet not in
 " order to be confirmed more in the christian religion,
 " or in the truth of its promises, for I believe them
 " enough to venture an eternity on them. ' When he
 ' was almost worn out and broken down by his infirmi-
 ' ties he observed, in conversation with a friend, " that
 " he remembered an aged minister used to say, that the
 " most learned and knowing christians, when they
 " come to die have only the same plain promises of the
 " gospel for their support, as the common and unlearn-
 " ed; and so, said he, I find it. They are the plain
 " promises of the gospel which are my support, and I
 " bless God they are plain promises, which do not re-
 " quire much labour or pains to understand them, for
 " I can do nothing now but look into my Bible for some
 " promise to support me, and live upon that. ' When
 ' he has found his spirit tending to impatience, and rea-
 ' dy to complain he would thus check himself, " The
 " business of a christian is to bear the will of God as
 " well as to do it. If I were in health I could only be
 " doing that, and that I may do now. The best thing is
 " obedience is a regard to the will of God, and the way
 " to that is to get our inclinations and aversions as
 " much mortified as we can."

The following hymn was written by Doctor Watts to excite his own mind to aspire after better things than this world can afford, it is inserted, to excite in us the same ambition:

“ What shall whole ages wear away,
“ And I a willing pris’ner stay
“ Immur’d within these walls of clay ?

“ The porch, the open door I see :
“ Shall both conspire to set me free,
“ And I start back from liberty ?

“ Shall I not pant t’ ascend the road,
“ That leads to yon sublime abode,
“ The palace of my Father, God ?

“ From this vile flesh what countless ills
“ Arise ? Now fear my bosom chills,
“ Now grief in trickling tears distills ;

“ While Sin, the worst of all my foes,
“ Prevents or murders my repose,
“ And snares of dark destruction strows.

“ On this poor spot where canst thou find
“ Pleasures of such exalted kind
“ To fill the wishes of the mind ?

" *Jesus*, thy love, far far from sight
" Midst stars and seraphs pure and bright
" Dwells high-enthron'd in worlds of light.

" Thither shouldst thou attempt to go
" Th' Almighty would no thunders throw,
" Nor would one cloud obscure his brow :

" Himself invites thee to the skies :
" From sin and all its sorrows rise ;
" Wings of swift flame his love supplies.



THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.



THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.



S E R M O N VIII.

ACTS XI, 26.

*“The disciples were called Christians first at Anti-
“och.”*

We are informed, that “they who were scattered
“abroad, upon the persecution that arose about Ste-
“phen, travelled as far as Phenice and Cyprus, and An-
“tioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews
“only. And some of them were men of Cyprus and
“Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch,
“spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.”
The conduct of these teachers was very different.—
The one confined their ministration to the Jews; the
other, having heard of the admission of Cornelius and
his family to the Church, preached to the Gentiles, as
well as to the Jews. They had great success, for “the
“hand of the Lord was with them; and a great num-
“ber believed, and turned unto the Lord.

“ Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of
“ the Church which was in Jerusalem : and they sent
“ forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch ;
“ Who when he came, and had seen the grace of God,
“ was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of
“ heart they would cleave unto the Lord. For he was
“ a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith :
“ and much people was added unto the Lord. Then
“ departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul.”—
And when he had found “ him he brought him to Antioch.” Saul being a Greek, although descended of Jewish parents, was likely to be particularly serviceable in evangelizing the Greeks ; especially, considering, on the one hand, his accomplishments as a scholar ; and on the other, his extraordinary conversion, and great zeal. “ A whole year they assembled themselves
“ with the Church, and taught much people. And the
“ disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.”

The friends of Jesus, were in contempt, called by their enemies, *Galileans*, or *Nazarenes* ; but they were known among themselves, as *brethren—disciples—believers—saints*. Now, and as the original word is supposed to import, according to ancient prophecy, they were called by a *new name*.

It was a circumstance of remarkable wisdom, that

this name should arise from the Church at Antioch, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, rather than from the Church at Jerusalem, distinguished in so many other respects. It announced the triumph of Christianity in that very place, where Satan had long had his seat; and from which many cruel tyrants, and bloody persecutors had arisen. *Christian* was the name now given them. Would God, that no other, no dividing name had ever been known. In the ancient, in the glorious title let us all boast. Let no contention exist, but the contention, whose character shall correspond best to his character, whose venerable name we bear.

Alexander, ashamed of a soldier of his own name, who was an arrant coward, ordered him 'change thy name, or change thy manners.' Be like your great leader, O christian, or cease to bring it into contempt, by assuming a title to which you have no claim.

Christ was humble, and mortified to the world; he was obedient to God, and kind to men; he was patient under suffering, and heavenly minded. Let Christians also, be humble, and mortified to the world; let them be obedient to God, and kind to men; let them be patient under suffering, and heavenly minded.

I. Christ was *humble*.

Y-2

That we may know how humble Christ was ; realize the glory of the Divine nature, and the happiness of the heavenly world ; with this, contrast the circumstances of a poor despised, afflicted mortal, then you are prepared to hear the exhortation of the Apostle and to feel its influence. “ Let nothing *be done* through strife “ or vain-glory ; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every “ man on his own things, but every man also on the “ things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was “ also in Christ Jesus : Who, being in the form of God, “ thought it not robbery to be equal with God ; But “ made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the “ form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of “ men : And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even “ the death of the cross.”

A proud Christian is a contradiction in terms. The Lord of Christians was meek and lowly. Pride changed angels into devils ; pride entered into that crime which drove Adam out of Paradise ; pride domineers over human nature to the detriment and ruin of civil and religious society. The incarnation and life, the suffering and death of the Son of God, tend to eradicate this root of bitterness. You have reaped little benefit at the table of the Lord, unless you have carried with you

from thence, a meek and humble spirit.* What have you to be proud of? The meanness of your nature when compared with the Divine! your inconsistencies and short comings! your guilt aggravated by solemn engagements! Can pride be agreeable to him, whose condescension, no language known to mortals can express? Can it ever accord with the oath you took last Lord's day to put on the Lord Jesus? Can it be an ornament to you, or any adorning? It is not agreeable to Jesus; it cannot accord with the oath you have taken; it renders you vile in the estimation of pure intelligences.

Consider, Christian, your own circumstances; consider your Saviour's humility; consider your solemn engagements, and tell me, what robe becomes you so well as the robe of humility? what ornament so proper for your adorning, as the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit?

II. Christ was mortified to the world.

Had he chosen a station of magnificence and show, it was at his command. The cattle on a thousand hills were

* *This sermon was delivered after the celebration of the Lord's Supper.*

his ; he was heir of all things. The devil, indeed, taketh
 “ Jesus up into an exceeding high mountain, and shew-
 “ eth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory
 “ of them ; And saith unto him, All these things will I
 “ give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”—
 A rebel, and an outcast, presumptuously offered him,
 what, had it been desired by him, was already, entirely
 his own : But his mind was more noble : after better
 things did he aspire. Every circumstance was so
 contrived, as to discover, how little he estimated earth-
 ly things, and how little he would have us to estimate
 them. Mary his mother, was a poor woman : his ear-
 ly life was retired and laborious ; When public service
 brought him in view, he depended for subsistence on
 the charity of others. The foxes had holes, and the
 birds of the air had nests, but he had no where to lay
 his head. He expired on a cross, amidst insulting
 crowds, and torturing pains.

You have been on mount Calvary, and have seen this
 awful scene. What impression did it leave upon your
 minds ? Can you love that world which Jesus over-
 looked ? Can you be in friendship with his enemy ?—
 Can you serve mammon, after having engaged in a bet-
 ter service ? Respect for the life of Jesus ; reverence for
 his cross ; fidelity to your solemn engagements, forbid
 the infatuation. Love not the world. By the cross of

Christ, ye are crucified unto the world, and the world unto you. Forget what is behind and reach forward ; press to the mark for the prize of the high calling ; let your conversation be in heaven.

III. Christ was, in all things, obedient to God.

An ancient prophecy represents him, addressing his father in memorable language, upon which the Apostle, in his epistle to the Hebrews, comments at large. " It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats " should take away sins. Wherefore, when he cometh " into the world, he saith, sacrifice and offering thou " wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me : In " burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin, thou hast had " no pleasure : Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume " of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God. " Above, when he said, sacrifice, and offering, and burnt " offerings, and *offering* for sin, thou wouldest not, nei- " ther hadst pleasure *therein* ; (which are offered by " the law ;) Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, " O God. He taketh away the first, that he may esta- " blish the second. By the which will, we are sancti- " fied, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ " once *for all*." Doing God's will was his meat and drink ; he was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Looking back on a painful but laborious

life ; he could appeal to the searcher of hearts, " I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."

Christians are grafts on Christ the vine, and it is their peculiar distinction to bear much fruit. Let holiness to the Lord, be written on their hearts and lives. An unrighteous man is not a christian. He may put on the mask, and pass among professing christians, but Christ acknowledges him not, and will never acknowledge him. Speak of a professor of Christianity, and add that he tramples upon any of God's commandments, the inconsistency is apparent. A *good christian* who is intemperate, licentious, or profane, is a strange abuse of language. You may as well speak of a good house which does not shelter you from the weather ; a good field which yields you no crops ; a good tree which is entirely barren. Consecrated to the service of God, let your conduct be humble, obedient, and spiritual. When Judas betrayed his master ; when Peter denied him ; when all the disciples deserted him in the hour of danger, it affected him much more, and was more grievous than the neglect, the insult and malice of his enemies. To be treated ill among our friends, awakens keen and overwhelming sensibility.

The grace, which you have received, teaches you to

deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and Godly in the world ; you are not permitted to rest in any attainment which you may have reached, but are excited to aspire after higher attainments ; give all diligence, “ add to your faith, virtue ; and to virtue, knowledge ; and to knowledge, temperance ; and to temperance, patience ; and to patience, godliness ; and to godliness, brotherly kindness ; and to brotherly kindness, charity.” Precious promises are found in scripture, for the very purpose of enabling you, to purify yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Inattentive to such instruction, such excitement, such promises, you may dread the most fatal consequences, of which, our Lord, in an expressive parable, gives you full warning. “ A certain *man* had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard ; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none : cut it down ; why cumbereth it the ground ? And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it : And if it bear fruit, *well* ; and if not, *then* after that thou shalt cut it down.”

IV. Christ was kind to men.

His obedience to God as already specified, proceeded from love to men, and illustrates that love in the strongest manner. Ye know his grace, that when rich, for your sakes he became poor; that you through his poverty might become rich. He condescended, to teach you condescension : he forgives you, and thereby inspires you with a forgiving disposition : he is kind to you, that you being kind to others, the benefit might extend far and wide.

The man indifferent to the welfare of fellow men, never felt the love of Christ, which filling the soul, and impressing thereon his image, appears in conduct condescending, forgiving and beneficent.

If you be not condescending, you are not christians ; condescension Christ taught, by example and by precept. Of this, a well known passage, in one of the gospels, which ought never to be forgotten, is a sufficient proof. “ He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter : and Peter said unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet ? Jesus answered and said unto him, what I do thou knowest not now ; but thou shalt know

" hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never
 " wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee
 " not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith
 " unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands
 " and *my* head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed
 " needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every
 " whit : and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew
 " who should betray him ; therefore saith he, ye are
 " not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and
 " had taken his garments, and was set down again, he
 " said unto them, know ye what I have done to you ?
 " ye call me Master and Lord : and ye say well ; for so
 " I am. If I then, *your* Lord and Master, have wash-
 " ed your feet, ye also ought to wash one anothers feet.
 " For I have given you an example, that ye should do
 " as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you,
 " The servant is not greater than his lord ; neither he
 " that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye
 " k now these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

Whilst christians stoop to do good, let them also
 forgive those who injure them. This is essential to
 the character. It is a disposition, which, the prayer in
 frequent use, rouses and keeps awake, " Forgive us
 " our debts, as we forgive our debtors ;" an assurance
 is added, which lays a necessity upon christians which
 they feel, and which is always operative, " For if ye

Z

“forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly father
 “will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their
 “trespasses, neither will your father forgive your tres-
 “passes.”

