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1870

THE
TIME OF DANGER,
THE
MEANS OF SAFETY,
AND THE
WAY OF HOLINESS.

Being the substance of THREE SERMONS preached on
the late public fast-days.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

The Cross of CHRIST the Christian's glory.

A SERMON from GAL. vi. 13.

By JAMES HERVEY, A. M.

Rector of Weston-Favell in Northamptonshire.

EDINBURGH:

Printed for the society at Edinburgh for promoting re-
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M DCC LVIII.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE four sermons hereto annexed, composed by the Rev. Mr Hervey, having already gone through several impressions; it is necessary to acquaint the public, by what means they are presented with a new one, more correct than any of the former.

A gentleman, unknown, was lately pleased to transmit to the *Society erected at Edinburgh for promoting religious knowledge, by distributing bibles, and other pious books, to the poor, gratis,* a bank-note for L. 5. Sterling, which he desired might be employed in purchasing a number of these sermons, to be distributed by direction of the Society. But a sufficient number could not be found.-----The society, therefore, wrote to Mr Hervey; and he generously gave them, not only a special licence to reprint them,---but transmitted several corrections, done with his own hand; which render this edition more perfect than any of the former.

'Tis in this most public manner that the Society think it their duty to acknowledge the favour done by the Rev. Mr Hervey:---a favour
done

done not to them only,---but to his country;---as they heartily join with their worthy, though unknown donor, in thinking, that these sermons are calculated to promote a regard to the genuine doctrines and precepts of the gospel; by which, and which alone, a reformation in our manners can be effected, and the awful symptoms of divine displeasure averted.

The Society just mentioned, though as yet in its infancy, hath received many testimonies of approbation from persons of eminence, both in Scotland and England:---it wishes for more:---it aspires to approbation from every well-disposed mind:---it hopes for success, by the blessing of GOD, on its endeavours:---and it prays for support from all who have at heart the interest of true religion, and who are able and willing to *shew compassion on the ignorant, and on them who are out of the way.*

P R E F A C E

To the first three sermons.

SHOULD any one ask, “ Why does this author publish his sermons, when the fast “ is *gone* and *forgotten* ?” --- For this very reason he publishes, that the fast, though gone, may not be forgotten; that we may remember the sins we confessed, and the miseries we deprecated; remember the vows of GOD, which are still upon us; and the snares of death, which are still around us.

Should it be further asked, “ Why does he “ obtrude himself on the public, when so many “ *eminent* writers have already made their appearance? Does he bring with him any distinguished excellency of composition, any superior force of argument, or uncommon delicacy of sentiment ?” No such thing. He pretends to nothing refined or extraordinary: he affects neither brilliant thought, nor polished style; equally remote from nice criticism and profound learning, his discourses are studiously *plain*, and brought down to the level of the meanest capacity.

“ What

“What then is his motive?”---This is the very truth. In several of the sermons published on this occasion, the *one thing needful* seems to be overlooked. CHRIST and his free grace, CHRIST and his great salvation, are either totally omitted, or but slightly touched,—Where these are but slightly touched, the door of hope and the city of refuge are shewn, as it were, through a mist, dimly and indistinctly. We have no more than a transient glimpse of the desirable objects; and only so much light as is sufficient to bewilder, rather than direct.—Where they are totally omitted, the door of hope is barred, and the city of refuge withdrawn from our view. In this case, being without CHRIST, we are without consolation; and may justly complain, with the mourning prophet, *the Comforter, that should relieve our souls, is far off.*

Through the following discourses, a constant regard is paid to *the redemption which is in CHRIST JESUS*; to his all-atoning blood, and his everlasting righteousness; which are the grand means, both of comforting our hearts, and sanctifying our nature.—Indeed the principal aim of the whole is, to display the unsearchable riches of CHRIST, the matchless efficacy of his death, and that perfect freeness with which all his invaluable benefits are bestowed.—*To those who believe*

believe he is precious; and to those who are convinced of sin, these salutary truths will be their own best recommendation. Such readers will excuse a multitude of blemishes, provided they find JESUS who was crucified; JESUS, who is the desire of all nations; JESUS, than whom no other foundation can be laid, either for present holiness, or future happiness.

As these sermons were not preached to gratify a *curious* taste, neither are they published with any fond prospect of reforming a *sinful* nation. Sincerely as the author loves his country, and ardently as he desires the salvation of his countrymen, he is not so vainly sanguine in his expectations.---But this he will venture to assert, that, if ever a reformation is produced, it must, under the influences of the eternal SPIRIT, be produced by the doctrines of free grace, and justification through a REDEEMER's righteousness. 'Till these doctrines are generally inculcated, the most eloquent harangues from the pulpit, or the most correct dissertations from the press, will be no better than a pointless arrow, and a broken bow.

This also he will venture to hope, that the discourses may here and there meet with some poor sinner, who is smitten with a sense of guilt, and alarmed with apprehensions of danger; who de-
sires

fires nothing so much as to find a resting-place, where he may be free from the terrors of conscience, and safe in the day of trouble. This freedom and this safety are to be found *only*, are to be found *infallibly*, in the blessed JESUS, and the blood of sprinkling. If such a reader, by the following pages, is conducted to this divine sanctuary, the writer is satisfied, is rewarded, enjoys the utmost of his wishes.

Then, instead of soliciting the voice of fame, or coveting the wreath of honour; instead of giving himself any concern about the *officious* critic; he will thankfully adore that Almighty hand which *confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers* *. For, oh! how insipid is the praise of men, compared with the exalted pleasure of glorifying GOD, and edifying an immortal soul! How harmless is defamation from a fellow-creature, when our great CREATOR smiles; and is pleased, by *weak things, and by things that are despised* †, to accomplish the purposes of his infinite grace and everlasting love!

* Isa. xlii. 26.

† 1 Cor. i. 27, 28.

S E R M O N I.

The Time of Danger.

H E B. xi. 28.

Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born, should touch them.

IF we consult the history to which these words refer, we shall find the Israelites in a state of great affliction. The Egyptians oppressed them; very heavily laid the yoke upon them; and made their *lives bitter with hard bondage*.—The misery of his people GOD pities, and is resolved to redress. Accordingly he sends Moses, in the quality of his ambassador, to demand their release. The king of Egypt most insolently replies, *Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice, to let Israel go? I know not the LORD; neither will I let Israel go.* GOD, to chastise his insolence and obstinacy, inflicts a variety of plagues on him and his subjects: in contempt of all which Pharaoh hardens his heart, persists in his disobedience, and refuses to *let the people go*.—At last, says the LORD, *I will bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt**; which shall infallibly accomplish my purpose.

A

Be

* Exod. xi. 1.

Be their hearts hard as the nether millstone, this shall make them feel: be their resolution stubborn as an iron sinew, this shall make it bend. *About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt, and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die †.*

But as the Israelites then dwelt in Egypt, how should they be safe amidst the general desolation?—Will it be said, The Israelites, being the people of GOD, were not exposed to this punishment; had no reason to fear the infliction of this vengeance?—None, that remembers how all the world is become guilty before GOD, will affirm this: none, that considers how rebellious and idolatrous the Israelites were, can suppose this. And every one who has read Ezek. xx. 8 *. must allow, that there was no difference in this respect. The one people were criminal, as well as the other. All of them most righteously deserved the afflictive stroke. Grace, free and sovereign grace alone, must make the distinction.

Since this was the case, it may reasonably be asked, how shall the Israelites be safe?—The LORD himself directs Moses to a method, which should effectually secure all the families of Israel, while death entered into every habitation of the Egyptians. The method—its execution—and success—are all specified in the text. *By faith Moses kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them.* Where we may observe,

I. A

† Exod. xi. 4, 5.

* *But they rebelled against me, and would not hearken unto me: they did not, every man, cast away the abominations of his eyes, neither did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, I will pour out my fury upon them, to accomplish mine anger against them, in the midst of the land of Egypt.*

I. A very dreadful danger; signified by *the destruction of the first-born.*

II. A method of security from this danger; effected by *keeping the passover, and the blood of sprinkling.*

III. The success of this method; denoted by the destroyer *not so much as touching them.*

The good LORD enable us to open and apply the words, thus divided! Then we shall see their suitability to the present occasion; and, I hope, feel their salutary influence on our souls.

I. A very dreadful danger; signified by *the destruction of the first-born.* The LORD had already put his hand to the sword. It was even now drawn from the scabbard, and had received a commission to go forth; to go forth that very night; to walk through all the land of Egypt; and to be bathed, before the morning-light, in the blood of the first-born; *all* the first-born, from the haughty king that sat on the throne, even to the slave that toiled at the mill, and the very sheep that yeaned in the field.—Tremendous, as well as inevitable blow! O what an alarm will it create, and what affliction will it spread! make every heart sad, and every house a scene of mourning. *There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more †.*

And is not the present time a time of imminent danger? are not the judgments of the Almighty *now* abroad in the world? have not earthquakes shaken kingdoms,

A 2

and

† Exod. xi. 6.

and rent the foundations of nature? have they not spread terror through our own and distant nations; laid wealthy towns and magnificent cities in ruin; and swallowed up or destroyed unknown multitudes of our fellow creatures?

Is not the sword of slaughter drawn? has not war hung out her bloody flag? are not the flames kindled in Europe and America; on the land and on the ocean? are they not gathering strength daily; spreading their rage continually; and threatening to overrun all?

If we were evidently superior to our enemies in number and power, in vigilance and unanimity; yet the events of military undertakings are very uncertain. *The battle is not always to the strong**. Success and victory depend upon a hand higher far than the arm of flesh. *Without me, saith the LORD, they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain †*.

But are we not at war with one of the most potent, insidious, enterprising kingdoms in the world? is there not great reason to suppose, that they will soon be joined by their neighbours the Spaniards? And, if we have been worsted by one, how shall we contend with their united force?—Considering the situation and behaviour of the ungrateful Austrians, have we not cause to suspect the junction of a third Popish power against our religion and liberty? will not the court of Rome, with all her bigotted adherents, urge and instigate them to be active in this confederacy ‡? will they not at this juncture—

* Eccles. ix. 11.

† Isa. x. 4.

‡ I am informed, that when the Pope heard of the alliance lately established between the houses of Bourbon and Austria, Hungary and Bohemia, strengthened

junction—the most favourable for the prosecution of their purpose that any age has afforded, or their own sanguine zeal can desire—will they not exert their utmost ability to crush the Protestant cause, and extirpate the Protestant name * ?

Should the enemy make a descent upon our island, what can we expect, but that our island be turned into a field of blood? They, who have always been jealous of our interest and influence, have now added rage to their jealousy. Their resentment, like the burning fiery furnace, is heated seven times hotter than usual. We should certainly find them, as the scripture speaks, *a bitter and hasty nation* †: and, without the spirit of prophecy, may venture to declare, Wo be to England, if GOD should now deliver it into the hands of the French.

Some, perhaps, may cry, “ These fears are all chimerical. There is no ground for such discouraging suggestions. We don’t question but we shall be a match, and more than a match, for our adversaries.” —To this confident boasting let not my tongue, but
let

strengthened by the unexpected accession of Russia, he cried out, with an air of triumph, *O admirabile commercium generis humani!* “Admirable association and intercourse of mankind!” promising himself, I suppose, from this remarkable turn of affairs, such advantages to the cause and interests of Popery as exceeded even all his hopes.

* The French and Austrian ministers, it seems, have long been concerting measures to tear up the reformed religion by the roots, and not to leave a Protestant upon the face of the earth. This execrable plot is discovered by the sagacity and activity of the king of Prussia; is averred and proved, in the memorials lately published by his majesty. If that hero and his army should fall before their enemies, what can hinder the execution of this horrid design? It may puzzle the acutest politician to assign any *human* means, sufficient to stand as a barrier.

† Hab. i. 6.

let the course of events, let the disposals of providence, reply.—Have we, then, been superior in the day of trial? Alas! have we not lost Minorca? is not Oswego gone? a general slain, and his army cut in pieces? an admiral condemned to be shot to death, and his fleet defeated by an inferior number of the enemies ships? Are not ravages and depredations made almost continually upon our colonies in America; and horrible, unheard of cruelties committed by the savages, on the persons of our fellow-subjects? What have we reaped from the late campaign, but disappointment, loss and shame?