What among men passes as a point of honour is despised by the christian. He recompenses to no man evil for evil. He avengeth not himself. If his enemy hunger, he feeds him; if he thirsts, he gives him drink: he is not overcome of evil, but overcomes evil with good. The man who has courage to act on such principles, for courage it undoubtedly requires, possesses real dignity, and takes a station which must command universal respect. Lessons of this kind are repugnant to little debased minds, but Christ insists that they be attended to, by all his followers, and become the rule by which their practice shall be regulated. Peter said to Jesus, “Lord how oft shall my
 “brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven
 “times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, un-
 “til seven times; but until seventy times seven.

“Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto
 “a certain king, which would take account of his ser-
 “vants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was
 “brought unto him which owed him ten thousand ta-
 “lents: But forasmuch as he not to pay, his lord

“ commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.
“ The servant, therefore, fell down, and worshipped him, saying, lord have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow servants, which owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, pay me that thou owest.—
“ And his fellow servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. But he would not; but went and cast him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me,—
“ Shouldest thou not also have had compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall my heavenly father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”

Graces, like these adorn the Christian character ; the adorning is complete, when the conduct is uniformly kind and useful ; when ye give meat to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty ; when ye visit the sick, and look after the prisoner. Ah, brethren, many found their pretension to the Christian character, on the observance of little things, whilst they neglect the weightier matters of the law ; in these weightier matters, the established Christian abounds, and at the same time, gives due attention to matters of less importance.

V. Christ was patient under suffering.

When he was reviled, he reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him who judgeth righteously. " He was oppressed, " and he was afflicted ; yet he opened not his mouth : " he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a " sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not " his mouth. Agonizing in the garden of Gathsemane, he resigned himself to God, " not my will, but thine " be done. The cup which my father giveth me, shall " I not drink it." Dying by the hands of abandoned men, he prayed for his murderers, " Father forgive " them, for they know not what they do."

In your pilgrimage through life. O Christian, you

will find frequent occasion for the exercise of the same disposition. Afflictions are planted thick : It is a thorny path which you tread : your path is beset with enemies. Ill it would become you, who know the contradiction of sinners, to which your Lord submitted ; and the afflictions which he endured ; to faint, or to be weary in your minds. In patience possess your souls. The just have been condemned and killed, and did not resist. Be patient, therefore, brethren unto the coming of the Lord. “ Take my brethren, the prophets, who “ have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example “ of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we “ count them happy, which endure. Ye have heard of “ the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the “ Lord ; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender “ mercy.” Let patience have her perfect work. “ For “ ye have need of patience ; that, after ye have done “ the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For “ yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, “ and will not tarry. Now, the just shall live by faith : “ but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back “ unto perdition ; but of them that believe to the saving “ of the soul.”

VI. Christ was heavenly minded.

Z 2

Often he spoke of having come from his father, and was delighted at the thought of returning whence he came. He disclaimed every pretension to a temporal kingdom ; his kingdom was not of this world ; he reigns in the hearts of men. He died on a cross, and visited the tomb ; but the cross advanced him to the Crown ; from the tomb he arose to the enjoyment of an immortal existence. In this assurance, his last words were, " Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

A disposition like his ennobles the soul, and gives dignity to the conduct. You were informed by your Lord, at the holy table, " I will come again." Prepare for his coming, gird up the loins of your minds, trim your lamps. The prospect of life and immortality has hitherto animated the disciple of Jesus, and shall continue to animate him. It supported the Apostle in the midst of insult and violence ; and shall support all, who possess the same faith, under any circumstance, however humiliating or depressed. Think of the tyrant ; of the sentence of death ; of the executioner ;—Behold the apostle, he smiled at the tyrant ; he was unmoved by the sentence of death, and had no dread of the executioner. His language was not only firm and cheerful, but even triumphant ! " For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I

“ have kept the faith : henceforth there is laid up for
“ me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the
“ righteous judge, shall give me at that day : and not
“ to me only, but unto all them also that love his ap-
“ pearing.” A mind, habituated to future prospects,
stands collected at the moment of danger, and at the
approach of death. It is cheered by a voice from hea-
ven, the voice of Jesus, which revives and invigorates
the soul ; “ Let not your heart be troubled : ye believe
“ in God, believe also in me. In my father’s house are
“ many mansions : if *it were* not so, I would have told
“ you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go
“ and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and
“ receive you unto myself ; that where I am, *there* ye
“ may be also.”

Such the character of a *christian*, how amiable ! how dignified ! Although dwelling on earth, yet he is a citizen of heaven. You profess that you are christians, and in professing to be so, you do well. Be the humble and selfdenied ; be the obedient and loving ; be the patient and noble minded persons, which that profession supposes ; then the profession which you have made, will be an ornament to yourselves, and useful to the world : but otherwise, your profession is good for nothing. You appear in a false character ; you claim a privilege to which you have no title ; you lay a

foundation for future shame and disappointment. To confine your views to this world, is to deny Christ ; to love and practise even one sin, is to have a name to live, when you are dead. A saint in public, but a devil in private, is to have the form, but not the power of godliness : a Lamp, but no oil in your vessels with your lamp. Christ addresses such in alarming language, “ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall “ enter into the kingdom of Heaven ; but he that do- “ eth the will of my father which is in Heaven. Ma- “ ny will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we “ not prophesied in thy name ? and in thy name done “ many wonderful works ? And then will I profess “ unto them, I never knew you : depart from me, ye “ that work iniquity.”

Let a man profess to be a good Farmer, or a good Mechanic, who knows nothing of either, it is to his disgrace ; he is held in contempt by all who are acquainted with his ignorance of these branches which he pretends to know ; equally disgraceful and contemptible, is the profession of Christianity, in those who never felt its power, and never practise its precepts. The profession is an ornament to a character. But there is, in nature, what admits of no ornament. Load a sow with jewels, it is an unseemly sight ; more unseemly is it, to see a worldly, profane, irreligious person at-

tempting, to pass for a disciple of Jesus, and to hide the vileness and deformity of his character under borrowed honours. Unless christians can be persuaded to act like Christians, Christ will be ashamed of them, and spurn them from his presence.

I insist on this alarming truth, merely to put you on your guard. I hope better things of you, although I thus speak. Let not that hope be disappointed. Realize in your own lives, the life of Christ. Order your conversation according to the gospel. Shine in the beauties of holiness. Let it be observed concerning you, as it was observed concerning the first christians, 'Behold, how these christians love one another.'

It may perhaps be expected on this subject; and the expectation no doubt had been fully realized, had the subject been discussed by some of my brethren; that I should enter into a detail of the mode of life; of the dress; of the amusements, the food of vain, light, empty minds, and expose the inconsistency of those who adopt such a mode of life, who appear in such dress, who delight in vain amusements, and yet, who openly profess themselves to be christians. Philippicks on such topics I could never reconcile with the dignity of this place; nor perceive how these philippicks can

most successfully effect the great end, which all the ministers of Christ have much at heart. It is little more than attacking an out post, when the enemy ought to be stormed in his strong hold ; Lopping off some withered branches, when the axe ought to be laid at the root of the tree ; an attempt to wash the Etheopian white, which cannot be done, without entirely changing his nature. Let love to God, and love to man take possession of the heart : let heaven be kept in view, and the earth be put under your feet ; let the bread of life be broken, and its excellency over husks be once known. The mean things which amuse the degenerate, will then cease to have any relish ; never will such persons, be conformed, in an unworthy degree, to the present evil world. Nay, in matters which to them appear indifferent, but which, the weakness of some of their brethren, aggravates as a heinous crime, they will cheerfully deny themselves, rather than offend any belonging to Christ. On this principle, christian, you would act contrary to your master's will ; and to your own solemn engagements, were you either to do as worldly men do, or even to indulge in what you do not see to be sinful, but what is thought to be so by your brethren. A conscience void of offence toward God and man is an object, which ought ever to be in view. It is becoming in a good, and in a prudent christian.—Live not to yourselves ; but to God—to Christ—and to the church.

It would grieve me to the heart to hear of any thing unworthy in your conduct ; or to see any thing unworthy in your disposition. Shew, I beseech you, by rejecting, what is frivolous and unsubstantial ; that you have food to eat which the world knows not of : by minds fixed on heaven ; that you have been with Christ at his table ; by garments unspotted with the flesh ; that you are clothed in linen clean and white, even that righteousness which is the ornament, and the distinction of the saints.

The night, christian, is far spent, “ The day is at hand : let us therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light Let us walk honestly as in the day ; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”

The service, in which you were lately engaged, is the best corrective of the disorders of our nature.— Having seen Christ at his table you received the impression of his image. Like Moses, descending from the mount, you will shine in a celestial glory ; a glory which sinners hate, because it pains their diseased eyes ; a glory which saints admire, and are ambitious

to obtain ; a glory which marks you out to be the children of God, and which, although it may soon disappear on earth, shall burst forth, with the brightness of the sun, in the kingdom of your father.

May God bless his word.... *Amen*

APPENDIX.

The bad consequences attending the ill conduct of professing christians, is so much felt, and so generally acknowledged, that it can hardly be necessary to produce examples to illustrate so plain a subject.

Dr. Priestley's verulence against doctrines, which are certainly pillars on which the christian system rests, led his antagonist Levi the Jew, to suspect that he himself did not believe the divine origin of that system, and how could he persuade a Jew of the truth of what he himself did not appear to believe. When the Indians of America, and the Mahometans of Assia see christians, cheat, and lie, and get drunk, nothing can induce them to allow that the religious system of christians, has any excellency over the religious system handed down to them from their forefathers. This has been the insurmountable obstacle, in the way of the success of the Gospel; and until christians return to the simplicity of the Gospel, in their faith and practice, they cannot expect to advocate with success the cause of Christ.

Voltaire's *Pupil of Nature*, is the keenest satire

A a

which was ever written ; it shews to demonstration, that his countrymen had departed so far from christianity, that the shadow barely remained, and even that was stained with blood and violence. No wonder a penetrating mind saw nothing divine in such an impostor. When christianity wears the attire of Pagans, it inevitably forces the contemptuous smile. It stands manifest as a cheat. Infidels multiply, and laugh at the credulity of mankind.

It was established, even to a proverb, at the commencement of Christianity, that the blood of the saints was the seed of the church. The first martyrs were so forgiving, so resolute, so patient, so cheerful that their persecutors were struck with their conduct ; they examined the nature of that religion which yielded such fruit, and in many instances, from conviction, became christians. Pliny, in his letters to Trajan, gave a favourable testimony to the innocence of the christians, whom the laws obliged him to punish, and procured an amelioration of these laws, to which they were exposed.

The husband of a pious and prudent woman was sensible that his brutality, when intoxicated, which was almost always, did not deserve the tender and kind treatment which he was sure to receive from the wife

of his bosom. He reflected during a sober moment, I know my wife to be every thing that is amiable, but to bear, with such a brute, is more than mortal. It led him to converse on the subject: 'It is true, was the mild reply, your conduct is extremely disgusting, it nearly breaks my heart, but I am your wife, and as a christian, I am taught to overcome evil with good; which I do the more cheerfully, knowing well, that all the good, which you are likely to receive, is in this world, I shall do what I can to give you any satisfaction *now*, foreseeing that you will be miserable *for ever afterwards!*' The observation went to his heart; such treatment to such a wretch, must be the consequence of noble principles. He became a sincere penitent, and lived afterwards like a christian.

The Reverend Doctor Samuel Charters received when a young man a presentation to a Parish, in the gift of Lord Kaimes. Such settlements in Scotland, are extremely offensive to the people. He returned attention for neglect, kindness for ill usage, blessing for cursing. The effect was astonishing. It conciliated the affection of the people. They began to consider him not with attention only, but with attachment: After some years, when providence called him to labour in another part of the vineyard, it appeared that he was the idol of their hearts. He lately, being now

an old man, payed them a last visit, and reaped all the satisfaction which unabating kindness could occasion. Let christians always act in the same way, and they will soon perceive, the great and the good effect consequent on such conduct.

Col. James Gardiner, when challenged to single combat, returned a cool but firm answer, ' You know ' I am not afraid to fight, but I am afraid to offend God.' The answer did not affect his reputation as a soldier; and I cannot conceive how his antagonist could remain any longer hostile; a man of such piety will never intentionally injure another, or if injury has unwarily been done, he will readily acknowledge it, and make such a reparation as the nature of the injury demands. Did the spirit of Christianity universally prevail, feuds, tumults, and wars would entirely cease. Individuals, families, and nations, having no interested, no aggrandizing, no ambitious views, the evil would be torn up by the roots, and the reign of harmony be established.