Are not all these things apparently against us? will they not dispirit our men and embolden our foes? will they not make our allies backward to come in with their succours, and render the powers that are unengaged afraid to declare themselves on our side?

All these circumstances considered, the present time appears to be a time of uncommon danger: affairs, look where-ever we will, wear a lowering aspect. *Our sky is black with clouds, and there is the sound of abundance of rain**. Judgments seem, more than seem, to be hovering all around us. How soon they may fall GOD only knows!

If GOD indeed were for us, we might trust, and not be afraid: we might look danger in the face, and boldly say, *Who shall be against us †?*—But is this the case? are we *a righteous nation, that keepeth the truth †?* is there sufficient reason to believe, that the holy One of Israel is our defence?—Are we not, on the contrary, a
sinful

* 1 Kings xviii. 41.

† Rom. viii. 31.

† Isa. xxvi. 2.

sinful generation, a people laden with iniquity? is there not abundant reason to fear, lest our GOD should say, in terrible indignation, *They are joined to idols, let them alone* *?—In order to determine this point, let us examine our ways. Nothing can be more proper for a day of humiliation. Are not we, like the Egyptians, in a state of great danger? if we consider

1. The *sins* of our nation.
2. The *judgments* of GOD denounced upon such sins.
3. The *certain execution* of those judgments, unless we fly to the appointed refuge.

1. Consider the sins of our nation. Here I shall mention some, and only some, of those abominations, which, where-ever they are found, cannot fail to provoke the eyes of GOD's glory, and render either a person or a people ripe for his vengeance.

The *Christian sabbath* is an inestimable privilege to the church of CHRIST: it is a happy means of building us up in knowledge, of establishing us in faith, and preparing us for our everlasting rest.—Yet is it not shamefully profaned in city and in country? What multitudes waste it in idleness, or squander it away in unedifying conversation; making it by far the most useless and contemptible day of the week?—This they do, even though GOD strictly charges, saying, *Remember ye the sabbath day*, not barely to abstain from your ordinary works, but *to keep it holy* †; devoting it entirely to holy purposes, and religious exercises.—This they do, even though GOD solemnly threatens, saying, *If ye will not hearken unto me, to hallow the sabbath-day, then*
will

* Hof. iv. 17. † Exod. xx. 8.

will I kindle a fire in your gates, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.*

Is not the *name of GOD* great, wonderful and holy? ought it not to be used with the deepest veneration, and magnified above all things? But is it not audaciously dishonoured, and impiously blasphemed? dishonoured by customary and wanton, blasphemed by false and perfidious swearing? Has not the most high GOD declared, that he will in no wise hold such daring wretches guiltless? Yet how do these daring wretches swarm, like the locusts of society, in our polluted land? O England, how is thy air tainted with this breath of the infernal pit! how do thy streets resound, most horribly resound, with this language of hell! And will not the almighty LORD make thee know—know by bitter experience, what that meaneth, which is spoken by his prophet? *Because of swearing the land mourneth †; mourneth under afflicting visitations, and desolating judgments.*

Is not the *scripture* a singular blessing? Yes; it is celebrated by the psalmist as the sovereign blessing; that which crowns the other instances of divine goodness: *He sheweth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and ordinances unto Israel.* It is also celebrated as a most distinguishing blessing, from which multitudes are excluded: *He hath not dealt so with all nations, neither have the heathen knowledge of his laws ‡.* Should not then the scripture be precious to our souls; more precious than fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the droppings of the honey-comb? should we not exercise ourselves

* Jer. xvii. 27. † Jer. xxiii. 10. ‡ Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20.

ourselves in it day and night *; reading it by day, meditating on it by night? should we not make it the most delightful subject of our conversation? talk of it to our children, our domestics, our neighbours; when we ly down, and rise up; when we walk by the way, and sit in the house †?—But where are the persons who bear such a superlative esteem for the bible? where is the company that delights to converse on those oracles of truth? where are the parents that diligently instruct their children, and feed them with the milk of the word? **D**iversion, of every kind, engages their attention, and the most trifling impertinence employs their tongue? but the LORD's word is insipid, if not irksome. His word is treated, even by Protestants, as the manna was treated by the Israelites, who had the ingratitude and impudence to say, *Our soul loatheth this light bread* ††. A plague from the LORD of hosts was the consequence of their contemptuous treatment of the meat that perisheth. Of how much sorer punishment shall we be thought worthy, who contemn the food which endureth to everlasting life.

GOD hath reserved the unjust, saith the scripture, unto the day of judgment, to be punished; *chiefly those who walk after the flesh in the lusts of uncleanness* ‡. Is not this iniquity rampant among the inhabitants of England? What lewd pictures are exposed to view! what filthy writings are suffered to see the light! fewel for lust, and incentives to debauchery.—What is wit, in our days, but either some lascivious hint, or some
B licentious

* Psal. i. 2. † Deut. vi. 7. †† Numb. xxi. 5. ‡ 2 Pet. ii. 10.

licentious abuse of scripture? are not the wanton entertainments of the stage, and other seminaries of lewdness, countenanced, supported, thronged? Can you acquit our cities and towns of drunkenness, revellings and abominable excesses? are not these, and all sorts of filthiness, found in our skirts? If so, hear the word of the LORD; and let it sink deep into every heart; *When I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots houses. They were as fed horses in the morning: everyone neighed after his neighbour's wife. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the LORD; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this *?*

Is not religion, *vital religion*, very much upon the decline? does it not, even among the serious, wear a sickly dying aspect? What multitudes profess to know GOD, but in works deny him; and, quite destitute of the power of godliness, content themselves with the mere form? Whereas, if any, in imitation of the first believers and preachers, are fervent in spirit, serving the LORD with alacrity and zeal; these persons, instead of being encouraged, are opposed; instead of being esteemed, are reproached.—Of such persons even the malignant spirit could bear witness; *These are the servants of the most high GOD, who shew unto us the way of salvation †*. But among us, who call ourselves Christians, who pique ourselves upon being the purest church in Christendom, among us such persons are deemed the visionaries of the age, the disturbers of society, the men that would *turn the world upside down ‡*.—The ministers

* Jer. v. 7, 8, 9.

† Acts xvi. 17.

‡ Acts xvii. 6.

sters who are most faithful, and the people who are most exemplary, are a derision and a by-word among their neighbours. Thus, in Israel, *they mocked the messengers of GOD, and despised his words, and misused his prophets.* But it was to the confusion of those scoffers, and the ruin of their country. *For the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword, in the house of their sanctuary; and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man or him that stooped for age †.*

Are we not abandoned to a spirit of *carnal confidence*? When do we discover any reliance on the Almighty, or ascribe any of our success to his gracious interposition? It is not GOD, but our sword, that shall help us. Or, if any unseen power is acknowledged, it is not the LORD of hosts, but *good fortune*. One would almost imagine, that we were ashamed of a heavenly ally; and thought it a disgrace to own ourselves dependent on Omnipotence. Is not such a temper a national infatuation, and the harbinger of national judgments? Zedekiah and the men of Judah forgot or neglected the rock of their salvation, and made Pharaoh's army their confidence. But see what was the issue, or hear it from the mouth of Him who fulfilleth the word of his servants; *Though ye had smitten the whole army of the Chaldeans that fight against you, and there remained but wounded men among them, yet should they rise up every man in his tent, and burn this city with fire*.*

B 2

Should

† 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, 17.

* Jer. xxxvii. 10.

Should you say, This is a false charge: have we not, this very day, publicly acknowledged, that, “ without
 “ the divine aid, the wisest counsels of frail men, and
 “ the multitude of an host, and all the instruments of
 “ war, are but weak and vain ?” Have we not likewise expressly declared, that, “ not confiding in the splen-
 “ dour of any thing that is great, or the stability of any
 “ thing that is strong here below, we do most humbly
 “ flee to the LORD for succour, and put our trust un-
 “ der the shadow of his wings * ?” I would to GOD we believed *that* acknowledgment, and acted conformably to *this* declaration. We should then be very diligent to propagate religion among our soldiers and sailors: we should seek for such officers and commanders, as are men fearing GOD: we should be as desirous to establish our troops in godliness, as to train them up in military discipline. But is it thus with our army? is it thus with our navy? Visit a man of war. You will think yourself, not in one of the bulwarks of our island, but in a little hell. Observe the gentlemen of the sword. Concerning the generality of them you will have reason to ask, are these Christians? are they not incarnate devils †?—And can we expect, that the infinitely pure GOD will go forth with *such* hosts? will he

* The form of prayer appointed for the fast.

† Does this sound harsh? or will any other part of the charge advanced in these discourses, prove offensive?—I am sorry there should be any occasion for such language. But I dare not retract it; I must not soften it; no, nor apologize for it. Thus much, however, I will very readily acknowledge, borrowing the words of *Job*; *If it be not so now, let experience make me a liar, and in this case make my speech nothing worth*, *Job xxiv. 25*. Desirous as I am of speaking truth, here I shall rejoice to be convicted of falshood.

he not rather become *their enemy, and fight against them* * ?

What *ignorance* prevails, especially among the lower ranks of people? The grossest ignorance of themselves, and of GOD our SAVIOUR; the grossest ignorance of grace and salvation by a REDEEMER's righteousness; the grossest ignorance of the very first principles of our holy religion. To do evil they are wise: but to do good, to believe in JESUS CHRIST, to love and glorify Him who bought sinners with his blood; to do all, to do any of this, they have no knowledge. And is it a small matter to be thus *children of darkness*? is not the soul alienated from the life of GOD through ignorance †? does not this displease the most high GOD, and provoke the Holy One of Israel? Let his own word determine: *It is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them will shew them no favour* †. Are these impotent menaces? made only to be contemned? then we may dismiss our fears. But if they are the word of GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever; then we have reason to cry, "What will become of England?"

In a word; religion, both as to knowledge and practice, was never at so low an ebb, since the reformation took place; nor luxury, and immorality of every kind, at such an enormous height.—Where now are our *rulers*? are they zealous for GOD, and valiant for the truth? have they courage to stem the torrent, or to oppose the overflowings of ungodliness?—Where are the

* Isa. lxiii. 10. † Eph. iv. 18. † Isa. xxvii. 11.

the grandees and magistrates? warm with generous indignation, do they snatch the spear; and, like the gallant Phineas, smite through the loins of iniquity?—Alas! have not our great men *altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds**? are they not, generally speaking, the ringleaders in transgression; as eminent for their contempt of GOD as for the affluence of their circumstances? *Yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in the several trespasses†*. But will that dignity, which they have abused; will that authority, which was lent them for better purposes; will those distinctions be a security to them or their country, in the day of visitation?—Hear what the righteous LORD says, who is higher than the highest, and able to execute all his decrees: *It is the sword of the great men that are slain, which entereth into their privy chambers. I have set the point of the sword against all their gates, that their hearts may faint, and their ruins be multiplied‡*. Gates, be they ever so strongly fortified, or ever so faithfully guarded, are no fence against the point of JEHOVAH's sword. And if sin is suffered to enter, judgments will assuredly follow: judgments will follow even the most powerful and wealthy sinners; will pursue them, like an eager blood-hound; will haunt them, like a dismal ghost; will force a way into their palaces, nay into their closest retirements; and never remit the chace, till *fainting of heart* ends in *multiplied ruin*; in the ruin of themselves, their families, their country.

Amidst

* Jer. v. 5. † Ezra ix. 2. ‡ Ezek. xxi. 14, 15.

Amidst all these crying evils, are we not *presumptuously secure*? is there not a deplorable spirit of stupidity, which blinds our eyes, and renders us insensible? Scarce any one lays these miseries and dangers to heart. Who mourneth for the abominations of the land? who stirreth up himself to call upon GOD, if so be he may yet be entreated, and have mercy upon Zion?—Are we not too much like the intoxicated sinners of the old world? *they eat, they drank; they bought, they sold; they planted, they builded.* They gave themselves wholly up to sensual gratifications, and inferior cares; disregarding all the admonitions of Noah, and all the tokens of impending vengeance: *till the divine long-suffering ceased; the universal flood came; and, with irresistible violence, swept them all away**.—Are we not in the condition of those supine senseless people, spoken of by the prophet Zephaniah? *It shall come to pass at that day, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled upon their lees; that say in their heart, The LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil.* And may we not justly expect their awful doom? *Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation. Their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them, in the day of the LORD's wrath, but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy †.*

As

* Luke xvii. 27. † Zeph. i. 12, &c.
Tremend'ous threatening! *black as night it stands,*
Fierce as ten furios, terrible as hell,
And shakes a dreadful dart;

Milton.