" Addison was a very able and eloquent advocate for
" the bible, in life and death. Just before his depar-
" ture, having sent for a young nobleman nearly related
" to him, who requested to know his dying commands

“—his answer was—‘See in what peace a christian
“can die.”’

That religion which meliorates the temper ; which overcomes evil with good ; which controls restless passion ; and disarms death of its terrors, is of God ; let men act under its influence, and its triumph would soon extend to the remotest nations of the earth.

Simpson in his *Plea for Religion*, well observes, “It
“is not said now, as in the days of old, ‘See how these
“christians love one another’—but—‘See how these
“christians hate one another.’ Catholics damn pro-
“testants, and protestants revile catholics. One sect
“of protestants anathematizes another sect ; every one
“holding forth the peculiar doctrine of their own party
“as the truths of God, in opposition to the peculiar
“doctrines of those who differ from them. Instead of
“turning our zeal against the immoralities of the age,
“we have frequently turned it against men, who, in
“every moral and religious point of view, were per-
“haps better than ourselves. A spirit of infallibility,
“in a greater or less degree, pervades all parties. In
“this unchristian strife, the pure spirit of the gospel
“has been banished from the great bodies of profes-
“sors, and has taken up its abode among a few solita-
“ry individuals, dispersed through the several church-

“ es of christendom. Men of discernment, seeing this
“ to be the state of things through all denominations,
“ are led to suppose that there is no truth among any
“ of them. The fact however, is directly the contrary.
“ They have all gotten the saving truth, if they hold it
“ but in piety, charity and righteousness. They all be-
• “ lieve in a Saviour of the world. Let them only ob-
“ serve the moral and religious precepts of his gospel,
“ and I do not see what more is necessary to entitle
“ them to our christian regards. They may not come
“ up to the full orthodoxy of the gospel ; but they are
“ such characters as our Saviour himself would not
“ have treated with severity. And till religion is redu-
“ ced to the simple form in which he left it, there ne-
“ ver will be an end to the bickerings and uncharita-
“ bleness of party, and infidelity will of course prevail.

“ The general wickedness and immoral conduct of
“ christians, so called, is another grand cause of infide-
“ lity. For let men profess what they will, they never
“ can persuade any thinking person that they believe
“ their own principles, while they are seen to trans-
“ gress every rule of moral and religious obligation,
“ and in various transactions between man and man,
“ conduct themselves in a manner, of which abundance
“ of the heathen, both ancient and modern, would be
“ ashamed.”

But why infer from these instances that the gospel is an imposture? "Some professors of natural religion are bad men; therefore natural religion is an imposture; there is no God. Some great pretenders to philosophy are knaves; therefore philosophy is all an imposition upon mankind. Some deists are immoral men; therefore the principles of deism are founded in error and delusion. Was it ever known that any man grew more moral, pious, virtuous, and heavenly minded, after rejecting the gospel? I could produce you a thousand instances where men have become better by cordially embracing it; and we defy you to produce one instance where any man became worse."

Lord Chesterfield was, under the impulse of the moment, led to offer a striking, and as he was situated, the best apology which could be made for the gospel. "Being at Brussels, he was waited on by Voltaire, who politely invited him to sup with him and madame C——. His lordship accepted the invitation.— The conversation happening to turn on the affairs of England, 'I think, my lord' said madame C——, 'that the parliament of England consists of five or six hundred of the best informed and most sensible men in the kingdom?'—'True madame, they are generally supposed to be so.' 'What then, my lord,

“ can be the reason that they tolerate so great an absurdity as the christian religion ? ” ‘ I suppose madame,’ replied his lordship, ‘ it is because they have not been able to substitute any thing better in its stead ; when they can, I don’t doubt but in their wisdom they will readily accept it.’

“ To have entered into a serious defence of the gospel of Christ, would have been the height of folly ; but such an answer as this, was calculated to silence her better than a thousand demonstrations, which she would neither have been able nor willing to understand.”

Contrast with the character of *the christian*, as it has been drawn in this sermon, and illustrated by the examples which the appendix produces ; the character of the man of fashion, that Butterfly in society, of which Mr. Charles Wesley gives a very exact picture ; that man must have an undiscerning and corrupted mind, who can hesitate for a moment to decide which is the most engaging ?

“ What is a modern man of fashion ?

“ A man of taste and dissipation :

“ A busy man without employment,

“ A happy man without enjoyment.”

“ Who squanders all his time and treasures,
“ On empty joys and tasteless pleasures;
“ Visits, attendants, and attention,
“ And courtly arts, too low to mention.
“ In sleep, and dress, and sport and play,
“ He throws his worthless life away;
“ Has no opinion of his own,
“ But takes from leading beaux the ton:
“ With a disdainful smile or frown
“ He on the *rif-raff* crowd looks down:
“ The world polite, his friends and he,
“ And all the rest, are—nobody!
“ Taught by the great his smiles to sell,
“ And how to write and how to spell;
“ The great his oracles he makes,
“ Copies their vices and mistakes;
“ Custom pursues, his only rule,
“ And lives an ape, and dies a fool.”

The conscience of a christian is very tender. What in itself has really no blame, or can only be considered as a natural infirmity, often gives inexpressible uneasiness, lest some way or other God may have been dishonoured, or the cause of truth injured in the eyes of men. This arises from a keen sense of the importance of Divine things, and a desire in all things to glorify the

name of God. Of this the following instance is illustrative.

James Faber, a native of Piccardy, a man of great repute among the first reformers of the Gospel, and of learning in France, after the reformation, "did in the persecution of that time flee with others, and for security retired to the queen of *Navarre* then in *Albret* in *Gascoine*, who had him in high esteem: on a certain day, the queen did advertise him, she purposed to come and dine at his house, and did invite some learned men, in whose conference she took much delight: at dinner *Faber* became exceedingly sad, and now and then fell out in bitter weeping; at which the queen complained, and inquiring the cause, why he weeped whilst she had come to be merry with him, he in the end said, Most serene queen, how can I be glad, or make others glad, who am as wicked a man as the earth bears! and what is that wickedness, says she, you have committed, who are known from your youth to have lived so holy? He answered, I am now the age of an hundred years, and remember not that I have committed what would burden my conscience, or make me afraid to leave the world; except one sin, for which propitiation is possible..... And as she pressed him to tell it, whilst he could scarce speak for abundance of tears, he said. How

“ can I stand before the throne of God? who having
“ taught others in purity and sincerity the holy evangel
“ of the Son of God, many of whom having followed
“ my doctrine, have constantly suffered a thousand
“ torments, and death itself, and in the mean time I,
“ an unconstant doctor, did flee; and though I had
“ lived long enough, and should not have feared death,
“ but rather desired it, did yet withdraw, and thus cqw-
“ ardly transgressed the command of my God!—
“ Whereupon the queen, as she was most eloquent,
“ did by reason and example shew him, this had befall-
“ en others of the holy servants of God: and others
“ there also, did add such considerations, as that he
“ became more cheerful, and said, there remains no-
“ thing, but that I go from hence to God, and after I
“ have now made my testament, I have that *impression*,
“ I must delay no longer, knowing *the Lord calls me*.
“ After he fixed his eyes on the queen, and says,
“ madam, I make you my heir: and to your preacher,
“ *Gerard*, I leave my books; and my cloaths, and
“ other things I have, I leave to the poor. Whereupon
“ the queen smiling, asked, What then *Mr. Faber*,
“ shall I have? The care, said he, madam, to distribute
“ this to the poor. It is well, said she; I solemnly
“ profess, this legacy is more acceptable to me, than if
“ the king my brother, had named me his heir. There-
“ after they saw him more joyful; then he said, I have

“ need of some rest, be you merry and joyful, and in
“ the mean time *adieu*; and having spoke this, he
“ turned him over on a bed that was near: where, as
“ they judged, he lay asleeping, but was indeed *fallen*
“ *asleep in the Lord*, without the least sign of a previ-
“ ous indisposition: for when they were about to awake
“ him, they found him to their admiration *dead*. Such
“ was the end of this personage indubitably holy, which
“ the queen of *Navarre* did herself relate to the elec-
“ tor *Frederick* the second of *Palatine*, when he was
“ sick at *Paris*, in his return from *Spain*, from the em-
“ peror *Charles* the fifth, and it was communicated by
“ a worthy gentleman *Hubertus Thomas*, a counsellor
“ of the said *Frederick's*, who was present at this re-
“ lation of the queen's, from whom *Rivet* had it writ-
“ ten by himself.”



LIFE AND IMMORTALITY.



LIFE AND IMMORTALITY.



S E R M O N IX.

SECOND TIMOTHY, I, 10.

*“ Jesus Christ, who hath brought life and immortality
“ to light through the gospel.”*

The glad tidings of peace are published in the gospel, for the benefit, both of Jews and of Gentiles, according to the promise given to Adam at the fall, long before Moses was born; or the introduction of the Mosaic economy. It was a promise to restore to mankind, by brusing the head of the serpent, the life and immortality which had been forfeited: the promise has been accomplished, and the accomplishment thereof is published in the gospel. The Jews are better informed concerning this doctrine than they were formerly: and the gentiles are made acquainted with a doctrine, of which hitherto they had been in doubt, if not totally ignorant. Death is become ineffectual, and the grave spoiled of its boasted victory. Life and immortality are brought to light.

"*Life*" is the existence of the soul after death: "Immortality," or, which better expresses the word used in the original, "incorruption," is the resurrection of the body, and its re-union with the soul, that re-united, both may live together, through the ages of eternity.

What light does the gospel throw

I. On the separate state? And what

II. On the resurrection of the body?

I shall endeavour through divine assistance to resolve both of these inquiries.

What light does the gospel throw, I. On the separate state?

It is an awful and interesting subject, which we are now venturing to discuss; would God it may arrest attention, and impress the whole of future life.

That the soul shall exist in a separate state, has been the belief of men of all ages, and among all nations. It has ever kept the world in awe, and engaged the more considerate in conduct, correspondent to

such belief. Heathen writers often speak of souls in a separate state, experiencing the consequence of a good or bad life, either rewarded with a happiness suited to their natures, in the Elysian fields; or confined in Tartarus, suffering exemplary punishment.

The anticipation of future happiness, or future misery, arises from the mind itself, possessing powers which cannot be destroyed by the dissolution of the body. The terror of the wicked, from a consciousness of crimes, even when these crimes are approved of by a world lying in wickedness, and when no danger of any kind on account thereof appears; and the joy of the righteous, from the testimony of a good conscience, when their good is evil spoken of, and when they for their good conduct are in the greatest danger, proclaim aloud future existence.

Revelation contains a doctrine so congenial to the constitution of our minds. This doctrine appeared once in great obscurity; but it has since been clearly manifested. It was then supposed; but now it is expressly taught. Good men in time past desired a better country, that is an heavenly, but in these last days, they know that the things which are seen are temporal, but that the things which are not seen are eternal, they

look for a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory ; but wicked men never did, and never can persuade themselves, that in death they shall cease to exist, or in the event of future existence that they shall be safe and happy : nay, they have frequently been impelled on trying occasions to exclaim “ *Let me die the death of the righteous*, and let my last end be like *his*.”

The gospel brings this doctrine down in some measure to the testimony of our senses. Three Apostles, with their bodily eyes, beheld Moses and Elias ages after they had put off the flesh ; and with their ears heard them converse with our Saviour on the mount of transfiguration. Saints, who had been long in their graves, sprung to life, at our Lord's resurrection, and were seen in full possession of existence, to the conviction of many Jews at Jerusalem. The king of saints himself, whom the Jews crucified, slew, and secured in the tomb, revived on the third day, conversed afterwards for forty days together, in the most familiar manner, with his disciples, and then, they beholding, ascended from a mountain in the neighborhood of Bethany, to the heavenly world. Unless you oppose the general belief of mankind ; unless you disbelieve the dictate of your own minds ; unless you overlook the facts which

the scriptures narrate, you cannot entertain a doubt, concerning this important doctrine.

When the dust returns to the dust; the spirit returns to God, and is reserved, in a happy or miserable state, until the judgment of the great day.