Even

As a farther aggravation of our crimes, have we not been *incorrigible*, amidst the most compulsive and the most winning motives to amendment?—We have been visited with a *contagious distemper* among our cattle; which, we were apprehensive, might have introduced a plague among the human race. From this fear we have been delivered: but are we delivered from our evil works, and have we renounced all ungodliness?—*Rebellion* broke out in our island; threatening to overthrow our Protestant government, and deprive us of our reformed religion; threatening to deprive us of our liberty and its privileges, of our peace and its comforts. This storm also was soon blown over, and tranquillity restored to our land. But did we return every one to the LORD our GOD, who dealt so graciously with us?—*Earthquakes* have shattered other kingdoms, have destroyed other cities; while they only admonished, not injured, us and ours. Has this goodness, this distinguishing goodness of GOD, led us to repentance?—Were we not lately preserved from the most calamitous of all temporal losses? from losing the *precious fruits* of the earth. When the corn was ripe and ready for the sickle, who can forget the lowering sky, and the descending rains, which held back the husbandman's hand, and forbad the gathering? A few more days of such unseasonable weather had inevitably spoiled the produce of the ground, and destroyed the staff of life. But divine providence, at the very hour of need, restrained
the

Even the dart of divine indignation over a guilty land. Yet who is awakened from a state of indolence? who is induced to watch and pray? who falls down at the feet of JEHOVAH, though they see his wrath enkindling, and hear his terrors denounced?

the immoderate showers ; bid the sun shine forth with peculiar brightness, and gave us the expected weeks of the harvest. Thus rescuing us from famine, perhaps from pestilence, probably from mutiny, certainly from a train of evils, the particulars of which we cannot so much as imagine. But is there not too much ground for the complaint, so pathetically urged, and so frequently repeated, by the prophet ; *Though I have done all this for you, yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD* †.

Behold, now, the state of our nation.—Our sins abound, and are grown up to heaven—sins of every, even the most horrid kind—sins among all ranks, from the highest to the lowest.—In our sins we persist, though wooed, as it were, with the choicest mercies ; though made to smart under various judgments ; though threatened with far more afflictive visitations.—And will the great, the mighty, the immortal GOD, always bear with such a people ? will he receive the most horrible indignities, and still, still refrain himself ? Surely he will awake, as one out of sleep ! surely he will say, with a determined indignation, *Ah, I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies* * !—Has he not shewed us evident tokens of his displeasure ? is he not filling all his dispensations with marks of anger ? And what, O what may be the end of these beginnings ! how doleful, how destructive ! unless sovereign grace interpose ; bringing us, by faith in the SON of GOD, to unfeigned repentance and newness of life.—

C

Some

† Amos iv. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11. * Isa. i. 24.

Some notion we may form concerning the end of these things by unfolding the second point,

2. The *judgments* of GOD denounced on such sins.—Where such iniquities prevail, we might naturally conclude, that the divine indignation is awakened, and the divine vengeance lingereth not. Is there a GOD? does he behold the children of men? is his nature infinitely pure and holy? surely then he cannot, he will not suffer the most outrageous violations of his sublime perfections to pass unpunished.—Thus we might argue from the nature of GOD: this we might conjecture from the aspect of things. But we have a more sure word of prophecy, in this word, *the wrath of GOD is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men* *. And see! in what flaming colours, by what frightful images this wrath is represented, these judgments are described.

They are likened to *a lion rending his prey*. The LORD had been *unto Ephraim as a moth, and unto the house of Judah as a worm*. He had dispensed milder corrections; afflicting them in measure, and withholding inferior comforts. His judgments were like a moth fretting the garment, or like a worm corroding the wood. In both which cases the consumption creeps, as it were; the wasting operates silently, and proceeds slowly. Thus the chastising JEHOVAH acted; giving the people space for recollection, and looking for repentance: but no repentance was produced: they continued irreclaimable, adding sin to sin.—Then says the LORD, *I will be unto Ephraim as a lion*; which, all
fierce

* Rom. i. 18.

fiere and ravenous, rushes upon a lonely traveller. I will now come forth, as an incensed and irresistible adversary, and be as a roaring lion to the house of Judah. I, even I, who am omnipotent, will tear, will destroy them with a mighty hand; and go away, satiated with slaughter and vengeance. I will take away both prince and people; I will take away their very place and nation; and none shall have power to effect, or courage to attempt a rescue*.—If GOD do thus to perverse and incorrigible Judah, why should we imagine that he will deal otherwise with perverse and incorrigible England?

They are described by a flood. Now therefore behold the LORD bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria and all his glory: and he shall come up over all his chanel, and go over all his banks. And he shall pass thro' Judah; he shall overflow and go over; he shall reach even to the neck, and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O IMMANUEL †. The king of Assyria and his army, determined to invade Judah, are signified by the waters of the river. These the LORD bringeth up; overruling the purposes of ambitious princes, and making even their wicked designs subservient to his holy will.—They are, like the waters of an immense flood, strong and many; their multitude innumerable, and their force unconquerable. For they shall come with all their glory; with their choicest troops, their ablest commanders, and their whole warlike artillery. He shall come up over all his chanel,

C 2

and

* Hof. v. 12. 14.

† Isa. viii. 7, 8.

and go over all his banks; from all parts of his vast dominion, his troops shall be assembled; each province shall be drained of its bravest inhabitants; and all unite to render this expedition one of the most formidable that ever was undertaken.—He shall pass through Judah; not only make inroads upon the frontiers, but push his way through the country, and penetrate the very heart of the kingdom. He shall overflow; spread terror and desolation on every side, and in every quarter. He shall go over villages, towns, cities, tribes; and bear down all before him. He shall reach even to the neck; his ravages shall extend even to the royal city, to the very gates of the metropolis; threatening destruction to the palace of the king, and the walls of the temple. The stretching out of his wings, the several detachments and parties of his victorious army, shall fill the breadth of the land with havock, slaughter and ruin; even of thy land, O IMMANUEL. Their relation to thee shall procure no favour, shall afford no protection. They have dishonoured that goodly name wherewith they were called. Therefore that goodly name shall no longer stand in the breach, but pour itself with the torrent, and render it irresistible.—Such an inundation of judgments, so terrible, so destructive, have not we deserved, may not we expect?

These judgments are compared to *fire*, and to the fiercest of fires, that which glows in a *furnace*. *The house of Israel is to me become dross, all they are brass, and tin, and iron, and lead, in the midst of the furnace; they are even the dross of silver. Therefore thus saith the LORD GOD, Because ye are all become dross, behold,*

bold, therefore I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. As they gather brass, and iron, and tin, and lead into the midst of the furnace, to blow the fire upon it, to melt it; so will I gather you, in mine anger and in my fury; and I will leave you there, and melt you. Yea, I will gather you, and blow upon you in the fire of my wrath, and ye shall be melted in the midst thereof *. Astonishing words! And they are doubled! they are redoubled! in order to alarm the insensible sinners: as the sword, by being brandished in many a dreadful circle, over the criminal's head, strikes terror into his apprehensions, before it does the work of vengeance on his heart.—This generation is become *brass*, impudent in their wickedness. They have a whore's forehead; they cannot blush at their iniquities, but glory in their shame.—They are *tin*; a degenerate race, children that are corrupters. They have forsaken the good old way, and swerved from the example of their fathers.—With regard to hardness of heart, they are as *iron*: impenitent amidst all their guilt; obstinately tenacious of their vices; and not to be wrought upon by any addresses, not to be reclaimed by any expedients.—In another respect, they are as *lead*; stupid and sottish; pliable to evil, but for any good purpose unmeet, to every good work reprobate.—Because they are so exceedingly sinful, they shall be overtaken by GOD's anger, and surrounded by his fury; as metals cast into *the midst of a furnace*, are surrounded with the raging heat. The flame of this wrath shall *be blown*, as with a vehement wind, to its utmost height. In this furnace they shall

* Ezek. xxii, 18, 19, 20, 21.

shall *be left*, to this wrath they shall be abandoned ; till, by a complication of afflictions, resembling the complication of their vices, they are overcome, subdued, and even *melted* : so melted, as to be either purged from the dross of their iniquities, or else blended together in one promiscuous ruin.

These judgments are described by the terrible representation of *an end*. An end of affluence and prosperity, of which we have gloried : an end of power and strength, in which we have trusted : an end of all national blessings, which we have not improved to GOD's honour, but turned into licentiousness. *Thus saith the LORD GOD, An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land. The sword is without, and the pestilence and the famine within : he that is in the field shall die with the sword ; and he that is in the city, pestilence and famine shall devour him**. For this we have been ripening, by an unintermitted course of ungodliness and iniquity. And what can be expected by an impenitent people, hating to be reformed ? What, but that judgments, which have long been suspended, should at last be inflicted ? *An end is come :—it is come upon the land*. It is a national visitation ; not confined to a part, but extending to the whole kingdom.—*Upon the four corners of the land*. No place shall be exempt ; nothing secure : neither that which seems to be most secret, nor that which lyes most remote. The vengeance is universal and inevitable.—The executioners of this vengeance take their stand, within and without, at home and abroad ; so that to fly from one is

* Ezek. vii. 2, 15.

is only to fall into the hands of another. *He that is in the field shall find no way to escape, but shall die with the sword. He that is in the city shall obtain no protection, but famine and pestilence shall devour him.* Every city shall be a charnel house, and every field a field of blood. In city and country sin has prodigiously abounded; therefore in city and country desolation shall be made, deaths shall be multiplied, miseries shall abound.

These are some of the images, by which the judgments and the wrath of GOD are represented in the scriptures. But when all images are used, when fancy itself is exhausted, we may truly cry out with the psalmist, *Who knoweth the power of thine anger * ?* If GOD whet his glittering sword, and his hand take hold on judgment, what can withstand it, or who can sustain it? If his wrath be kindled, yea but a little, *it shall consume the earth with her increase; it shall set on fire the foundation of the mountains, and burn to the lowest hell †.*

When *the lion has roared*, says the prophet, *who will not fear?* When the Most High GOD has spoken; spoken such terrible things in righteousness; who will not lay them to heart? O! how deep is that sleep; how deadly is that lethargy, which the voice of Him who shakes the heavens does neither alarm nor awe!

Lest you should begin to say within yourselves, These threatnings are applicable only to the Jews, I proceed to shew

3. The *certain execution* of these, or some such judgments on us, unless we fly to the appointed refuge.

GOD

* Psal. xc. 11. † Deut. xxxii. 22.

GOD is an infinite speaker. In his word, he addresses himself to all generations of men, and to every individual of the human kind, where his holy revelation is made. It is therefore a certain rule, that when any people, enlightened by the glorious gospel, become, like Jerusalem, universally and incorrigibly corrupt; they do, in Jerusalem's doom, read their own.

GOD is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever. He remembereth his threatenings, as well as his promises, to a thousand generations. Whatsoever, of either kind, happened to our forefathers, *happened to them as examples to us.* And *whatsoever was written aforetime, was written for our learning.* Observe, it was written, not for our amusement, but *for our learning and admonition* †: that we may, as in a mirrour, see our own picture; and, as from an oracle, learn our own destiny.

Is it not in a manner necessary, for the manifestation of GOD's inflexible justice, and his unalterable hatred of sin, that judgments should take their course; when iniquity rears its head, and refuses to be controuled? At such a juncture does not every one of the divine attributes cry aloud, *O LORD GOD, to whom vengeance belongeth; thou GOD, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself.*—And how can the justice of GOD, with regard to a wicked *nation*, be shewn, but by executing his vengeance upon them, in temporal calamities?

Consider, sirs, the very essence of nations and political communities is temporal, purely temporal. They have no duration, no existence, but in this world. Here-

after

† 1 Cor. x. 11.

after sinners will be judged and punished singly, and in a personal capacity *only*. How then shall He, who *is ruler among the nations*, maintain the dignity of his government over the kingdoms of the earth, but by inflicting national punishments, for national provocations; and, for final impenitence, total destruction?