We know no more of things to come than what the scripture communicates. We see that when the body dies, it moulders and becomes dust; but we see no farther: darkness obscures the view; but we are assured, that the soul, surviving the ruin of the body, is disposed of, according to the appointment of God, until its future re-union with the body. The term, in our own language *hell*, and the correspondent term in the original *hades*, are descriptive of what is unseen. When the body is spoken of, it means the grave; but when the soul is spoken of, it means the place prepared by God, for the reception of separate spirits.

The situation assigned him who dies in his sin, is vastly different from the situation assigned him who dies in the faith. Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to *his own place*; an abode among apostate spirits, suited to a nature so degenerate and incorrigible. It is a prison, where the inhabitants of the old world, who contemned the warning, given by the mi-

nistry of Noah, are now confined. No suffering more keen than what is inflicted by fire, enraged with brimstone. Such the suffering of the wicked after death. They are exposed to every species of terror and dismay, like one shut out during the darkest night. A sense of loss, having fallen from happiness, preys as a gnawing worm on the spirit. Through grief and vexation; through rage and despair, they weep, and wail and gnash their teeth. Allotments of less or greater extremity are proportioned to the criminality of the offender, but all, and each dreadful beyond what eye hath seen, or ear heard, or heart conceived.

A spirit cannot be at rest, it must be employed; and we may be well assured, that the wicked are only employed in doing mischief; either increasing the misery of one another; or, if permitted to range on earth, the misery of mortals. The Gospel speaks of the Devil and *his Angels*, which beside *apostate spirits*, include *reprobate human souls*: these are the demons which formerly harassed the bodies of men, but which fled at our Lord's rebuke. A demoniac, one under the power of an unclean spirit, is introduced by the Evangelist Mark, "Who had *his dwelling* among the tombs; and "no man could bind him, no, not with chains: Because that he had been often bound with fetters and "chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by

“ him, and the fetters broken in pieces : neither could
“ any *man* tame him. And always, night and day, he
“ was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and
“ cutting himself with stones. But when he saw Jesus
“ afar off, he ran and worshipped him, And cried with
“ a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee,
“ Jesus, *thou* Son of the most high God? I adjure thee
“ by God, that thou torment me not.” It is worthy of
notice that this wicked spirit was miserable in himself,
yet he pursued a course which, of necessity, increased
and perpetuated his misery.

The region allotted the righteous when they drop
the garment of mortality, is different, and a part from
that allotted the wicked. “ To day ” said our Lord to
the dying penitent, “ To day shalt thou be with me in
“ in Paradise,” the abode of happy spirits, prepared
for their refreshment after the fatigues of life ; where,
thou shalt reap the fruit of that faith, which now, burst
through so dark a cloud, and honours me, in the midst
of infamy and death.

The state, both of the wicked, and also of the righte-
ous, is set in a very distinct light in one of our Lord’s
parables. “ There was a certain rich man, which was
“ clothed in purple and fine linnen, and fared sumptu-
“ ously every day : And there was a certain beggar

“ named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of
“ sores. And desired to be fed with the crumbs which
“ fell from the rich man’s table : moreover, the dogs
“ came and licked his sores. And it came to pass,
“ that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels
“ into Abraham’s bosom : the rich man also died, and
“ was buried ; And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being
“ in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus
“ in his bosom. And he cried, and said, Father Abra-
“ ham, have mercy on me ; and send Lazarus, that he
“ may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my
“ tongue ; for I am tormented in this flame. But A-
“ braham said, Son, remember that thou in thy life
“ time receivedst thy good things and likewise Lazarus
“ his evil things : but now he is comforted, and thou
“ art tormented. And, besides all this, between us and
“ you there is a great gulf fixed : so that they which
“ would pass from hence to you cannot ; neither can
“ they pass to us, that *would come* from thence.” Both
the rich man and Lazarus, according to this parable
continued to exist, the one in happiness the other in
misery. The places destined for their reception was
separated by a vast impassible chaos : The poor man
was conveyed to a happy mansion, by Angels ; but the
rich man, without a celestial guide, seized, as a just
prey, by apostate spirits, too soon arrived at the dreary
regions, the receptical of the wicked.

The spirits made perfect are delightfully employed, learning more of God and his ways, worshipping in his courts; or promoting the welfare of one another; perhaps also carrying into effect God's kind designs, with respect to their friends yet in a mortal state. Moses and Elias conversed with Christ on the mount of transfiguration, and thereby strengthened his mind, when he was exposed to dreadful suffering. The angel who attended John in Patmos, and gave him instruction, for whom he had such reverence, that he was once and again in danger of paying him religious homage, was his fellow servant, one of the prophets.—Is it not extremely likely from this statement, that the saints in heaven, not only know what is doing on earth, but also in numerous instances, are employed as the agents of a wise and a kind providence?

A remarkable prophecy represents our Lord as saying, "Thou wilt not leave my *soul* in *hell*, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption." What according to this passage went to hell? No doubt the soul. What was liable to corruption? Certainly the body. They are perfectly distinct substances, and assigned different situations at death. Christ expired on the cross. The spirit left the body and retired—But where? To the place of punishment, the hell where the rich man lifted up his eyes in torment? No—im-

possible, it was committed to his father's care, and retired to Paradise; the term, therefore, must be descriptive of the unseen state, where, a place of happiness is prepared for the righteous, but of misery for the wicked. His body was put in the tomb. Soul and body were separated for a time; but on the third day, before the body began to corrupt, the soul was reunited to the body, and having continued forty days in the flesh, he put on the robe of immortality, and sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.

The government of the mortal and immortal state is conferred on our Lord. He assured John, when suffering for his sake, and let his assurance be remembered for the consolation of all the faithful; "Behold, I am alive for ever more—and have the *keys of hell*, and *of death*." "*of Hell and of Death*" memorable expressions. It is my prerogative, by death, to separate the soul from the body, and to assign the soul its destination, among other separate souls, until the resurrection, at the Judgment of the great day.

It may be objected to this doctrine, How can we see or hear? how can we taste or feel? how can we speak or move, when the body furnished with organs and members for these purposes is reduced to ashes?—Inquiries on this subject are not improper; and no blame

can attach to researches which afford such satisfaction as is attainable. Spirits possess powers unknown to us at present. God is a spirit : He has no bodily organ or member ; but can it be supposed, that he who formed the eye should not see ; or the ear should not hear, Angels are spirits, and the just made perfect. Their means of acquiring and communicating knowledge : their capacity for motion and service : their intercourse with God, and with one another, is far more perfect than we can conceive of, in the mortal state.

In *sleep*, when we have no use of any of our senses, or of any of our members, we range at large over sea and land ; we converse with those, whom extensive oceans, and even the vale of death, have removed from us : Distinctly we hear and see, we speak and handle : The conclusion is natural, when these circumstances are investigated, that the soul, divested of the garb of mortality, possesses a capacity for these purposes.

Happiness in every stage of existence depends on purity of heart and life. Without holiness you cannot see God ; this is a blessing peculiar to those who are pure in spirit. The gospel which gives us the only information of a life to come, upon which we can depend assures us, that sin is now, and shall always be ruinous in its consequence. Of this, they whose office affords

C c

them, frequent opportunities of observing the effect which sickness, or the approach of death has upon the mind, are very sensible. If a return to God has restored peace to the soul, still the recollection of mispent time, whilst yet strangers to religion, awakes a bitter pang, and impells to bear a vehement testimony, against the reading, the company, the course of life, which poison the mind, and destroy religious principles: But let any be seized with sickness, or threatened with death, whilst ignorant of God, and disobedient to the gospel, I can conceive nothing half so terrible; racked in body, and agonized in mind, calling for mercy, without any certainty of obtaining mercy; summoned from time, and having no hope in eternity: This indeed is an evil day, which may, nay, which assuredly shall overtake the boldest offender; that it may not drive you to despair, think of it in time, think of it now, and from this moment, begin to lay up a good foundation for the time to come.

It is our joy to find any, at any time, inquiring after the things which belong to their peace; but our joy is much lessened, when the inquiry is delayed until pain and sickness unfit you for receiving instruction: make the inquiry now, when in health; the subject is always important, and being early attended to, and with the interest and improvement which it demands; it would

save you the bitterness; and us the mortification, which the neglect thereof must occasion. Inquire after Jesus: It is our delight to speak of him: Give us the opportunity: He saves from sin; and saves to the uttermost; Believe in him, you shall find rest; obey him you shall live forever.

But the gospel not only throws light, on the "life," or existence of the soul in a separate state; but also

II. On "*Immortality*" or incorruption when the body shall be raised again,

Intimation of this was given to Adam, when informed that "the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent." Listening to his temptation, mankind lost their immortality, to which they are restored by the seed of the woman. When God promised to be a God to Abraham, and to his seed; and to put them in possession of Canaan, it was a promise of a possession in heaven; but this could not be enjoyed, without a resurrection from the dead, which is included in the promise; this was well understood by Abraham, who in consequence thereof, expected a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is the Lord. A belief of the blessing contained in the first promise, and more fully expressed in the covenant

with Abraham, supported the pious Israelites, in the greatest extremity, of whom the Apostle Paul speaks, as "tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection."

This truth was impressed on the minds of the Jews, by many striking figures; among these the annual appearance of their high Priest, on the day of atonement, was peculiarly significant. Then in white linen the dress of the common Priests, he performed the service of the day; but that service, which expiated the sin of the nation being over, putting on the most splendid attire, and shining in ornaments of gold and precious stones, he returned to bless the people. His joy, and their's was very great. The grandeur and solemnity displayed on this occasion, conveyed to the Jews a lively idea of Christ's *second* appearance. In his first appearance he wore the garb of mortality; subject, like his brethren, to infirmity, affliction, and death; but having put away sin, by the sacrifice of himself, he shall return in splendor, not again to die, for the expiation of sin; but to complete the deliverance of those, who trust in the expiation which he had already made.

All shall revive, the good and the bad; every eye shall see him; they also who pierced him. The dead, small and great, shall stand before him. The sea shall

give up the dead which are in it; *death* and *hell* shall give up the dead which are in them; *death*, or the *grave* shall yield up their bodies; *hell* or *hades*, shall yield up their souls. Both the righteous and the wicked shall be united to their bodies, which shall be raised from the dust; the separate state shall exist no longer, but the eternal state shall be established.

The Apostle Paul's reasoning, concerning the resurrection, is full and express. "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." All are spoken of; every individual of the human race; as sure as they die, so sure shall they be raised from the dead. "The first man is of the earth; earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.—As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly." The *earthy* are those who die in their sins, they shall be raised with such bodies as they derived from Adam, vile and perishable. The *heavenly* are they who die in the faith, they shall be raised with celestial bodies, fashioned like to Christ's glorious body; of them, in his reasoning concerning spiritual bodies, the Apostle exclusively speaks.

The resurrection of the body depends on the pre-

mise of God to raise the dead; and on his power to do
 what he has promised. It is difficult to conceive of
 the dead arising from their graves, "How are they
 " raised up? and with what body do they come? Thou
 " fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except
 " it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not
 " that body that shall be, but bare again, it may chance
 " of wheat, or of some other grain: But God giveth it
 " a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his
 " own body. All flesh is not the same flesh; but *there*
 " *is* one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts,
 " another of fishes, and another of birds. *There are* al-
 " so celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial; but the
 " glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the ter-
 " restrial is another. *There is* one glory of the sun
 " and another glory of the moon, and another glory of
 " the stars; for one star differeth from another star in
 " glory." "Wherefore," says the Apostle, "the re-
 surrection of the dead is possible." The God who
 raises grain from the seed rotten in the ground, giving
 each grain its proper body, and who makes bodies ce-
 lestial and terrestrial, with their distinguishing quali-
 ties, is certainly able to raise the dead, and the Apostle
 appeals to these facts, to shew that it is possible, rather
 than to state any resemblance. Surely the power of
 omnipotence is not to be limited, with God all things
 are possible.*

* 1 Corinthians, xv. 53, 54.