Besides, has not the LORD always acted in this manner? Go back to the generations of old. Contemplate Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them; well watered every where, even as the garden of the LORD. Yet *this fruitful land is made barren*, those populous cities are turned into ashes, *for the wickedness of them that dwelt therein**; for their pride and idleness; for their voluptuous and wanton indulgencies. *For which things sake the wrath of GOD* not only has come, in former ages, and in distant nations; but in every age *cometh*, and in every nation will come, *upon the children of disobedience* †.

Pass over to Babylon, the grandest city that the sun ever beheld: which set calamity at defiance; saying in her heart, *I shall be a lady for ever* †. How is she fallen! *swept with the besom of destruction* ††!. Not so much as a trace or footstep of her antient glory left! And shall *we* be safe, when those very iniquities prevail among us, which rased the foundations of the Babylonian metropolis, and overthrew the magnificence of the Babylonian monarchy?

Take a view of Constantinople, once the most flourishing Christian city in the world: where the first Chri-

D

stian

* Psal. cvii. 34. † Col. iii. 6. † Isa. xlvii. 7. †† Isa. xiv. 23.

Man emperor filled the throne, and Chrysoſtom, that great Chriſtian orator, the pulpit. Then it was gloriously enlightened with the knowledge of JESUS CHRIST. Grace and truth dwelt in it; and the beauties of holineſs adorned it. But now the candleſtick is removed. It is now given up to infidelity and barbarity; is now full of darkneſs, and cruel habitations.

Come hither then, ye careleſs ones, and ſee what deſolations ſin has made in the earth. On account of ſin Sodom was conſumed, as in a moment; Babylon is totally deſtroyed*; Conſtantinople has loſt her glory. And will the LORD, the LORD GOD, who is unchangeably juſt and holy; will he ſpare *that* in one
people

* Will any, raiſed in their own conceit above the vulgar level, neglect theſe admonitions with a ſmile of diſdain? becauſe they can aſſign the *ſecond cauſes* of ſome ſuch evils, as have been deſcribed, will they therefore quiet their ſpirits, amidſt the alarming proſpect of judgments from heaven? — They have heard (I make no doubt) that a midnight debauch in Babylon, and a popular ſedition in Jeruſalem, left the gates of the former open to Cyrus, and the walls of the latter without defence to Veſpaſian. Perhaps they will ſuppoſe, that the overthrow of Sodom was occaſioned by the ſhock of an earthquake; and that the fire from heaven was produced by ſulphureous exhalations.

Be the premiſſes ever ſo certain, is there any thing rational in the con-
cluſion? Is not what we term the *course of nature*, the inceſſant admini-
ſtration of *Providence*? are not many of its ordinary appearances very
evident indications of a righteous and holy government, unalterably de-
termined to puniſh ſin? The poverty and ignominy of the lazy vaga-
bond; the diſeaſes of the debauchee, and the diſtreſſes of the ſpendthrift;
are theſe leſs manifeſt ſigns of divine diſpleaſure, becauſe they are the
immediate effects of an evil conduct? are they not as certainly the *judi-
cial*, the *penal*, as they are the *natural* conſequences of vice?

Let thoſe therefore who fear not judgments, compare cauſes and events.
If ſelfiſhneſs, avarice and venality; if indolence, luxury and prodigality;
if youth without principles, tradefmen without honeſty, and nobles with-
out honour; if theſe are allowed to be, either provoking immoralities, or
fatal ſymptoms; I fear the ruin of England cannot be far off. GOD
Almighty grant, we miniſters may not accelerate the fall of our coun-
try, by neglecting to warn every man, and exhort every man, to the
great evangelical duty of BELIEVING; in order to promote national
reformation, and to eſcape national deſtruction.

people which he has so severely corrected in another? *He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not be punish us, when we do according to all their abominations?*

Have we a license to sin with impunity? are our sins less heinous than those of other people? Quite the reverse. Considering the many blessings which we enjoy as a nation; the many deliverances we have enjoyed as a Protestant nation; the numberless advantages for religious knowledge and religious practice, which we both have enjoyed, and do enjoy, above all the nations on earth—Considering these circumstances, our wickedness is highly aggravated; it is become exceeding sinful; it *overpasses the deeds* * of the most abandoned heathens. What then can prevent our ruin?

Will you reply, “We fast, and humble ourselves before the LORD?”—I ask, Do we fast from sin? are our fast-days the beginning of a gospel reformation? When we abstain from our daily bread, do we turn by faith to JESUS CHRIST; that, *eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, we may live through him* †? live in holiness here, and live in glory hereafter, by applying his immaculate righteousness to our souls.—If this is the case, we may entertain reviving hopes. The scripture speaks good words, and comfortable words, to such people; be their condition ever so vile, or their guilt ever so great.—But alas! are we not just the same persons, the day after our fast, as we were before? as vain in our conversation, and as forgetful of GOD? as fond of folly, and as negligent of divine grace? as mad upon our idols, of carnal gratification, and worldly gain?

D 2

—If

* Jer. v. 29.

† John vi. 57.

—If so, our fasts are not an acceptable, no, nor a reasonable service; but a mere mockery of the omniscient majesty. May he not justly use that upbraiding expostulation? *Will ye steal, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and walk after other gods, serving, not the LORD JEHOVAH, but divers lusts and pleasures; and then, with hypocritical devotion, stand before me in this house, which is called by my name *?*

Perhaps you are ready to alledge, “ Our alms will deliver us. The son of Sirach exhorts us, to *shut up alms in our store-houses*; and assures us, that *they shall fight for us against our enemies, better than a mighty shield and strong spear †*. And when was there a greater flow of beneficence observeable in our own, or in any land? What sums have been given to the poor during this severe season of cold and scarcity! what hospitals of various sorts, and other charitable foundations, have been set on foot, and are supported through the kingdom !”—Let us beware, brethren, lest those very things, which we look upon as our recommendation, should prove an offence. If our alms proceed not from faith in JESUS CHRIST, and an unfeigned zeal for the glory of GOD; if they are not accompanied with a spirit of love to his name, and with a course of obedience to his commands; hear what the LORD himself says concerning *such* works; see what a figure they make in his sight; and then judge, whether they are likely to be a security to our land. *I hate, I despise your feast-days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt-*

* Jer. vii. 9, 10.

† Ecclus. xxix. 12, 13.

burnt-offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. Hymns of praise, you see, are no other than a *noise* in the LORD's ear; the most costly services of religion are no better than a *smoke* in his nostrils; unless *judgment*, and the love of GOD, *run down as a river*; unless *righteousness*, and the faith of CHRIST, abound as a *mighty stream**.

Do you still conceit yourselves, that, because there are many righteous persons remaining, *they* will stand in the gap; *they* will turn away the anger of the LORD, and be as the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen of Israel, to our endangered state?—Hear what a charge the supreme JEHOVAH gave to his prophet, when the provocations of Israel were risen to a very high pitch: *Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee* †. Amazing and awful prohibition! Yet it is repeated again and again ‡.—God's professing people may, by their excessive wickedness, become so insufferably loathsome, that were the greatest saints to make supplication in their behalf, they should not prevail. Though Noah, Daniel and Job, men mighty in prayer, and zealous for the welfare of their neighbours; though these three men (who had each, by his single intercession, procured blessings from heaven) were uniting their petitions in the midst of this profligate generation; *as I live, saith the LORD GOD, they*

* Amos v. 21, 22, 23, 24. † Jer. vii. 16. ‡ Jer. xi. 14. xiv. 11.

they shall deliver neither sons nor daughters; they only shall be delivered, but the land shall be desolate.*

The land shall be desolate—Doleful sound! dismal decree! And has it not long ago been carried into execution? was not Jerusalem plowed as a field, and trodden down by the Gentiles? are not the inhabitants rooted out of their dwellings, and scattered to all the ends of the earth? while their country is given up for a prey and for a possession to strangers, to infidels, to Turks.

Perhaps you will say, “The Jews crucified the LORD of glory, and rejected his gospel: *therefore* wrath came upon them to the uttermost.”—And are we innocent in this respect? are not we verily, are not we greatly guilty concerning this thing? Is CHRIST received into the hearts of men, with deep adoration of his person, as IMMANUEL, GOD with us? do they glory and delight themselves in his compleat redemption, as finished by the great GOD and our SAVIOUR? do they confide in him alone for their justification, as an infinite surety, and as JEHOVAH our righteousness? do they depend on him alone for their sanctification, as JESUS who saves his people from their sins, and sanctifies them through his blood? do they count all things but dung, for the excellency of CHRIST, and his incomprehensible merit?—Alas! is not his gospel, though the light of the world, disregarded and despised? is not his name, though a name above every name, derided and blasphemed? are not the influences of his eternal SPIRIT, tho’ the very life of our souls, exploded and ridiculed? They who would exalt the
SAVIOUR,

* Ezek. xiv. 16.

SAVIOUR, would make every sheaf bow down to the REDEEMER's, representing him as the alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending, in the salvation of sinners; those preachers, those writers, those believers, are treated as *the foolish people that dwell in Sichem* *.

What the Jews did through ignorance, we, who call ourselves Christians, Englishmen, Protestants; we do knowingly, wilfully, and of malicious wickedness. And if we thus trample upon the blood which alone can screen us; if we thus crucify afresh that JESUS who is our only hope; what can we look for, but vengeance and fiery indignation? If we ourselves, with our own hands, demolish the only barrier, what can ensue, but an inundation of wrath, tribulation and anguish?

Consider these things, brethren. The LORD enable you to discern the signs of the times! Then you will acknowledge, that we have reason to be alarmed, to tremble, to be horribly afraid.—Are not these iniquities the Achans, that will assuredly bring distress and trouble, if not destruction, upon our country? are not these iniquities the Jonahs, that will awaken the divine displeasure, and deliver up our vessel to the tempest, if not to shipwreck?

Is any one disposed to say within himself, “ Though others may be guilty of these flagrant iniquities, yet am not I?”—Remember, my friend, the prophet Isaiah. He was, at least, as free from these flagrant iniquities as yourself. Yet he laments, and with painful apprehensions, the guilt of his countrymen, as well as his own †.—Remember king Josiah. Though a holy
man.

* *Ezechiel*, l. 26.

† *Isa.* vi. 5.

man and a just, he rent his clothes, and trembled at GOD's word, denouncing vengeance against an irreligious people*.

Consider also, whether you have not been an accessory, even where you was not the principal. Tho' you have not joined with the more profligate sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful; yet have you not connived at their impiety? Do their affronts offered to the king of heaven rouse you into a becoming zeal to vindicate his injured honour? or, *because iniquity has abounded*, is not your love, and *the love of many, waxed cold* †? Have not the disciples, even the disciples of JESUS, been cowards and traitors; while others have been professed enemies and rebels?

Besides, have not you, have not I, have not all contributed, in many, many instances, to swell the score of national provocations? Is not every sin a disobedience of GOD's most holy command? is not every sin a defiance of his uncontrollable authority? is not every sin an imitation of the devil? does it not create a kind of hell in the heart? must it not therefore be inconceivably odious to the *holy, holy, holy LORD GOD of Sabaoth*?—If so, how guilty are the very best among us? Is not *this accursed thing* † found in all our tents? has not every one added to the load, that dreadful load, which is likely to sink the nation in ruin? Should not every one, therefore, smite upon his breast, and say with the penitent, *What have I done!* and cry with the publican, *GOD be merciful to me a sinner!*

Will

* 2 Kings xxii. 12, 13. † Mat. xxiv. 12. † Josh. vi. 18.

Will you still flatter yourself? "All these judgments may be delayed: they may not come in my time."—I answer, If there be any truth in GOD's word; if any conjecture is to be made from the appearance of things; these judgments are near: they are at the door. They are like the ax in the executioner's hand, which has been poised, has received its last elevation, and is now falling on the criminal's neck.—Yet, if these should be withheld for a season, will not sickness come upon you? are not many disasters lying in ambush to seize you? is not death sharpening his arrow; perhaps fitting it to the string; or even aiming at your life? is not the day, the dreadful day approaching, when the shout of the archangel and the trump of GOD will be heard; when the dead shall arise, and heaven and earth flee away? will not the LORD, the LORD GOD Omnipotent quickly come, *with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly, of all their ungodly deeds, which they have ungodlily committed; and of all their hard speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him* *.

Take then, my dear hearers, take the advice of the greatest of preachers, and the wisest of men; *The prudent foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself* †.—Behold! the rains are descending, and the flood is coming; hasten like Noah, hasten to your ark. See! the skies are kindling all around, and the shafts of vengeance are ready to fly. Make haste, Oh! make haste, and delay not the time, to get into a hiding-place.—Let me sound in your ears the angel's admonition; and may the

E

LORD

* Jude 14, 15. † Prov, xxii. 3.

LORD of angels, may the friend of sinners, convey it to your hearts! *Escape for your lives, lest ye be consumed*: lest the judgments of GOD, and the wrath of GOD, more to be feared than a deluge of waters, more to be feared than a torrent of flames, surround you suddenly—seize you unavoidably—and overwhelm you in ruin, temporal and eternal.

O that I might prevail! O that GOD would make you sensible of your peril! O that man, woman and child would ask, “How shall I fly from the wrath to come? where shall I be safe in the day of visitation? Shew me the ark! shew me the refuge!”—I should then, with great satisfaction, proceed to answer this enquiry; and point out CHRIST to your souls, as the *only* hiding-place, as the *sure* hiding-place, where you may certainly find safety. But this must be the business, the pleasing business of my next discourse.

Let me beseech you, in the mean time, to lay these alarming truths to heart: let them impress your consciences! let them penetrate your souls! And O thou gracious, thou almighty LORD GOD, do thou command them to sink deep into all our minds: that we may, with Ezra thy priest, sit down *ashamed and astonished**, under a sense of our manifold iniquities—That we may, with thy servant Job, *abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes* †—That we may, in the words, and with the compunction of thy prophet, every one cry out, *Wo is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips* ‡.

SERMON

* Ezra ix. 3. † Job xlii. 6. ‡ Isa. vi. 5.

S E R M O N II.

The Means of Safety.

H E B. xi. 28.

Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born, should touch them.

WE have been considering the danger of our nation, occasioned—by the *sin* of its inhabitants—by the *judgments* of GOD, denounced against such sinners—by the *certain execution* of his righteous threatenings, unless we fly to the appointed refuge.—When such is the state of a nation, it is high time for the watchmen on her walls to lift up their voice: not indeed to spread vain terrors, but to give notice of the approaching evil; to warn the unwary; to call in the stragglers; and urge every one to retire into a place of safety.

Having, in the preceding discourse, attempted to discharge this office; I shall now, brethren, as in the presence of the all-seeing GOD, ask—Have we been attentive to these things? are we alarmed with a sense of our guilt and our peril? have we, with the prophet Isaiah, lamented our own, and the sins of our people?—If so, we shall highly prize we shall ardently desire, the same

consolation, and the same relief, which the GOD of infinitely free goodness vouchsafed to his servant. *Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken from off the altar, and he laid it upon my mouth** : an action which represents the very thing signified in the text by *the sprinkling of blood*.

The *altar* typified CHRIST; who is both the sacrifice that makes the atonement, and the altar that sanctifies the gift.—The *live coal* seems to betoken the word of grace, and the word of life; which brings the glad tidings of the gospel, and testifies of the bleeding JESUS.—*Laying this upon the mouth* very significantly denotes the application of CHRIST and his great atonement. When this is done under the influence of the SPIRIT, and by means of faith, then *iniquity is taken away, and sin purged*; taken away from the sight of GOD, and purged from the sinner's conscience. Guilt is abolished; fear ceases—But this leads us to our second particular,

II. The method of security from danger, effected by *keeping the passover, and sprinkling the blood*.

Moses was apprised of a dreadful vengeance, to be inflicted on Egypt; the most dreadful that ever was known, since the beginning of their nation; so dreadful, that it would make every ear tingle, and every heart bleed. The destroying angel was to pass through all the territories of Pharaoh, and smite every first-born both

* Isa. vi. 7.

both of man and beast ; so that, before the morning, there should be heaps of slain in the cities, the villages, the fields ; not a house exempt, not a family spared, not a herd, nor a flock, free from the fatal calamity.

Moses feared the blow. He feared, as the text intimates, the least touch of the divine executioner's sword ; knowing that it would crush him and his people, as a moth is crushed by the falling millstone. He is therefore greatly solicitous to provide for their welfare. But what expedient shall he use ?—Shall he give them orders to close their windows, and bar their doors ; to erect fortifications, and stand upon their defence ? Alas ! before an invisible hand, armed with the vengeance of heaven, all such precautions would have been as a spark before the whirlwind.—Shall he assemble the warriors, or detach parties of soldiers, to patrol the streets, and guard the houses ? Vanity of vanities ! the sword of the avenging angel would pierce through legions and legions of such guards, as lightning penetrates the yielding air.—Shall the whole congregation bend their knees, with solemn confession of their sins, and sincere resolutions of future amendment ? This, though absolutely necessary to be done, was extremely improper to be relied on. It would have been relying on a broken reed, and despising the ordinance of the Holy One.

The LORD himself appoints a method of preservation. Moses is directed to slay a lamb. Each family in Israel is to do the same. Having received the blood into a basin, they are to sprinkle it, not on the threshold, but on the lintel and side-posts of their doors. This shall be a sign to the destroying angel. Looking
upon

upon this sign, he will pass over the house; will strike no blow, and execute no vengeance, where-ever he sees the blood sprinkled.—All this, in pursuance of the divine direction, being performed; with faith and tranquillity they wait the event.

You will say, perhaps, What is all this to us? I answer, It is a pattern for our imitation.—Are we then to do the very same thing?—We are to do what their practice typified. The shadow was theirs, the substance is ours. The blood of the lamb typified the blood of CHRIST, who is the Lamb of GOD, slain for the sins of the world.—By the blood of CHRIST is frequently signified in scripture the *whole* * merit of his life and death, of his actions and sufferings, of his trials and graces: which satisfied GOD's justice, and magnified GOD's law; which made propitiation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness.—Well does the apostle call it *precious blood*. Unspeakably precious are its effects. It appeases the wrath of GOD revealed from heaven, and makes peace between the offended CREATOR and the offending creature. Sprinkled on the conscience, it takes away all guilt, and secures from all vengeance.—This, therefore, my brethren, this blood
is

* *Being justified by his blood*, Rom. v. 9. That is; being pardoned, being made righteous, and heirs of all spiritual blessings.—*Thou hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood*, Rev. v. 9. That is; thou hast delivered us from all sin and all wrath; thou hast reconciled us to the Almighty MAJESTY, and introduced us into his blissful presence.—These blessings, ascribed to our LORD's blood, are confessedly the fruit, not barely of his sufferings, but of his whole humiliation, obedience and death. Therefore, in a very valuable dictionary of the most valuable words and phrases, we have this explication of the *blood of the LAMB*; "The sacrifice of CHRIST's death, together with his perfect righteousness and holiness imputed." See Wilson's Christ. Dict.

is our security. This is to our souls, what the blood of the paschal lamb was to the Israelitish families. *The name of the LORD*, the grace and goodness of GOD, manifested in the death and obedience of CHRIST, *is a strong tower*: not only *the righteous* person, but the distressed creature, and the endangered sinner, *runneth unto it and is safe* *.

Since this is a point of the utmost importance, it cannot be too clearly displayed, or too strongly established. For this purpose the scripture gives us several most amiable and instructive views of CHRIST, as our refuge and safety.—He is called a *hiding place* †. To a hiding-place people retreat, and are secure from their enemies, even from those cruel enemies that seek their destruction. Thus the prophets, whom Obadiah hid by fifty in a cave, were secure from Ahab's tyranny, and Jezebel's persecution. So the soul that flies to CHRIST, that takes sanctuary under the blood of sprinkling, is secure from the most formidable of all enemies; is secure from all the wrath due to sin, and from every accusation which Satan can bring. To such a person shall be fulfilled what is spoken by the prophet Jeremiah; *When the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, they shall not be found* ‡.

CHRIST is styled *a covert from the tempest*. A man, says Isaiah, that is the GOD-man CHRIST JESUS, *shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest* **. When the thunders roar, and the lightnings flash; when the clouds pour down water, and a horrid storm comes on; all that are in the open air re-

tire

* Prov. xviii. 20. † Isa. xxxii. 2. ‡ Jer. l. 20. ** Isa. xxxii. 2.

tire under the branches of a thick tree, or fly to some other commodious shelter. What storm can be so dreadful as the righteous vengeance of GOD, poured out upon a sinful nation? what storm can be so dreadful as the eternal vengeance of GOD, poured out upon a sinful soul? To both these we are exposed, to both these we are justly liable. But CHRIST's blood and righteousness are a covert. Hither we may fly, and be screened; hither we may fly, and be safe: safe as was Noah when he entered the ark; and GOD's own hand closed the door, and GOD's own eye guided its motions. For *there is no condemnation* of any kind, or from any quarter, *to them that are in CHRIST JESUS**.

CHRIST is compared to a *strong-hold*. *Turn ye to the strong-hold*, says the prophet Zechariah †. When soldiers fly from a victorious army, being admitted into an impregnable castle, they are beyond the reach of danger. They give their fears to the wind, and repose themselves in tranquillity. When sinners fly by faith to the dying JESUS, they also, from thenceforth, are in *a tower of salvation* ‡. They may say, each one for himself, "Soul, take thine ease. All thy guilt is laid upon thy LORD, and punished in thy surety. The flaming sword of justice is returned to the sheath, having received full satisfaction from the sufferings of CHRIST. The curse of a violated law is no more, having been executed to the utmost upon the person of my REDEEMER. Nay, its curse is turned into a blessing. For *CHRIST has redeemed us from the curse of the law, that the blessing of Abraham*

ham

* Rom. viii. 1. † Zech. ix. 12. ‡ 2 Sam. xxii. 51.

“ *ham might come upon us Gentiles* * : even the blessing of perfect reconciliation, and everlasting friendship, with GOD most high.”

This leads me to mention another beautiful comparison, which represents CHRIST not only as the cause of safety, but as the source of consolation. He shall be *as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land* †.—In a dry place, burnt up for want of moisture, nothing is so desirable, nothing so refreshing as water. To the poor sinful soul, of whose condition the parched ground is a fit resemblance, CHRIST shall be, not barely as the morning dew, not barely as the transient shower, but as a river; yea, as *rivers of water*, that flow in copious and never-failing streams thro’ the thirsty soil; making even the sandy desert green with herbage, and gay with flowers.—In a sultry clime, where the sun pours insufferable heat, and all things languish under the glaring rays, nothing is so cheering to the labourer, nothing so welcome to the traveller, as a cool and gloomy *shade*. A poor soul, assaulted by the fiery darts of Satan, and distressed with the remembrance of former iniquities, is this sultry clime, or *weary land*. But CHRIST and his atonement are not barely as the boughs of an oak, which extend their coolness to a small distance; not barely as the canopy of an alcove, through which much of the glowing influence penetrates; but like the *shadow of a rock*, a *great rock*; which projects the friendly shade over many a league; which has repelled and excluded the

F

sun,

* Gal. iii. 13, 14. † Isa. xxxii. 2.

sun, through all preceding ages; and gives you, as it were, "the cold of snow amidst the heat of harvest †."

Here then, brethren, is our security amidst all peril. The blood, the righteousness, the infinitely glorious person of CHRIST; these are our hiding-place—these are our covert—these are our strong-hold. And (blessed be GOD!) the doors stand wide open: they are never shut, night nor day. The access is free for any, free for all, free for the greatest sinners. We are not only allowed, but we are invited; nay, we are commanded, to approach; to enter; to enjoy the protection: or, as the words of the text express it, to *sprinkle the blood* on our souls.

Sprinkle the blood on our souls! You will probably say, "What does this signify? What was done by Moses, when he sprinkled the visible blood, we easily apprehend: but how can we sprinkle the blood of CHRIST, which we never saw? the blood of CHRIST, whom the heavens have received?"—This is one of those mysteries which the natural man understandeth not: he can form no notion of it: it is foolishness to his apprehension. Therefore, may the eternal SPIRIT both teach us to understand the doctrine, and enable us to practise the duty!

To sprinkle the blood of CHRIST is truly to *believe* in CHRIST, in his infinite atonement and everlasting righteousness: it is to *receive* these blessings as GOD's free gift to men, to sinners, to ourselves in particular: and, having received, to make continual *use* of them in every time of trial, for every occasion of need.

Perhaps

† Prov. xxv. 13.