In the epistle to the Thessalonians, the Apostle speaks of the saints who shall be living on earth when Christ shall come to judge the world, "they shall not prevent," or it may be translated, *anticipate* "them which are asleep." The dead in Christ shall rise first; then they who are living, shall be changed.† The wicked also shall leave their graves, and with these who are alive, shall be left on earth, and suffer the punishment prepared for them.‡

Before Christ's second coming, the mystery of God must first be finished. As many events are yet to be accomplished, his coming may be at a distance: scoffers deride the idea of his coming. When the period shall arrive, they shall be in great security, dreaming of peace and enjoyment during many years. At this moment, when thus off their guard, he shall descend from heaven in great majesty, and fix his throne in the air. A voice shall proclaim his approach to judge the world. The trumpet shall sound to rouse the dead.— They shall not all revive at once, but "every man in his order" or proper band: the righteous by themselves, and the wicked by themselves. Christ, the

† 1 *Thessalonians*, iv. 17.

‡ 11 *Thessalonians*, i. 7, 8, 9.

first fruit, had risen long before, afterwards they that are Christ's arise at his coming. They who are in their graves shall spring into life; and they who are alive shall be changed. The bodies, with which the one arise, and which the other when changed shall receive, shall, like Christ's glorious body, be *spiritual* and *incorruptible*. In such bodies, Enoch, Elias, and the saints who left their graves at his resurrection, and went with him, when he ascended on high, within the veil, now appear. They possess nothing corruptible or vile; weak or animal. Many organs necessary at present, shall then be unnecessary; and many of which we have no idea, shall then be bestowed: in these bodies, they shall shine as the brightness of the firmament. It is as impossible to conceive, as to describe the excellence, activity, and perfection of the spiritual body.

After the righteous who had been dead are raised from the dead, the trumpet shall again sound. It is called the last trumpet, whilst yet sounding, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye the righteous, living on the earth, shall be changed.

The righteous who had been dead, having been raised up, and they who are alive, changed, the wicked who are in their graves shall awake, but Ah! they shall

awake to shame, and everlasting contempt; appearing in the same *vile, fleskly, mortal* bodies in which they died. All the passages, which speak of immortal bodies, speak exclusively of the righteous. On what depends on revelation alone, to proceed a step beyond what that revelation, either by affirmation, or inference warrants, is great presumption. The wicked are expressly excluded from the hope of a glorious body.—“The children of God, are children of the resurrection,” which implies that they who are not the children of God, are not the children of the resurrection, in the same manner as the children of God are. “The glory to be revealed in the saints” is termed “the manifestation of the sons of God,” of consequence, that glory is not to be revealed in them who are not the sons of God. To suppose that the wicked shall rise with the same body as the righteous, is to suppose that they are the children of the resurrection, equally with the sons of God, contrary to our Lord’s express assurance; nay, that there shall be no discrimination of the sons of God, although by the Apostle Paul, we are taught otherwise. The righteous receive spiritual bodies, for the express purpose, that they may inherit the kingdom; but the wicked, being excluded from that kingdom, shall receive no such bodies: why should they be fitted for a happiness which they shall never possess? Beside, the immortal body being part of the inheritance

of the saints in light, is it to be imagined that the wicked can obtain any part of a portion which does not belong to them?

The wicked place their happiness in bodily pleasure, and upon the body bestow all their care. Is it not, therefore, fit that they should appear at the bar of Christ, in these vile bodies which they idolized, and be thereby exposed to universal contempt.

The righteous appearing in glorious immortal bodies; and the wicked in bodies vile and mortal, produced by the power of the judge, under the direction of his omniscience, each shall be fully revealed to assembled worlds, in their real characters, and the whole process of the judgment be completed at once.

To the righteous the king will say "Come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." They shall be caught up, by the ministry of angels in clouds, or great numbers at once, to join their Lord, in the air, and to accompany him, in his return to the heavenly world.

To the wicked, the king will say, "Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the de-

"vil and his angels." The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire, was an example of that dreadful punishment by fire, which shall be inflicted on the wicked. Fire from the presence of the Lord devoured Nadab and Abihu. Such the fire, which, at the great day, proceeding from the throne, shall be so destructive to the wicked. It shall set the air in flames ; the flame shall reach the earth, and spread to its utmost extent. The air is the abode of apostate angels, a dark region, compared with the region of light from which they were expelled. *There* are they confined in chains, unto the judgment of the great day. The air on fire, these malicious spirits, invested with aerial bodies of a texture which can be affected by fire, shall be burned up in their prison-house ; as the wicked shall be on the earth, where they were left. This is the second death ; to intimate, that as the soul, or thinking principle in man, was not destroyed by the first death, neither shall it be by the second. Excluded from all enjoyment, or even the hope of enjoyment, they must suffer a bitterness of which it is not possible to conceive. This most comfortless, miserable state, is called utter darkness, and the blackness of darkness reserved for the wicked forever. These things are all so terrible, that the sound of them, though distant, may well awaken even those who are most sunk in wickedness and insensibility.

Let this subject, interesting beyond all others, impress your minds.

Before the resurrection of the body, the deliverance of the righteous remains imperfect, but then it shall be complete. The separate state, however happy, bears evident marks of degradation. The body is the prey of worms; the subject of corruption; a heap of vile dust. But the body shall be raised again, so glorious and so pure, that henceforth, infirmity and pain; sickness and death shall be unknown.

Pious friends shall be restored to one another, in the most endearing circumstances, when separation for the future, shall be impossible. If even the wicked retain some regard for those, to whom, by ties of nature, they were once united; as appears from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Let it not be supposed that that natural affection can be extinguished in the righteous. It shall indeed be refined, and placed on objects so worthy, that for the future, it must increase the enjoyment awaiting them during eternal ages.

It is a circumstance which must not be overlooked, that the mediatorial kingdom, the end of its appointment having been completely gained, shall no more ex-

ist. The saints are so completely recovered from the degeneracy, once their reproach and ruin; that *now, immediately*, without *dread* or *danger*, they may approach a holy God, with acceptance. They can no more forfeit his favour; they are confirmed in holiness, and enjoy the most perfect and happy state of which their natures are capable.

But, who may anticipate such happiness? Is it you? or you? or you?

“Look unto me,” is the gracious invitation, “Ye ends of the earth and be ye saved.” Regarding Christ as the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world is attended with the happiest consequences.* Faith in Christ, when real and effective, destroys the power of sin, and brightens our prospects for eternity. But if man will not believe in Christ, nor yield him obedience, what advantage can they expect from what he has done? from what he is now doing? and has promised to do at an appointed period. The situation of such is desperate. Christ, indeed, will again appear on earth, not to die for sin, but to reckon with you, who account his blood an unholy thing, and do despite to the spirit of grace. You will then find your situation

* *John III, 14, 15.*

the most terrible and hopeless that can be imagined.— At this awful moment, your boldness will forsake you ; you will be confounded and speechless ; and with the approbation of assembled worlds, since you neglected the salvation of God for your relief, you shall be left forever, under the infamy and ruin incurred by sin.— No more will it be in your power to reject the offers of peace. He who made you will have no mercy upon you, and he who formed you will show you no pity.

Life and death are before you ; the blessing and the curse. I beseech you, this day, whether you will obey the gospel, that you may live ; or continue in wilful rejection thereof, in which case, I announce to you, in the name of God, that you shall surely die.

I beseech you, by the incarnation and life, by the suffering death of the son of God ; I beseech you by his resurrection from the dead, and his exaltation to the right hand ; I beseech you, by his power, to dispense grace to men in the mortal state, and to call the refractory at any moment, before his bar in the immortal, to answer for their conduct ; I beseech you by his coming to raise the dead, and to judge the world ; when he shall drive the wicked from his presence, as chaff is driven before the wind ; but advance the righteous to honour and happiness ; I beseech you, by these

awful, these incontestable truths ; rouse from a thoughtless, dreaming, ruinous state. Acquaint yourselves with God and be at peace. You are yet prisoners of hope, get you to your strong hold. Flee, Oh ! flee from the wrath to come.....*Amen.*

APPENDIX.

The subject of this Sermon is known only through revelation. We cannot call upon separate spirits, and from them learn the state of things in the invisible world. The resurrection also is future, and instances of a body which had been reduced to ashes, returning to life, is not to be expected.

The following example is astonishing; it confirms our belief in future existence, and more light, from any example on this subject is not to be obtained. I take it from the *Missionary Magazine*, of the year 1806. It is fully confirmed and can admit of no doubt.

The Reverend William Tennent, "After a regular
"course of study in Theology, was preparing for his
"examination by the presbytery as a candidate for the
"gospel ministry. His intense application affected his
"health, and brought on a pain in his breast and a
"slight hectic. He soon became emaciated, and at
"length was like a living skeleton. His life was now
"threatened. He was attended by a physician, a young
"gentleman who was attached to him by the strictest
"friendship. He grew worse and worse, till little

“ hope of life was left. In this situation his spirits failed him, and he began to entertain doubts of his final happiness. He was conversing, one morning, with his brother, in Latin, on the state of his soul, when he fainted and died away. After the usual time, he was laid out on a board, according to the common practice of the country, and the neighbourhood were invited to attend his funeral on the next day. In the evening, his physician and friend returned from a ride into the country, and was afflicted beyond measure at the news of his death. He could not be persuaded that it was certain; and on being told that one of the persons who had assisted in laying out the body thought he had observed a little tremor of the flesh under the arm, although the body was cold and stiff, he endeavoured to ascertain the fact. He first put his own hands into warm water to make it as sensible as possible, and then felt under the arm, and at the heart, and affirmed that he felt an unusual warmth, though no one else could. He had the body restored to a warm bed, and insisted that the people, who had been invited to the funeral, should be requested not to attend. To this the brother objected as absurd, the eyes being sunk, the lips discoloured, and the whole body cold and stiff. However, the doctor finally prevailed; and all probable means were used, to discover the symptoms of returning life.....

D d 2

“ But the third day arrived, and no hopes were enter-
“ tain of success by the doctor, who never left him
“ night nor day. The people were again invited, and
“ assembled to attend the funeral. The doctor still ob-
“ jected, and at last confined his request for delay to
“ one hour. He had discovered that the tongue was
“ much swoln, and threatened to crack. He was en-
“ deavouring to soften it, by some emollient ointment
“ put upon it with a feather, when the brother came
“ in, about the expiration of the last period, and mis-
“ taking what the doctor was doing, for an attempt to
“ feed him, manifested some resentment, and in a
“ spirited tone, said, ‘ It is shameful to be feeding a
“ lifeless corps ;’ ” and insisted with earnestness, that
“ the funeral should immediately proceed. At this
“ critical and important moment, the body to the great
“ alarm and astonishment of all present, opened its
“ eyes, gave a dreadful groan, and sunk again into ap-
“ parent death. This put an end to all thoughts of bu-
“ rying him, and every effort was again employed in
“ hopes of bringing about a speedy resuscitation. In
“ about an hour, the eyes again opened, a heavy groan
“ proceeded from the body, and again all appearance
“ of animation vanished. In another hour life seemed
“ to return with more power, and a complete revival
“ took place, to the great joy of the family and friends,
“ and to the no small astonishment and conviction of

“ very many who had been ridiculing the idea of res-
“ toring to life a dead body.

“ Mr. Tennent continued in so weak and low a state
“ for six weeks, that great doubts were entertained of
“ his final recovery. However, after that period he re-
“ covered much faster, but it was about twelve months
“ before he was completely restored. After he was
“ able to walk the room, and to take notice of what
“ past around him, on a Sunday afternoon, his sister,
“ who had staid from church to attend him, was read-
“ ing in the Bible, when he took notice of it, and asked
“ her what she had in her hand. She answered that
“ she was reading the Bible. He replied, ‘ What is
“ the Bible ? I know not what you mean.’ This affec-
“ ted the sister so much that she burst into tears, and
“ informed him, that he was once well acquainted with
“ it. On her reporting this to the brother when he
“ returned, Mr. Tennent was found, upon examination
“ to be totally ignorant of every transaction of his life
“ previous to his sickness. He could not read a single
“ word, neither did he seem to have any idea of what
“ it meant. As soon as he became capable of attention,
“ he was taught to read and write, as children are usu-
“ ally taught, and afterwards began to learn the Latin
“ language under the tuition of his brother. One day
“ as he was reciting a lesson in Cornelius Nepos, he

“ suddenly started, clapped his hand to his head, as if
“ something had hurt him, and made a pause. His
“ brother asked him what was the matter, he said, that
“ he felt a sudden shock in his head, and it now seem-
“ ed to him as if he had read that book before. By de-
“ grees his recollection was restored, and he could
“ speak the Latin as fluently as before his sickness,....
“ His memory so completely revived, that he gained a
“ perfect knowledge of the past transactions of his life,
“ as if no difficulty had occurred.

“ The writer of Mr. Tennent's life, was greatly inte-
“ rested by these uncommon events ; and, on a favour-
“ able occasion, earnestly pressed Mr. Tennent for a
“ minute account of what his views and apprehensions
“ were, while he lay in this extraordinary state of sus-
“ pended animation. He discovered great reluctance
“ to enter into any explanation of his perceptions and
“ feelings at this time ; but, being importunately urged
“ to do it, he at length consented, and proceeded with
“ a solemnity not to be described.

“ ‘ While I was conversing with my brother,’ said
“ he, ‘ on the state of my soul, and the fears I had en-
“ tertained for my future welfare, I found myself, in an
“ instant, in another state of existence, under the di-
“ rection of a superior being, who ordered me to fol-

“ low him. I was accordingly wafted along, I know
“ not how, till I beheld at a distance an ineffable glory,
“ the impression of which upon my mind it is impossi-
“ ble to communicate to mortal man. I immediately
“ reflected on my happy change, and thought—Well
“ blessed be God ! I am safe at last, notwithstanding
“ all my fears. I saw an innumerable host of happy
“ beings surrounding the inexpressible glory, in acts of
“ adoration and joyous worship ; but I did not see any
“ bodily shape or representation in the glorious appear-
“ ance. I heard things unutterable. I heard their
“ songs and hallelujahs, of thanksgiving and praise,
“ with unspeakable rapture. I felt joy unutterable and
“ full of glory. I then applied to my conductor, and
“ requested leave to join the happy throng. On which
“ he tapped me on the shoulder, and said, ‘ You must
“ return to the earth.’ This seemed like a sword
“ through my heart. In an instant I recollected to
“ have seen my brother standing before me, disputing
“ with the doctor. The three days during which I had
“ appeared lifeless, seemed to me not more than ten
“ or twenty minutes. The idea of returning to this
“ world of sorrow and trouble, gave me such a shock,
“ that I fainted repeatedly.’ He added, ‘ Such was the
“ effect on my mind of what I had seen and heard, that
“ if it be possible for a human being to live entirely
“ above the world and the things of it, for some time

“ afterwards I was that person. The ravashing sounds
 “ of the songs and hallelujahs that I heard, and the ve-
 “ ry words that were uttered, were not out of my ears,
 “ when awake, for at least three years. All the king-
 “ doms of the earth were in my sight nothing and va-
 “ nity ; and so great were my ideas of heavenly glory,
 “ that nothing which did not in some measure relate
 “ to it, could command my serious attention.” ’

Mr. Tennent was frequently importuned with inquiries, “ Sir, you seem to be one indeed raised from the
 “ dead, and may tell us what it is to die, and what you
 “ were sensible of while in that state.’ He replied in
 “ the following words: ‘ As to *dying*—I found my fe-
 “ ver increase, and I became weaker and weaker, until
 “ *all at once*, I found myself in heaven as I thought. I
 “ saw no shape as to the Diety, *but glory all unuttera-*
 “ *ble !*” Here he paused, as though unable to find
 “ words to express his views, let his bridle fall, and lift-
 “ ing up his hands proceeded, ‘ I can say as St. Paul
 “ did, I heard and I saw things all unutterable ! I saw
 “ a great multitude before this glory, apparently in the
 “ height of bliss, singing most melodiously. I was
 “ transported with my own situation, viewing all my
 “ troubles ended and my rest and glory begun, and was
 “ about to join the great and happy multitude, when
 “ one came to me, looked me full in the face, laid his

“ hand upon my shoulder, and said, ‘ You must go
“ back.’ These words went through me ; nothing
“ could have shocked me more ; I cried out, Lord,
“ must I go back ! With this shock, I opened my eyes
“ in this world. When I saw I was in the world I faint-
“ ed, then came to, and fainted for several times, as one
“ probably would naturally have done in so weak a situ-
“ ation.’

“ Mr. Tennent further informed me, that he had so
“ entirely lost the recollection of his past life, and the
“ benefit of his former studies, that he could neither
“ understand what was spoken to him, nor write, nor
“ read his own name. That he had to begin all anew,
“ and did not recollect that he had ever read before,
“ until he had again learned his letters, and was able to
“ pronounce the monosyllables, such as *thee* and *thou*.
“ But, that as his strength returned, which was very
“ slowly, his memory also returned. Yet, notwithstand-
“ ing the extreme feebleness of his situation, his recol-
“ lection of what he saw and heard while in heaven, as
“ he supposed, and the sense of divine things, which
“ he there obtained, continued all the time in their full
“ strength, so that he was continually in something like
“ an ecstasy of mind. ‘ And,’ said he, ‘ for three years,
“ the sense of divine things continued so great, and
“ every thing else appeared so completely vain, when

“ compared to heaven, that could I have had the world
“ for stooping down for it, I believe I should not have
“ thought of doing it.”

“ The pious and candid reader is left to his own reflections on this very extraordinary occurrence. The facts have been stated, and they are unquestionable. The writer will only ask whether it be contrary to revealed truth, or to reason, to believe that in every age of the world instances like that which is here recorded, have occurred, to furnish *living testimony* of the reality of the invisible world, and of the infinite importance of eternal concerns.”

ON IRRESOLUTION.

ON IRRESOLUTION.



S E R M O N X.

HOSEA VI. 4.

*“ Your goodness is as the morning cloud, and as the
“ early dew it goeth away.”*

Uniformity is necessary to establish a character, and to give it value. The most irreligious, are sometimes religious ; and the most immoral perform occasional acts of morality. None are so depraved as to discover no good quality. Being occasionally religious and moral, but generally otherwise, is the character reprobated in my text. Such was Herod, who, although he heard John the baptist gladly, and in consequence thereof reformed many errors in his life and reign ; yet afterwards he shut up John in prison, and took his life.— Such was Felix the Roman governor, who trembled when the Apostle reasoned of righteousness temperance and judgment to come, being determined at a convenient season, to inform himself fully on these sub-

jects, and to act accordingly ; but his convictions were soon lost, and his life more reproachable than ever.— Such the Galatians, whose zeal at one period, and indifference at another gave the Apostle Paul much concern.

Inconsistency and folly strongly mark the human character ; either they are intemperate in their zeal, or altogether indifferent. Their “ goodness is as the morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.”

View the the character in different lights ; view it,

I. In its aspect to the *individual*.

Peace of mind, and health of body ; cheerfulness and prosperity depend, in a great measure, on our own conduct. The thoughtless and dissipated are seldom happy, and seldom prosperous : but the prudent and temperate seldom fail of being both. This discovery produces the most favourable impression. The imprudent lay prudent schemes. The intemperate reprobate their cups, and are no more to go astray. ‘ I have been my own enemy,’ is the reflection, ‘ I have destroyed my peace, my reputation, and my welfare ; but the charm is now broken, I can no longer be amu-

' sed to my ruin. In the path of peace and safety, I
' am determined henceforth to walk.'

The reformation which you contemplate is important ; but with you it is imaginary—the illusion of fancy—a castle in the air—a dream, when you attempt something, but effect nothing.

You see no need of divine aid ; but believe yourselves equal to encounter the impulse of an evil bias, and all the violence of temptation. Vain thought ; you enter a good course, but immediately draw back : when assaulted, you yield. Provoked by such unsteady conduct, God withdraws from you ; your hearts, which began to melt, become harder, and your situation in every respect more desperate than ever.

View the character,

II. In its aspect to others.

In a state of society, the welfare of others, ought equally to be considered as our own individual welfare. The Divine Law has interposed its authority, " Love thy neighbour as thyself ;" and human laws join issue with the Divine. The weight of these laws is some-

E c 2

times felt. Men are meliorated, restrained, overawed. Favourably are they inclined to each other, and many good offices are performed. But ah ! the natural enmity of the heart freezes the melting occasioned by a moment of sunshine ; breaks through every restraint ; and casts off all dread. The innocence of the Lamb, and the harmlessness of the Dove can no longer be recognized. A brood of vipers endanger society : Beasts of prey spread alarm and desolation : we witness dispositions the most vile, and conduct the most pernicious. Men live in malice and envy ; they sit and speak against a mother's son ; they bite and devour one another.

Jude gives a mortifying description of some who had crept unwarily into the church, to the disgrace and detriment of the christian name.† Pretensions to the christian character, they must once have had, otherwise they could, never, have gained admission into the church ; but these pretensions they forfeited, drawing back to the dishonour of God, to the reproach of christians, and to the ruin of their own souls.

III. The relation in which we stand to God is tender and commanding :

† *Jude*, 2—13.

In him we live, and move, and have our being: He is a great king and his name is dreadful among the heathen. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings and not one of them is forgotten before God; nay, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. As a father, honour is due to God, and as a master, fear..... Great violence must be done to a man's own mind, before God ceases to be the object of his honour and fear: and let him proceed never so far in an irreligious course, still there are moments in which he reprobates his impiety. This being the case, we may well suppose that in one period of life, or another, there are not only resolutions, but attempts, prosecuted to different lengths, and with different degrees of vigor and success, to forsake a course which is so unnatural and dangerous.

I think I hear an irreligious man, in a serious mood expostulating with himself: I often, indeed, and thoughtlessly enough, use great freedoms with the name of God; I repeat it in ordinary conversation: It ministers to my passion. Am I justifiable in this? The name which I take in vain, is venerable in Heaven, and awful in hell. Am I not daring, and impious as I am daring?—When did I find the sabbath a day of rest, from care, and business, and pleasure? I am then as on other days careful, busy, and gay. My soul

never rises above the earth; nor do I know a higher gratification than to take my ease, to eat, to drink, and to be merry. Some speak of returning unto the Lord as their rest; but to me, it is an unknown language; I am a stranger to worship. When did I bow a knee in private?—when did I pray with my family? When was I glad to go to the house of the Lord? Ah! my closet, my family, the house of the Lord bear witness against me. If celestials venerate the name of God; If they observe his ordinances; If they delight in his worship; I am not likely to be their companion: my disposition and conduct are the very reverse of their's; I must be entirely changed, before I can have any pretension to heaven: my tongue, I charge you, no more to prophane the name of God; Let me reverently bow the knee before the Most High; Let me worship him who is a spirit, in spirit and in truth.—

These reflections may, for a moment, put a bridle on the tongue, and produce some act of worship.... Then men begin to do well. See the goodness spoken of in my text.

The great unhappiness is, that such reflections, and any conduct consequent thereon, are the reflections and conduct of a melancholly moment; of a solitary retreat; of midnight darkness; with cheerfulness, with

company, with day, they are rejected as intruders, who had taken undue advantage. The dog returns to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. They were entering, nay, had actually entered on the path of righteousness, when they hesitated, stopped, and speedily forsook the path, at the risk of their utter ruin.

IV. Jesus Christ sustains a character in which mankind are nearly interested. As rebels against the Divine government, we have forfeited the privileges which the obedient inherit. Jesus Christ reduces the rebellious to obedience, and restores their forfeited privileges. Any of mankind may receive benefit from the characters which he sustains, if they believe in his name, and obey him from the heart: but the unbelieving and disobedient insult his pretensions, and counteract his influence. They act a part extremely fatal in its consequence. It is not more ungrateful, than it is desperate. Under a sense of this, sinners are often agonized; but by repeated resistance, they become obdurate, in such a degree, as even to glory in their own shame. This is the last stage, when sinners approach the point, from which they shall instantly be precipitated into utter ruin.

Intermediate stages exist, during which, the sinner's

own forebodings, and the suggestions of God's spirit incline, nay urge him to stop, and immediately to enter on a safer course. There is hope concerning such..... Let them speak the sentiments of their hearts, they are sentiments of contrition and respect.—The friend of mankind deserves better at my hand than the neglect and disobedience of which I am conscious. Found in fashion as a man did he humble himself, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, that I should be earthly and sensual? I have trodden under foot the Son of God, and done despite to the spirit of grace. It is of the greatest mercy I have not been consumed. Shall I still be stiff-necked and disobedient? still I treasure up wrath against the day of wrath? shall my heart continue stubborn, and my life perverse? spirit of grace change and sanctify my nature; enable me to come unto Christ at his invitation, that I may find rest: may I receive his yoke, and submit to his burden.