Perhaps this doctrine may become clearer if we illustrate it by an example. A remarkable example we have in the practice of David. After the commission of his grievous crimes, he did, in a very eminent manner, sprinkle the blood. For he said unto the LORD, *Thou shalt purge me with hyssop*, (the instrument of sprinkling the typical blood) *and I shall be clean; thou shalt wash me* in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, *and I shall be whiter than snow* *. This fountain he looked upon as opened for *his* sins; and fully sufficient to cleanse him from all his filthiness; so that he should be as free from spot, before the righteous Judge, as the snow on Salmon was free from stain.—Had he said within himself, “ My crimes are too great for this blood to expiate;” or, “ This blood cannot be shed for so vile an offender as I am :” he would then have put the atonement far from him, together with all its expiating virtue. This would have been not to apply, but to throw away the blood; not to sprinkle it upon the soul, but to pour it upon the ground.

Come then, brethren; come, fellow sinners; let us also, in this day of fear and danger, look unto CHRIST, as dying that we may live; as made sin, that we may be made the righteousness of GOD in him; as made a curse, that we may inherit eternal blessedness.—Let us look unto JESUS as taking our nature, and standing in our stead. Behold him apprehended as a thief; ignominiously bound, and marked with the lashes of the scourge. Behold him crowned with thorns; his hair clotted, his face discoloured, his breast and shoulders

* Psal. li. 7.

all bedewed with his own most innocent blood. Behold him nailed to the cross; hanging in the most racking posture, till all his bones are out of joint; hanging amidst malefactors, forsaken of GOD, of angels and men. Behold him bowing his head in death, and stabbed to the heart with the executioner's spear.— Thus behold him, and say, “ Verily, this sufferer was
 “ the SON of GOD, and the LORD of glory. Veri-
 “ ly, these sufferings were the punishment due to *my*
 “ sins. In all this extreme anguish he bore *my* griefs,
 “ and carried *my* sorrows. He was oppressed, and he
 “ was afflicted, because I had done amiss and dealt
 “ wickedly. He was cut off out of the land of the li-
 “ ving, that he might make his soul an offering for *my*
 “ sins, and obtain eternal redemption for *me*.”

Thus behold the blessed JESUS: thus, sinners, behold the LORD your righteousness; with this look of application, with this appropriating faith. Be verily persuaded, that you shall find mercy before a holy GOD; not because you have any worthiness, but because CHRIST has incomparable merit: that you shall never come into condemnation, not because you have fasted and prayed, but because CHRIST is your great propitiation. Be persuaded, that GOD has given his SON for you; that GOD gives his SON to you; and together with him eternal life.—Be persuaded of all this, upon the best of foundations, the infallible word of GOD; who has declared, that CHRIST died for the *ungodly**, and by his obedience *sinners* are made righteous †; that CHRIST was wounded on the cross, and
 intercedes

* Rom. v. 6. † Rom. v. 19.

intercedes in heaven for *transgressors* †; that he received spiritual gifts, and divine blessings, even for the *rebellious* *.—The LORD GOD omnipotent, the author and finisher of faith, enable you thus to believe! on the ground of his own most sure word, thus to believe! Then you keep the Christian passover; then you sprinkle the blood of CHRIST; then you may boldly say, *under his shadow we shall be safe*.—Which reminds us of the third particular, namely,

III. The success of this method, denoted by the destroyer not so much as *touching* them. *Lest he that destroyed the first-born should touch them*.—What a beautiful antithesis! The Egyptian first-born were wounded, were mortally wounded, were absolutely *destroyed*: the Israelites were not hurt, nor endangered, no nor so much as *touch*ed. So sure and complete a defence was this blood of sprinkling!—Nothing else could have yielded *any* protection; this afforded *perfect* security. When this was sprinkled on their door-posts, they had no cause to be *afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day; for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon day* †.

And is not the hiding-place, the covert, the stronghold, provided for *us* in the blood and righteousness of CHRIST, an equal security? do they not yield absolute, perfect, consummate safety? Nothing else could administer the least hope to the chiefest apostle; this opens an inviolable sanctuary even for the greatest of sinners.

† Isa. liii. 12.

* Psal. lxxviii. 18.

† Psal. xci. 5, 6.

sinners. None ever perished who laid their help upon CHRIST. He *saves*—he saves to the uttermost—he saves not a few only, but *all*—*all that come unto GOD through him**. Is our danger great? our security is greater. Is our danger exceeding great? our security is incomparably greater. In short, our refuge and security are the greatest that can be wished, that can be imagined, that GOD himself could provide.—Chearing, charming, ravishing truth! Suffer me to enlarge upon it, brethren. Let your attention hang on the glad tidings. May your hearts imbibe the precious doctrine!

Had more than forty men bound themselves with an oath, that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed † some one in this congregation; the danger would be great, and the case startling. Nevertheless the endangered person would think himself sufficiently safe, if he could steal away, and hide himself in one of the deepest caves of America, with a vast tract of unknown land, and all the waters of the vaster ocean between himself and the ruffians. Much safer will your souls be under the hiding, cleansing, atoning efficacy of this blood of sprinkling; by which unrighteousnesses are forgiven, sins are covered, and iniquities done away, as though they had never been.

Were you overtaken by a violent and impetuous storm? If you sought shelter under a covert that was firmer than boards of cedar, harder than slabs of marble, thicker than the roofs of all the houses in Europe; you would reckon yourselves secure from torrents of rain, or from volleys of hail. Much more secure will you be from everlasting wrath; secure, even when *the LORD*

shall

* Heb. vii. 25. † Acts xxiii. 21.

shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest *; provided you are found under the covert of CHRIST'S magnificent and meritorious righteousness: by virtue of which, *all that believe are justified*—I say not from millions, or from thousands of millions, but—*from all offensive, provoking, criminal things* **.

Should you be pursued by a conquering foe, determined to cut you in pieces? If you turned into a castle whose walls were stronger than brass, stronger than adamant, stronger than all the rocks in the world; you might laugh at the attempts of your enemy: you are guarded from the power and peril of the sword. So, and abundantly more, are you guarded from every spiritual enemy, and from every spiritual evil, when you fly to the strong-hold of CHRIST'S death and atonement. The souls that abide in CHRIST, *they shall dwell on high*; beyond the rage of the old serpent and the great dragon: *their place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks* †; against which all the assaults of earth and hell shall never be able to prevail. They may say, with the triumphant apostle, *How much more shall we, who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, be delivered from ruin, and reign in life by CHRIST JESUS* ‡!

And will you not prize such a strong-hold? shall not such a covert be dear to your guilty souls? will you not set an exceeding great value upon such an hiding-place? especially when the storm is gathering and threatening all around: when days of desolation and perplexity are coming upon the world; and judgments, inflicted by
men,

* Psal. xi. 6. ** Acts xiii. 39. † Isa. xxxiii. 16. ‡ Rom. v. 17.

men, may transmit us to the everlasting judgment of GOD.—How did Israel bless and adore their most merciful JEHOVAH, for granting them such an effectual means of preservation, as the blood of the paschal lamb! and shall not we bless and adore the same most gracious JEHOVAH, for granting us a means of preservation altogether as effectual, and incomparably more wonderful?

If you should say, “How does it appear that the “blood of CHRIST is such a security? so great, so “wonderful, so matchless!”—Because it is the blood of Him who is JEHOVAH’s fellow.*; of Him who is GOD over all, blessed for ever †; of Him in whom dwells all the fulness of the GODHEAD bodily ‡.—Permit me, brethren, to clear up and establish this doctrine; as it is a doctrine of the last importance; on which the very strength of our salvation is built; and from which the fulness of our consolation flows.

There are in CHRIST, in his one undivided person, two distinct natures. One nature is eternal, infinite, almighty; which is called by the apostle, *the form of GOD***. The other nature had a beginning; is limited as to extent, and limited as to power. This is termed by the apostle, *the seed of Abraham ††*.—As GOD, he is subject to no authority, and infinitely superior to all possibility of suffering. To become capable of obeying, suffering and dying, he humbled himself, and was found in fashion as a man: that by obeying, suffering and dying in human flesh, he might triumph over sin and Satan,

* Zech. xiii. 7.

† Rom. ix. 5.

‡ Col. ii. 9.

** Phil. ii. 6.

†† Heb. ii. 16.

tan, in that very nature which Satan had overcome, and sin had ruined: that, by accomplishing all this in the room and stead of his people, he might bring many sons unto glory; not without a full satisfaction to the rights of injured justice, and to the demands of a violated law.

JESUS CHRIST then, in his divine nature, is the most high GOD. The heaven of heavens is the august palace, and royal residence, of this blessed and only potentate. Thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him. The church militant rely on him; the church triumphant adore him; while all the hosts of angels pay homage to him.—JESUS CHRIST, in his divine nature, is the majestic and most adorable I AM; self-existent and independent. All worlds and all beings are derived wholly from him, and depend continually upon him: *he made the worlds, and upholdeth all things* *.—View the beauty, the magnificence, the harmony, observable in heaven, on earth, through the universe. All is intended, like the miracle wrought at Cana of Galilee, to *manifest his glory* †: to tell every one who has eyes to see, and a heart to understand, how great our SAVIOUR is; how sublime his majesty, and how marvellous his perfection. All things, says the SPIRIT of inspiration, were created *by him, and for him* ‡.—Judge then, whether the obedience and atonement of *such* a REDEEMER are not sufficient to secure, perfectly to secure any sinner, every sinner, all sinners, that fly by faith under his wings. As perfectly sufficient they are

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for

* Heb. i. 2, 3.

† John ii. 11.

‡ Col. i. 16.

for this blessed purpose, as the unmeasurable circuit of the skies is roomy enough for a lark to fly in, or as the immense orb of the sun is beamy enough for a labourer to work by.

Behold now the dignity and excellency of this blood, which is your covert, your hiding place, your stronghold. It has all the power and efficacy that every divine perfection can give it. It is the blood and righteousness of Him who is eternal, incomprehensible, and exalted above all blessing and praise. Surely then nothing can bear any proportion to it. Guilt, all guilt, though ever so execrable and horrid, compared with the grandeur and riches of this invaluable blood *, is as a glow-

* St Chrysostom's explanation of a verse lately quoted is so important in itself, and so apposite to our purpose, exhibits such a magnificent and delightful display of *the salvation which is in CHRIST JESUS*, that I promise myself, the reader will allow me to present him with a translation. *How much more shall they who receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, reign in life by one CHRIST JESUS!* ΟΥΚ ΕΙΠΕΝ ΕΝΤΑΥΘΑ ΚΑΡΙΝ, &c. "The apostle says not, grace, but abundance of grace. For we receive, not barely what may suffice to obtain our pardon, but incomparably more. We are delivered from all punishment, and from every evil. We are justified; we are sanctified, made the children of GOD, and the brethren of his only begotten SON. We are constituted heirs, joint heirs with the PRINCE of heaven. Yea, we become the members of his body; most intimately and indissolubly united to that divine head.

"All these privileges St Paul styles *the abundance of grace*: intimating, that the antidote is not only qualified to counteract and expel the poison, but is sovereign also to establish health, to create beauty, to impart honour, and, from the most malignant of all evils, to produce the most distinguished blessings: any one of which, separately considered, would have been sufficient to overcome and disarm death; but under their combined influence, it is absolutely destroyed, it vanishes entirely away, and leaves not so much as a trace of mischief, or a shadow of terror.

"Let us suppose some poor debtor owing a considerable sum, and, for want of payment, cast into prison. A generous friend, pitying his condition, discharges the whole debt, and releases him from confinement: and not this only, but bestows upon him splendid apparel,

"with

glow-worm before the sun. All manner of sins and blasphemies are blotted out by such an expiation, as the shades of night are abolished by the light of day. Every sinner washed in this blood must be whiter than the unsoiled wool, whiter than the virgin snows. Every sinner clothed in this righteousness, must be unblameable and unreprieveable, even before the eye of Omniscience itself.

For this, therefore, bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my brethren; and let every thing that hath a being praise his unutterable grace. For *behold! GOD is our salvation.* GOD himself is made flesh, and become our sacrifice, our sin-offering, our justifying righteousness: *therefore will we trust, and not be afraid**; trust in this infinitely sufficient SAVIOUR; and not be afraid of death or hell, of any enemy or any evil.—But
this

“ with thousands of silver and gold; introduces him to court, and recommends him to the royal favour; procures his advancement to the highest honours, and puts him in possession of the grandest preferments. “ Where now is the disgrace of his imprisonment? and where are the distresses of his insolvent state?