Under these impressions men pray, and lead new lives; they profess faith in Christ, and join the church in the ordinary and more solemn acts of religion.—Such sentiments, such prayers, such conduct are the dictates of true wisdom. Follow where they lead.—Study well the laws of Christ; avoid what they forbid, and comply with what they command: For be as-

sured, if you be unsteady and partial; doing one duty, omitting another, or neglectful of duty altogether, you shall loose your serious impressions; the Philistines will be upon you, when deprived of your strength, you will fall into disgraceful, wretched, and hopeless captivity. Many have done so. They were running well, when in an evil hour they stopt short. Let none of you be of those who draw back to perdition, but of them who believe to the saving of their souls.

V. Time is a valuable talent, nay, the most valuable entrusted with men on earth. A small proportion thereof is in their hand at any period. The *past* was once their's, but has escaped, and they must answer for the improvement which they have made. The future may not reach them, ere it arrive, the probationary state may be over, and the eternal have commenced. — The *present* only is their's, let it be siezed to correct past errors, and to guard against future evils. Whether they shall afterwards be happy or miserable, depends, in a great measure, on the present moment. At the thought the most sluggish are roused, and feel a tormenting pang; yet they will hesitate; resolutions to enter on the Christian course are put off, from childhood to youth; from youth to manhood; from manhood to old age.

When a *trifling* or irresolute character has at any time been exposed ; have you not been compelled to assent, that the character is unbecoming and dangerous ; and that the character belongs to you ? And what then ? You paused ; you became a little thoughtful ; you did many things ; but your reformation was left imperfect. Trifling and irresolute before ; you continue trifling and irresolute still. These *religious qualms*, for I am at a loss by what name to call them, are very frequent in youth ; occur often in manhood ; but seldom are known in old age. They arise from a man's own conscience ; or from the strivings of God's spirit ; or from the united operation of both. Critical is that moment when they prevail. The disease is either removed, or proves mortal. If the views which open, be attended to ; if the resolutions which arise, be carried into effect, you shall do well ; but if you hesitate, if you stop short, if you draw back, you remove further than ever from the kingdom of heaven.

Men intend to *reform to-morrow* ; when they ought to *reform to-day*. *To-morrow* may not arrive ; should it arrive, the longer you continue in a wicked course, the difficulty of breaking off still increases ; should you even succeed, regret for former folly, will embitter the few remaining years of life.

I once knew an old man, who wept incessantly, because he had been a dissipated youth. I had no doubt of his reformation and piety, but he could not forgive himself, who had lived so long and done so little good. Grotius, whose services to the church and state are generally acknowledged, lamented when dying, ‘Ah me! I have been busy doing nothing.’ If reformation, fully effected, but at a late hour; if time, of which every advantage has not been taken, darken the last moment, let not the procrastinating and unprofitable anticipate any comfort when they come to die.

If youth and manhood pass and nothing effectual be done, think not of succeeding better in old age. Men generally die as they live. Can you bend the aged oak; as you do the tender osier? No. The sinner, an hundred years old, is accursed. His habits are all formed, and the usual means of changing the character and conduct have been attempted in vain. Further attempts are hopeless. Can the Ethiopian change his skin, and the leopard his spots, then may they who have been accustomed to do evil, learn to do well? Any thing in religion; a good opinion of it; desires after it; steps towards it; if you stand, and linger, and proceed not, are “the morning cloud and the early dew.” You tire the patience of God, and forfeit his grace and blessing.

F f

VI. *Eternity* gives time all its importance. What is eternity? None can tell; an explanation is impossible; it exceeds even conception; it has nothing correspondent. What comes *now*, in view, has a commencement, a progress, and an end. Not so with eternity. God never had a beginning, and is ever the same. This is peculiar to the Divine nature. Existence, in other instances, has been communicated, but we retain the existence which has been communicated to endless ages.

We pass through different states, and find that one period of existence is affected by the preceding. The child in the womb, receives dispositions, both of the body and mind, which are to its advantage or disadvantage, during the whole of the mortal life. The first steps which we take in life, generally lead to a happy or a calamitous tract. The conclusion is natural, that the next stage of existence shall receive impressions from our pursuits and character in the present. Scripture confirms, beyond even a shadow of doubt, that conclusion. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.—" "For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." Holy in time, you shall be happy in eternity; but wicked in time, you

shall be miserable in eternity. Than such a truth, none can be more interesting. Let it once enter the mind of him who never reduced the rules prescribed in the Gospel, for his conduct in life, to practice, and his reflections must be terrible.

All I do in the worship or service of God, is mere drudgery, which I could cheerfully omit, having therein no manner of delight. I am, therefore, no wise qualified to stand before God, and to serve him day and night in his temple above. I have no taste for its service and worship. It would disgust and tire me.—Heaven would throw me off as an incumbrance. If the scripture be true, my habits and pursuits expose me to certain perdition.

Were the misery confined to days, or weeks, or months, or years, it were dreadful ; but eternity ! Tormenting name ! Is it upon eternity I enter with such prospects ? Am I *forever and ever*, to be banished from the presence of God ? to be given up by Christ ? to be separated from angels, and from the spirits of the just made perfect ? Wretched creature ! Is there no hope ? None, but in an immediate return to God ; in an unreserved submission to the Saviour ; in an entire change of heart and life. Awake ye drowsy powers ; let me escape for my life ; a moment is not to be lost ; a prodigal, I re-

turn to my father ; a rebel, I submit to the king of Zion ; guilty, I wash in the fountain opened for sin, and uncleanness.

Few lives pass, without such thoughts, and such resolutions : but alas ! alas ! they escape forgotten, and ineffectual ; like a tale which has been told ; like a vision of the night ; like a vapour, which appears for a moment, and is gone forever.

— Such the goodness spoken of in my text, in its aspect to ourselves and others ; to God and Christ ; to time and eternity. It is a system of inconsistency and folly : Men resolve, and break their resolution ; they do something in religion, but nothing to the purpose ; they approve of what is good, and continue in the practice of what is evil.

Ephraim, unstable as water ; varying as the wind ; zealous and indifferent in turns, is an object of disgust. Condemning Ephraim dost thou not condemn thyself ? The picture is odious, but is it not thine own ? Who is ever changing, and capable of conduct offensive to God, and ruinous to the souls of men ? Art not thou the man ?

Let past experience forbid you, or any of the children

of men, from trusting in their own hearts. The heart is deceitful above all things, and is desperately wicked. He is unwise who trusts in himself; he leans on a broken reed; he trusts in a disjointed member; assuredly he shall be put to shame.

Peter declared that he would rather die with Christ, than deny him; Peter was sincere in the declaration; yet the same Peter, on the very night, when that declaration was made, terrified in the presence of his enemies, called for the heaviest judgments of God to fall upon his head, if he was a disciple of Christ, or if Christ was at all known to him.

To persons of such inconsistency and guilt, is the gospel addressed. It is perfectly known that you are without strength; that you return with the dog to his vomit; that afflicted, you will revolt yet more and more: notwithstanding, peace is now proclaimed in your hearing, and good will. Christ's blood cleanseth from all sin: his spirit strengthens, renews, and sanctifies our whole nature: Encouraged by these assurances, depending on this spirit, begin to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; God will work in you, both to will, and to do of his good pleasure.

You may resolve a thousand times, and confirm the

F f 2

resolution in the most solemn manner, the resolution however often made, and however solemnly confirmed, if made, and confirmed in your own strength, will prove a snare, by which your peace and safety are endangered.

Sensible of your own weakness and incapacity for good, let the mercy, faithfulness and power of God be your only hope : this hope will not disappoint you.— Confide in God : fly to him, reconciling the world to himself through Jesus Christ, not imputing to men their trespasses. Cast yourselves before him, take with you words, and say—Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously ; what I know not, instruct me.— Although I have done ill, may I do so no more. In thee is my help, I will wait for thee ; in the path of duty will I wait ; I will wait as those who wait and watch for the morning. You can take no step more promising ; only persevere, then you shall taste and see that God is good. It is to you he speaks, and his word can diffuse vigor through the soul, “ I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth ; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. For the iniquity of his covet-

“ousness was I wroth, and smote him : I hid me, and
“was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of
“his heart : I have seen his ways, and will heal him :
“I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him
“and to his mourners. I create the fruit of the lips ;
“peace, peace to *him that is* far off, and to *him that is*
“near, saith the Lord ; and I will heal him. But the
“wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest,
“whose waters cast up mire and dirt. *There is no*
“peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”

Amen,

APPENDIX.

Through the kindness of God, this completes what the proposals promised ; and the encouragement, given the proposals, merits and has my warmest acknowledgment.

Of the execution of the work the reader himself must judge. Some typographical errors have escaped, but few of them affect much, if at all, the meaning of the passage.

A very worthy literary friend, whose genius and ability reflect honour on the American name, had prepared and published the best address ever written at General Washington's death ; but discovering some typographical errors, he suppressed the whole edition, and could never be reconciled to the mortification which he felt. Had he recollected the instruction given under an expressive parable, by a writer of much wit, his mind had been at ease, and his address given to the publick.

A man was so unfortunate as to have an *wooden leg*, he made the most of the defect, using it as a *Barome-*

ter, to ascertain, not the weight of the atmosphere, but the weight of character. He who delighted in blemishes was sure to fix his eye upon the wooden leg: but he who was pleased with the good qualities of another, never failed to look at the leg which nature formed:.... Let the blemishes which may be discovered in the execution of this work be *that Barometer*.

The *matter*, contained in these sermons has been acquired with much labour, during many years: The subjects are interesting, and as delivered, have been received with attention, and I hope, and have reason to believe, in many instances, with lasting improvement.

Each sermon is illustrated with examples; a mode, in part attempted by others, but it is not common, and may be considered as a distinguishing characteristic of what is now offered; Facts are eagerly sought after, they are the best support of any system, and nothing yields such satisfaction, as apt and interesting narrative.

The Reverend doctor Saml. Charters' sermon on almsgiving has illustrated the subject with many examples, which powerfully excite imitation. I have never seen the subject better handled, it deserves all attention. A

sermon written by the same author, on these words "I will have mercy and not sacrifice," introduces a great variety of accurate criticisms on difficult passages of scripture enforced by examples, manifesting the mischief, which arises from being more attentive to *sound* than to the *sense*, which, comparing one passage with another, and taking the whole passage in view, and not detached sentences, would easily discover. This is a valuable sermon, of which no lover of biblical criticism ought to be ignorant.

I, many years ago, read sermons of Dr. Dodd illustrated with examples. It is a useful and pleasing work.

I had executed my own plan before I recollected that the tract had been marked out by any other. It is the taste of the age to have a *savoury dish* presented to the public, and that author merits well of society, who is so happy as to mingle the *useful* with the *sweet*.

"The art of thinking," and "The culture of the heart," by Henry Home esquire, are valuable treatises, illustrated with many entertaining, and well chosen examples.

The *first* sermon in this volume preserves many awful events, prognostick of the evils which now shake the earth.....The *second* preserves the memory of an event, which although confined to one city, yet speaks with a voice, a voice of thunder and commands attention from all.....The *third* sermon is practical.....The *fourth*, and *fifth* expostulate with the young, that their hearts may be secured for God.....The subject of the *sixth* is well known to the student of Theology; but to many christians it is entirely new, yet it merits a full investigation.....The *seventh* is intended to make us sensible, that any blessing which we enjoy, temporal or spiritual, is the fruit of Christ's death, and flows through him to us.....The *eighth* sermon introduces the awful scenes of eternity.....The *ninth* is a likeness of the christian.....as the *tenth* is of those who are pleased with the likeness, but bear no resemblance, being of another family, whose father, they too exactly resemble.

In Epitome you are here presented with a system of Divinity.

A late writer on prayer, says that prayer ought to be made for those who are writing good books, by those who think as this writer does, I have not been forgot-

ten, and now leave what is written on the blessing of God.