“ Such is the case with regard to us sinners, and our most gracious REDEEMER. He has paid inconceivably more than we either did or could possibly owe. Being GOD, the true GOD, the infinite and eternal GOD, his payment exceeds our debt, as much as the waters of the great deep exceed the small drop of a bucket.—Doubt not, therefore, poor sinner, that hast for refuge to this all-glorious SAVIOUR; doubt not but thy sins, though more virulent than all plagues, are done away; and death, though he be the king of terrors, is abolished: this abolished, and those done away, before *such* grace and merit; even as a spark of fire is extinguished, when plunged into the abysses of the sea.”—For, indeed, compared with a *divine* person, and an *infinite* righteousness, whatever guilt you have contracted, whatever thing you can name, is, as our devout orator speaks, *σανις μικρα προς πελαγος απειρον*, no more than a scanty drop compared with the boundless ocean. Vid. Chrysostr. in loc.

* Isa. xii. 2.

this leads me to apply the whole: which I shall do by way of

Examination,
Direction,
Exhortation,
Consolation.

I. By way of *examination*. *Examine your own selves*, says the apostle †. Have *you* kept the passover? have *you* sprinkled the blood?—Many, perhaps, will be ready to answer, “We have.”—But beware, my friends, lest ye deceive your own souls. Let me give you a touchstone, whereby you may try your spirit, and pronounce aright concerning your state.

Have you been convinced of your *great sinfulness*? of your sinful nature and your sinful practice? Have you been made sensible, that hell, the deepest hell, is your deserved portion? is what you deserve for any transgression—for every transgression—how much more for the many thousands—how much more for the many millions—how much more for the numberless multitude of your provocations? If you have never been convinced of these most alarming, but certain truths; if you have never been touched with a sense of your extreme guilt, and undone state; I fear, you are settled upon your lees, you are in the dead sleep of sin. You are not so much as awakened; much less have you applied CHRIST.

Again; have you been made to see, that *nothing but CHRIST* and his precious blood, *nothing but CHRIST*
and

† 2 Cor. xiii. 5,

and his divine righteousness, can be your security from vengeance? have you been convinced, that thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil, could never expiate the least of your iniquities? that no tears, no confessions, no amendment, nothing but the sacrifice of the body of CHRIST, can make your peace with GOD? If you have not been taught the absolute insufficiency of every remedy, save only the meritorious sufferings of JESUS CHRIST; you have not seen him, neither known him; much less is his blood sprinkled upon your conscience.

Once more; have you a supreme, a *matchless esteem* for CHRIST? is CHRIST and his great salvation the thing that you long for? is he to your souls the pearl of great price? do you account all things but loss, that you may win CHRIST, and be found in him? If this is not the state of your soul, I dare not flatter you with vain hopes: I must not buoy you up with ungrounded imaginations. You are not, as yet, in your hiding-place; neither have you fled to your strong-hold. All the curses of the divine law stand charged and pointed full against you. You have no security from being hurt by the first death, nor from being irrecoverably ruined by the second death. If judgments should come upon a sinful and backsliding people, you have no defence; there is no wall of fire around you. You must therefore expect to fall among those that fall; and, falling by the sword, may immediately drop into hell.

Can you hear this, and be unconcerned? can you listen to this warning, more awful than the voice of ten thousand thunders, and not start from your insensibility?

ty? are you not looking around, and ready to cry out,
 “ What then shall I do to be safe in the day of evil?”
 —O! that this enquiry came from the very bottom of
 your hearts. I should then proceed, with great cheer-
 fulness, to

2. A word of *direction*.—Fly to CHRIST, alarmed
 sinners. Come under the covert of his blood. Appro-
 priate the blessed JESUS; look upon him and his me-
 rit as your own. Thus sprinkle his blood: sprinkle it
 upon your lintel and door-posts; upon all you are, up-
 on all you have, and all you do: upon your consciences,
 that they may be purged; upon your souls, that they
 may be sanctified; upon your works, that they may be
 accepted.—Say, every one for himself, “ I am a poor,
 “ guilty, helpless creature: but in JESUS CHRIST,
 “ who is full of grace and truth, *I have righteousness*
 “ *and strength**.—I am a poor, polluted, loathsome
 “ creature: but JESUS CHRIST, who is the image of
 “ the invisible GOD, and the brightness of his Father’s
 “ glory, has *loved me, and washed me from my filthi-*
 “ *ness in his own blood* †.—I am by nature a perverse
 “ depraved creature; and, by evil practice, a lost dam-
 “ nable sinner: but JESUS CHRIST, who made the
 “ worlds; JESUS CHRIST, whom heaven and earth
 “ adore; even JESUS CHRIST himself, came from the
 “ mansions of bliss, on purpose *to seek me, to save me* ‡;
 “ to give himself for me.—And how can I perish, who
 “ have such a ransom? how can I be undone, who
 “ have such a repairer of my breaches? how can I come
 “ into condemnation, who have the blood, not of ten
 “ thousand

* Isa. xlv. 24.

† Rev. i. 5.

‡ Mat. xviii. 11.

“ thousand sacrifices; the merit, not of ten thousand
 “ angels; but the blood and merit of JEHOVAH him-
 “ self, for my propitiation?”

Should you say, “ Have I a warrant for such a
 “ trust?”—You have the best of warrants, our LORD’s
 express *permission*; *whosoever will, let him take the wa-
 ter of life freely**. It is not said, this or that person
 only, but *whosoever*; including you and me; excluding
 no individual man or woman.—It is not said, whoe-
 ver is worthy, but whosoever is *willing*. *Wilt thou be
 made whole?* was our LORD’s question to the impotent
 man at the pool of Bethesda. *Wilt thou, all terms and
 conditions apart, inherit grace and glory?* is his most
 benevolent address to sinful men, in all ages.—*Let him
 take the water of life*; let him receive ME and my righ-
 teousness; let him look upon all that I have done and
 suffered, as done and suffered for *his* redemption. This
 will administer peace of conscience, and joy in the
 HOLY GHOST: this will produce love of GOD, and
 alacrity of obedience; in which things the true *life* of
 the soul consists.—All these blessings are to be received
freely, without money and without price: that is,
 without any good works, any good qualities, or any
 preparatory requisites whatever: to be received, as the
 infinitely rich gift of divine grace, vouchsafed even to
 the *lost*—the *guilty*—the *undone*.

You have our LORD’s most generous *invitation*;
come unto ME. And whom does he call? The righte-
 ous? No. The excellent? Quite the reverse. He
 calls sinners; miserable sinners; even the most mis-
 erable

* Rev. xxii. 17.

rable of sinners: those who are *weary and heavy laden*; overwhelmed with iniquities; bowed down to the very brink of hell, and ready to think, "There is no hope for them." Yet them he encourages; them he invites; to them he declares, *I will give you rest* *; rest in the enjoyment of peace with GOD, and peace in your own consciences.—Observe and admire the riches of your REDEEMER's grace. He says not, Ye are vile wretches; polluted by sin, and enslaved to the devil; therefore keep at a distance; but, *therefore come*. Come, and be cleansed by my blood; come, and be made free by my SPIRIT.—He says not, Furnish yourselves with this, or that, or the other recommending accomplishment; but only come: come just as you are; poor, undone, guilty creatures. Yea, come to ME for pardon and recovery; to ME, who have given my life, myself, my all, for your ransom.

Should you still question, whether these inestimable blessings are free for you? Remember, brethren, they are free for *sinners*. Is this your character? Then they are as free for *your* acceptance, as for any person's in the world. *To us eternal life is given* †; not us who had deserved it by our goodness, but us who had forfeited it by our sins.—*To you is preached the forgiveness of sins* ‡; not you whose transgressions were inconsiderable, but you whose iniquities were more in number than the hairs of your head.—Even to you, who are the lost and perishing sinners of Adam's family, *is the word of this salvation sent* **. And, by a commission from GOD, we publish it; that, as sinners,

you

* Mat. xi. 28. † 1 John v. 11. ‡ Acts xiii. 38. ** Acts xiii. 26.

you may receive it; that receiving it, you may commence believers; and *believing, may have life through his name* *.

Some, perhaps, will be inclined to debate; “Is this so extraordinary a matter? will this exercise of *believing* do such great things for us, or put us in possession of such singular blessings?”—Moses might have formed the same scruple with regard to the *sprinkling of blood*. Will this seemingly insignificant circumstance be such an extraordinary safeguard to us? will this preserve us from the impending blow, more effectually than the labours of the engineer, or the shield and spear of the warrior?—But Moses consulted not with flesh and blood; Moses rejected all such carnal reasonings. *By faith* he and his people kept the passover, and were made partakers of the temporal salvation. *By faith* may you and I receive CHRIST! So shall we be partakers of pardon and eternal salvation.

By believing the promise of GOD, and by trusting in the person of CHRIST, we are united to the LORD JESUS †; so as to have a real interest in his blood and righteousness. Being united to CHRIST, our sins are done away, by virtue of his infinitely precious atonement; and eternal life becomes ours, on account of his everlasting righteousness.—Whoever thus believes, believes merely as a sinner, not upon the supposition of any goodness in himself, but upon the sole warrant of GOD’s promise, in the infallible word of the gospel. Such a person shall not be ashamed of his belief; shall

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never

* John xx. 31.

† Eph. iii. 17.

never be disappointed of his hope; *according to his faith shall it be unto him* *.

Come then, fellow sinners; believe the record of heaven. Set to your seal, that GOD is true. Honour his word, which cannot lie; honour his grace, which is absolutely free; honour his dear SON, who has obtained eternal redemption for such unworthy creatures as you and I. What shall hinder you?—But this leads me to

3. A word of *exhortation*. I say then, what shall hinder you? what shall withhold you, a single moment, from believing? *since all things are ready* † in CHRIST JESUS. The great propitiation is made by him; the perfect obedience is performed by him; all the conditions of the new covenant are fulfilled by him. Come then, and partake of the heavenly blessings; as you partake of a marriage feast, when the entertainment is all prepared, and the bridegroom bids you welcome.

Fain would I prevail in this most important address. LORD, make bare thy arm; incline their hearts; *make them willing in the day of thy power* ‡.—My dear friends, if you turn away from such invitations, you are ruined to eternity: misery awaits you here, and damnation hereafter. Suffer me then to be importunate. Refuse not him that calleth you by my mouth; that bids you trust, and not be afraid; that offereth himself, with all his fulness, to you.—Why are you backward? why slow of heart to believe? why do you stand at a distance from the all-gracious JESUS?

Is

* Mat. ix. 29. † Mat. xxii. 4. ‡ Psal. cx. 3.

Is it because you are guilty wretches? Then he publishes the act of indemnity to you: *I, even I, am he that blotteth out your transgressions, for mine own sake* *.—Is it because you are polluted creatures; lothsome in your own eyes, and much more lothsome in the eye of infinite Purity? Then hear the word of the HOLY ONE: *I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean. From all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you* †.—Is it because your sins are more numerous, and more heinous than the sins of others? Be they ever so numerous, or ever so aggravated, thus saith the GOD of immensely rich grace in CHRIST; *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool* ‡.

Are you still objecting, “I am weak; I have no strength; I cannot believe?”—Look then to a promising GOD; that he may help your unbelief; that he may fulfil in you all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power. For he who is truth itself hath said, *Your GOD will come and save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped: the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing* **.—Has the LORD given you a desire to believe in his dear SON? doubt not but he will also give you the power. Does GOD the LORD bring to the birth, and not give strength to bring forth? that be far from Him! the suspicion be far from us! He has, in unspeakable mer-

* Isa. xliii. 25. † Ezek. xxxvi. 25. ‡ Isa. i. 18. ** Isa. xxxv. 4, 5, 6.

cy, appointed his blessed SPIRIT for this purpose. The HOLY GHOST, the comforter, attendeth continually on this very thing; to testify of CHRIST, and to reveal CHRIST in our sinful souls; enabling us to discern the all-sufficiency of CHRIST, to discern our right to make use of CHRIST, and to receive CHRIST as our own—*our own* GOD and SAVIOUR.