The *versatility* of the human character is even proverbial. *The wise* put a double guard where they are so much in danger; Where there is no guard little steadiness need be expected. The memoirs written by the Duke of Sully, preserve a character, in which, all the weakness, and folly of a depraved nature, is very visible. "Old Servin," says Sully, "presented his son to me, and begged I would use my endeavours to make him a man of some worth and honesty; but he confessed it was what he dared not hope, not through any want of understanding or capacity in the young man, but from his natural inclination to all kinds of vice. The old man was in the right: what he told me having excited my curiosity to gain a thorough knowledge of young Servin, I found him to be at once both a wonder and a monster; for I can give no other idea of that assemblage of the most excellent and most pernicious qualities. Let the reader represent to himself a man of a genius so lively, and an understanding so extensive, as rendered him scarce ignorant of any thing that could be known; of so vast and ready a comprehension, that he immediately made himself master of what he attempted; and of so prodigious a memory, that he never forgot

G g

“ what he had once learned ; he possessed all parts of
“ philosophy and the mathematics, particularly fortifi-
“ cation and drawing ; even in theology he was so well
“ skilled that he was an excellent preacher whenever
“ he had a mind to exert that talent, and an able dis-
“ putant for and against the reformed religion indiffer-
“ ently ; he not only understood Greek, Hebrew, and
“ all the languages which we call learned, but also all
“ the different jargons, or modern dialects ; he ac-
“ cented and pronounced them so naturally, and so
“ perfectly imitated the gestures and manners both of
“ the several nations of Europe, and the particular pro-
“ vinces of France, that he might have been taken for
“ a native of all or any of these countries ; and this
“ quality he applied to counterfeit all sorts of persons,
“ wherein he succeeded wonderfully ; he was, moreo-
“ ver, the best comedian and greatest droll that per-
“ haps ever appeared ; he had a genius for poetry, and
“ had wrote many verses ; he played upon almost all
“ instruments, was a perfect master of music, and sung
“ most agreeably and justly ; he likewise could say
“ mass ; for he was of a disposition to do, as well as to
“ know, all things ; his body was perfectly well suited
“ to his mind, he was light, nimble, dexterous, and fit
“ for all exercises ; he could ride well, and in danc-
“ ing, wrestling, and leaping, he was admired : there
“ are not any recreative games that he did not know ;

"and he was skilled in almost all mechanic arts. But
 "now for the reverse of the medal : here it appeared
 "that he was treacherous, cruel, cowardly, deceitful;
 "a liar, a cheat a drunkard and glutton ; a sharper in
 "play, immersed in every species of vice, a blasphem-
 "mer, an atheist : in a word, in him might be found all
 "the vices contrary to nature, honour, religion, and so-
 "ciety ; the truth of which he himself evinced with
 "his latest breath, for he died in the flower of his age,
 "in a common brothel, perfectly corrupted by his de-
 "baucheries, and expired with the glass in his hand,
 "cursing and denying God."

Major General Arthur Lee's was an eccentric char-
 "acter, "full of absurdities, and qualities of a most ex-
 "traordinary nature. His understanding was great, his
 "memory capacious, and his fancy brilliant. His
 "mind was stored with a variety of knowledge, which
 "he collected from books, conversation, and travels.
 "He had been in most European countries. He was
 "a correct and elegant classical scholar ; and both
 "wrote and spoke his native language, with perspicui-
 "ty, force and beauty. From these circumstances he
 "was, at times, a most agreeable and instructive com-
 "panion. His temper was naturally sour and severe.
 "He was seldom seen to laugh, and scarcely to smile.
 "The history of his life is little else, than the history

“ of disputes, quarrels and duels, in every part of the
“ world. He was vindictive to his enemies. His avarice had no bounds. He never went into a public
“ and seldom in to a private house, where he did not
“ discover some marks of ineffable and contemptible
“ meanness. He begrudged the expense of a nurse in
“ his last illness, and died in a small room in the Philadelphia tavern called the Canastoga-waggon, (designed chiefly for the entertainment and accommodation of common countrymen) attended by no one
“ but a French servant, and Mr. Oswald the printer,
“ who once served as an officer under him. He was
“ both impious and profane. In his principles he was
“ not only an infidel, but he was very hostile to every
“ attribute of the Deity. His morals were exceeding
“ debauched. His manners were rude, partly from
“ affectation. His appetite so whimsical as to what he
“ ate and drank, that he was at all times, and in all
“ places, a most troublesome and disagreeable guest.
“ He had been bred to arms from his youth ; and served as lieut. colonel among the British, as colonel
“ among the Portuguese, and afterward as aid de camp
“ to his Polish majesty, with the rank of major general.
“ Upon the American continent’s being forced into
“ arms for the preservation of her liberties, he was
“ called forth by the voice of the people, and elected
“ to the rank of third in command of their forces. He

" Had exhausted every valuable treatise, both ancient
 " and modern, on the military art. His judgement in
 " war was generally sound.....He was extremely use-
 " ful to the Americans in the beginning of the revolu-
 " tion, by inspiring them with military ideas, and a con-
 " tempt for British discipline and valor. It is difficult
 " to say, whether the active and useful part he took in
 " the contest, arose from personal resentment against
 " the king of Great Britain, or from a regard to the
 " liberties of America. It is certain he reprobated the
 " French alliance and republican forms of government,
 " after he retired from the American service. He was
 " in the field, brave in the highest degree; and with
 " all his oddities was beloved by his officers and soldiers.
 " He was devoid of prudence, and used to call it a *ras-*
 " *cally virtue*. His partiality to dogs was too remar-
 " kable not be mentioned in his character. Two or
 " three of these animals followed him generally where-
 " ver he went. When the Congress confirmed the
 " sentence of the court martial, suspending him for
 " twelve months, he pointed to his dog and exclaimed,
 " 'Oh! that I was that animal, that I might not call *man*
 " my brother'.....~~Two virtues he possessed~~ in an emi-
 " nent degree, viz. sincerity and veracity. He was
 " never known to deceive or desert a friend; and he
 " was a stranger to equivocation, even where his safety
 " or character were at stake."

G. g. 2

I know nothing more conducive to steadiness of character, than frequent and prudent meditations on death, which *Hannah More's* reflections on the awful message sent to Hezekiah, are well adapted to excite, encourage and direct.

- “ *Prepare thy house, thy heart in order set ;*
 “ *Prepare, the judge of heaven and earth to meet.*
 “ So spake the warning prophet.—Awful words !
 “ Which fearfully my troubled soul records.
 “ *Am I prepared ? and can I meet my doom,*
 “ Nor shudder at the dreaded wrath to come ?
 “ *Is all in order set, my house, my heart ?*
 “ Does no besetting sin still claim a part ?
 “ Does no one cherish'd vice, with ling'ring pace,
 “ Reluctant leave me to the work of grace ?
 “ Did I each day for this great day prepare,
 “ By righteous deeds, by sin-subduing pray'r ?
 “ Did I each night, each day's offence repent,
 “ And each unholy thought and word lament ?
 “ Still have these ready hands th' afflicted fed,
 “ And minister'd to want her daily bread ?
 “ The cause, I knew not, did I well explore ?
 “ Friend, advocate and parent of the poor ?
 “ Did I, to gratify some sudden gust
 “ Of thoughtless appetite ; some impious lust.
 “ Of pleasure or of power, such sums employ

" As wou'd have crown'd pale penury with joy ?
 " Did I in groves forbidden altars raise,
 " Or molten Gods adore, or idols praise ?
 " Did my firm faith to heav'n still point the way ?
 " Did charity to man my actions sway ?
 " Did meek eye'd patience all my steps attend ?
 " Did gen'rous candor mark me for her friend ?
 " Did I unjustly seek to build my name
 " On the pil'd ruins of another's fame ?
 " Did I like hell, abhor the insidious lie,
 " The low deceit, the unmanly calumny ?
 " Did my fix'd soul the impious wit detest ?
 " Did my firm virtue scorn th' unhallowed jest ;
 " The sneer profane, and the poor ridicule,
 " Of shallow infidel's dull school ?
 " Did I still live as born one day to die,
 " And view the eternal world with constant eye ?

" If so I liv'd if so I kept thy word,
 " In mercy view, in mercy hear me Lord !
 " My holiest deeds *indulgence* will require,
 " The best, but to *forgiveness* will aspire,
 " If thou my ~~purest services regard,~~
 " 'Twill be with pardon only, not reward.

" How imperfection's stamp'd on all below !
 " How sin intrudes on all we say or do !

"How late in all the insolence of health,
 "I charm'd th' Assyrian by my boast of wealth!
 "How fondly, with elab'rate pomp-display'd,
 "My glitt'ring treasures! with what triumph laid
 "My gold and gems before his dazzled eyes,
 "And found a rich reward in his surprise!
 "O, mean of soul! can wealth elate the heart,
 "Which of the man himself is not a part?
 "O; poverty of pride! O foul disgrace!
 "Disgusted reason, blushing, hides her face.
 "Mortal and proud! strange contradicting terms!
 "Pride for death's victim, for the prey of worms!
 "Of all the wonders, which th' eventful life
 "Of man presents; of all the mental strife
 "Of warring passions; all the raging fires
 "Of furious appetites, and mad desires,
 "Not one so strange appears as his alone,
 "That man is proud of what is not his own.

"How short is human life! the very breath,
 "Which frames my words, accelerates my death!
 "Of this short life how large a portion's fled!
 "To what is gone I am already dead;
 "As dead to all my years and minutes past,
 "As I, to what remains, shall be at last.
 "Can I my cares and pains so far forget,
 "To view my vanished years with fond regret!

- “ Can I again my worn out fancy cheat,
“ Indulge fresh hope, solicit new deceit ?
“ Of all the vanities weak man admires,
“ Which greatness gives, or sanguine youth desires,
“ Of these, my soul, which hast thou not enjoy’d ?
“ With each, with all, thy sated pow’rs are cloy’d.
“ What can I then expect from length of days ?
“ More wealth, more wisdom, pleasure, health or
“ praise ?
“ More pleasure ! hope not that, deluded king ?
“ For when did age increase of pleasure bring ?
“ Is health, of years prolong’d the common boast ?
“ And dear-earned praise, is it not cheaply lost ?
“ More wisdom ! that indeed were happiness ;
“ That were a wish a king might well confess :
“ But when did Wisdom covet length of days ;
“ Or seek its bliss in pleasure, wealth, or praise ?
“ No : Wisdom views with an indifferent eye,
“ All finite joys, all blessings born to die.
“ The soul on earth is an immortal guest,
“ Compell’d to starve at an unreal fest :
“ A spark, which upward tends by nature’s force ;
“ A stream diverted from its parent source ;
“ A drop, dissever’d from the boundless sea ;
“ A moment, parted from eternity ;
“ A pilgrim, panting for the rest to come ;
“ An exile, anxious for his native home.

- " Why shou'd I ask my forfeit life to save ?
 " Is heav'n unjust, which dooms me to the grave ?
 " Was I with hope of endless days deceiv'd ?
 " Or of lov'd life am I alone bereaved ?
 " Let all the great, the rich, the learn'd, the wise ;
 " Let all the shades of Judah's monarchs rise :
 " And say, if genius, learning, empire, wealth,
 " Youth, beauty, virtue, strength, renown, or health,
 " Has once revers'd th' immutable decree
 " On Adam pass'd, of man's mortality ?
 " What—have these eyes ne'er seen the felon worm
 " The damask cheek devour, the finish'd form ?
 " On the pale rose of blasted beauty feed,
 " And riot on the lip so lately red ?
 " Where are our fathers ? Where the illustrious line
 " Of holy prophets, and of men divine ?
 " Live they for ever ? Do they shun the grave ?
 " Or when did Wisdom its professor save ?
 " When did the brave escape ? When did the
 " breath.
 " Of Eloquence charm the dull ear of Death ?
 " When did the cunning argument avail,
 " The polish'd period, or the varnish'd tale ;
 " The eye of lightning, or the soul of fire,
 " Which thronging thousands crowded to admire ?
 " Ev'n while we praise the verse, the poet dies ;
 " And silent as his lyre great David lies.

"Thou, bless'd Isaiah ! who, at God's command,
"Now speak'st repentance to a guilty land,
"Must die ! as wise and good thou hadst not been,
"As Nebat's son, who taught the land to sin !

"And shall I, then, be spar'd ? O monstrous
"pride !

"Shall I escape, when Solomon has died ?

"If all the worth of all the saints was vain—

"Peace, peace, my troubled soul, nor dare com-
"plain !

"Lord ! I submit. Complete thy gracious will !

"For if Thou slay me, I will trust Thee still.

"O be my will so swallow'd up in thine,

"That I may do thy will in doing mine."

THE END.