Be it then your daily endeavour, your continual business, to believe; firmly, confidently, assuredly to believe in JESUS CHRIST; as the great and glorious REDEEMER, in whom *you* have pardon, *you* have righteousness and eternal life. Thus exercise yourselves unto godliness, and *GOD will help you; GOD will strengthen you; yea, GOD will uphold you with the right hand of his righteousness.*—Thus exercise yourselves unto godliness, depending on the divine faithfulness, proceeding upon the divine warrant, in obedience to the divine command, which expressly says, *Believe in the LORD your GOD, so shall ye be established: believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper * : believe in his dear SON, so shall ye be saved †.*

Pharaoh said to Joseph, *Now thou art commanded, this do ‡.* Let me also say to my hearers, Now ye are allowed, invited, commanded to believe in the SON of GOD, this do. 'Tis your grand concern; the one thing needful. Without this nothing will profit you. Therefore I repeat my exhortation: therefore I am so urgent: therefore I cannot dismiss the subject, without beseeching the FATHER of mercies to command a blessing upon the word; that you may indeed *believe ** unto*
righteousness,

* 2 Chron. xx. 30. † Acts. xvi. 31. ‡ Gen. xlv. 19. ** Rom. x. 10.

righteousness, unto life, unto salvation. Thus will you glorify the ineffable goodness of GOD, and the inestimable merit of CHRIST: thus will you find a sure, a full, an incomparably rich provision made for your safety: and thus will you most effectually comply with that tender and gracious invitation of the LORD your GOD; *Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For behold! the LORD cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity**.

And what will ye do, when the LORD cometh forth to punish, if you are not received into the hiding-place? — What will ye do, ye men of *sober* and *decent* conversation; who have nothing but an outward regularity, and some customary conformity to religious worship? These, though in their place valuable, yet are no security. They are only the outworks, not your fortification, nor your citadel. When the righteous Judge *shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them that obey not the gospel †*; these, without the blood of sprinkling, will be but as a withered leaf amidst the inextinguishable burning.

What will ye do, ye men of *wealth* and large possessions? *Will riches profit you in the day of wrath ‡?* will riches protect you in the day of the LORD's controversy? Alas! they will mark you out for a prey, and serve only to lure the vultures. If riches have been your idol; hoarded up in your coffers, or lavished out upon yourselves; they will, when the day of reckon-

ing

* Isa. xxvi. 20, 21.

† 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.

‡ Prov. xi. 4.

ing comes, be like the garment of pitch and brimstone, put upon the criminal condemned to the flames.

What will ye do, ye *mighty men* of valour? If the LORD turn his hand upon you, your heart shall fail, and your knees be feeble; your arm shall lose its strength, and your sword shall lose its edge. Your fleets and armies *shall be as tow*, and the commanders of them *as a spark; and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them**.—If you are not sheltered and secured by *this* blood, what will ye do, when the shout of the archangel is made, and the trump of GOD is heard? Undaunted as you now seem, you will then, in an agony of despair, *call upon rocks to fall upon you, and mountains to cover you* †.

What will ye do, ye *voluptuous* men, and ye *careless* women? ye that eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall? ye that drink wine in bowls, and anoint yourselves with the chief ointments? Ah! what will ye do, when *the whole land*, for the universal degeneracy of its inhabitants, for their contempt of CHRIST, and neglect of grace, *shall become brimstone, and salt, and burning;—insomuch that it shall not be sown, nor bear, nor any grafs grow thereon* ‡? Much more may I ask, what will ye do, when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, when the whole earth, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up?

What will ye do, people of *all* ranks and conditions, when *mischief shall come upon mischief, and rumour shall be*

* Isa. i. 31. † Rev. vi. 16. ‡ Deut. xxix. 23.

be upon rumour*? when your houses shall be laid in heaps, and your streets be made a place of graves? when your cities, that were full of inhabitants, shall be solitary; and not a voice heard amidst them, but sighs of the disconsolate, and groans of the dying? when your children shall be slaughtered in one place; your parents in another; and the "slain shall ly behind the slayer, " as the sheaves † behind the reaper, in the the time of "harvest?"—But, above all, what will ye do, when the great white throne is erected; when the earth and the heavens flee away from the face of Him that sitteth thereon; and the dead, both small and great, stand before GOD to be judged? Without the blood of sprinkling, where can you be safe? how will you appear? what will you do?—Whereas, if CHRIST and his blood are yours, all is yours. You have nothing to fear, in time or eternity. "O! well is it with you, and happy shall "you be." But this reminds me of adding a word

4. By way of *consolation*.—Possibly you may be ready to enquire, "What consolation will this administer, amidst the presages, or under the approach, of national calamities?"—Very great. *Fear not*, says the LORD, *for I have redeemed thee †*. Redemption by CHRIST is a preservative from all terror, and an antidote against every evil. This causes the serene breast, and the lightsome heart. Hence comes calmness of conscience, *quietness and assurance for ever*. Therefore says the prophet, *This man shall be our peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land*. The blood and righteousness of our incarnate GOD shall be the sovereign support

* Ezek. vii. 26.

† Jer. ix. 22.

‡ Isa. xliii. 1.

support of our souls, even when the enemy invades our territories, and preys upon the vitals of our country: yea, when he *treads upon our palaces* *; not only demolishes our dwelling-houses, but lays our royal edifices in the dust, and makes us feel all the grievousness of war.

Further; when this blood is sprinkled, sin is done away, and GOD is appeased. His promises are your portion, and his arm is your defence. For the comfort of such people it is written; *He shall deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee. In famine, he shall redeem thee from death; and in war, from the power of the sword. Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue; neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction, when it cometh* †. In the hands of this reconciled and faithful CREATOR, this unwearied and almighty DELIVERER, how safely may you deposit yourselves and your families, your possessions and your all!

Be not then discouraged, ye followers of CHRIST, though troublous times should come. All creatures, and all events, are under the controul of your heavenly FATHER. If he has any further occasion for your service, or sees it conducive to your good, he will preserve you amidst the greatest dangers. He can draw a curtain of concealment over you, as he did over David in the cave ‡. He can plant an invisible guard around you, as he did around Elisha in Dothan **. He can turn the hearts of your adversaries, and make even the enemy and the avenger to be at peace with you; as he did

* Mic. v. 5. † Job v. 19, 20, 21. ‡ 1 Sam, xxiv. 3. ** 2 Kings vi. 17.

did in the case of Jacob and his enraged brother Esau. — Or, if you fall in the common calamity, *your latter end shall be peace*; your inheritance is unalienable, and *your joy no man taketh from you*. Your best things, your eternal interests, are secure, inviolably secure, being hid with *CHRIST in GOD* *.

Happy, unspeakably blessed and happy the people, on whom this blood is sprinkled! If vindictive visitations come upon the land, this may screen and protect their persons; like the mark, which the man clothed with linen set on the forehead of GOD's chosen ones †; or like the line of scarlet thread, which Rahab the harlot bound to the window of her house ‡. However, by this blood of reconciliation, all afflictions shall be disarmed, and every evil unstung. Nay, *all things*, not in prosperity only, but in adversity likewise, *shall work together for good* **. Death, even death, is vanquished for them, and become their gain. And the last judgment is no longer the object of their dread, but their unspeakable privilege. Being justified by this blood, they may even *glory in tribulation, and rejoice in hope*, in sure and steadfast hope of the glory of GOD ††.

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Will

* Col. iii. 3.

† Ezek. ix. 6.

‡ Josh. ii. 18, 19.

** Rom. viii. 28. This seems to be the meaning of the HOLY GHOST, in the passage lately quoted from Job. *In six*, in manifold and various troubles GOD shall deliver thee. Or, if he suffer thee to be involved in seven, there shall no evil, no penal evil, touch thee. His gracious presence shall be more than deliverance. Thou shalt not feel *anguish*, but enjoy *comfort*: thou shalt not suffer *harm*, but receive *benefit*. Though the flames of tribulation kindle all around, they shall not consume thee; but (like the fire which surrounded the three Hebrew confessors) shall only loose thy bonds, and set thee free; set thy affections free from a troublesome world, or set thy soul free from a prison of clay.

†† Rom. vi. 1, 2, 3.

Will ye not then, brethren, ardently join with me ?
while I lift my voice to GOD in the heavens, and say,
“ Awake, awake, O arm of the LORD ; let this be a
“ day of thy power, and a day of our redemption.
“ Behold, O GOD our SAVIOUR, and look upon
“ thy various congregations. See what a gathering of
“ the people there is in thy courts ; let there be as great
“ a gathering of souls to thy blessed self. Fulfil the
“ prophecy, almighty SHILOH ! Let sinners, won
“ by the discovery of thy grace, fly unto thee as a
“ cloud ; and take shelter in thy wounds, as the doves
“ in their windows ! that they may rest in the day of
“ trouble ; and, when time shall be no more, may en-
“ ter into that everlasting rest, which remaineth for the
“ people of GOD.” *Amen!*

S E R M O N III.

The Way of Holiness.

E Z E K. xviii. 27.

When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.

MANY of my hearers, I observe, are husbandmen; and the season, if I mistake not, is the season of *seed-time*. I will suppose a person, unskilled in your business, brethren, taking notice of your work. Perhaps he goes home, and says—"What strange inconsiderate creatures have I seen in the field! I saw them, instead of laying up their corn in the garner, throwing it away by handfuls. Nay, they even buried it in the ground, and left it to putrefy under the clods. Is this the way to improve their stock, and increase their substance? is this the way to get gain, and provide for their families?"

Should any one make such a reflexion on your conduct, you have an answer ready. The same answer, only with an alteration of circumstances, will be equally proper for your preacher. It is true, his usual subjects are, the absolutely free grace of GOD, and the immensely rich merits of CHRIST; the infinite atone-

ment, and everlasting righteousness of the REDEEMER. But because he generally enlarges upon these doctrines, is he therefore throwing away his words? does he neglect the cause, or disregard the interests of holiness? Far from it. He is sowing the seed of vital holiness; without which seed, holiness will never flourish in your hearts, will never bring forth fruit in your lives; any more than your plowed lands would produce a crop of corn, without receiving the appointed grain. It is *through the knowledge of our adorable SAVIOUR, as calling us to glory and virtue, that we have all things pertaining unto life and godliness**; unto the enjoyment of life eternal, and the practice of true godliness.

To convince you that this is my aim, I have chosen a text full to the purpose; and not unsuitable to the occasion of our present assembly. *When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.*

The words naturally divide themselves into the following particulars;

- I. What the wicked man should turn *from—wickedness.*
- II. What he should turn *to—to do that which is lawful and right.*
- III. What will be the *effect* of such turning—*he shall save his soul alive.*

May CHRIST JESUS, the head of his church, and the wonderful counsellor, enable us to open these truths;

* 2 Pet. i. 3.

truths; to add a word of lively application; and to receive godly edifying from the whole!

I. What the wicked man should turn *from*—wickedness. Here perhaps you expect that I should mention several sorts of wickedness; should display the detestable nature and destructive consequences of each; and deter you, by such considerations, from the commission of them all; deter you from lying and defrauding, from cursing and swearing, from drunkenness and uncleanness, from a spiteful temper and a backbiting tongue. These are horrid evils. On account of these the land mourns. These bring the vengeance of GOD on a person, and on a people*. If I could speak in thunder, I could never inveigh too loudly against these vices. “Ye that go on in such iniquities, ye are scattering
“ *brimstone upon your habitations* †; ye are *heaping up*
“ *wrath against the day of wrath* ‡. *How can ye escape*
“ *the damnation of hell* **?”

But let me forbear invectives. Let me reason with you in the spirit of mildness.—I will suppose you possessed of a pleasant garden. In some favourite bed, many weeds spring up, alluring to the eye, but full of deadly poison. Will you order your gardener, to crop off the *leaves*, or to pluck up the *roots*?—To pluck up the roots, most certainly. Because, if he does the former only, it will avail but little; it will be no better than labour lost: whereas, if he does the latter, he will effectually rid your ground of the pernicious incumbrance.—Thus would I act. Wickedness is this *pernicious* weed. It is full of deadly poison; it pollutes your souls, and will be the bane of your happiness. I

would

* Col. iii. 6. † Job xviii. 15. ‡ Rom. ii. 5. ** Mat. xxiii. 33.

would not therefore be content with using the pruning knife, and cutting off the shoots: but I would take the spade, and level my blow at the root.

I would fain have you turn, not partially and superficially, but *thoroughly* and *habitually*—not from some only, but from *all* wickedness—and not barely from the practice, but even from the *love* of it, and any *fondness* for it—This will never be accomplished unless you turn

From a *thoughtless* }
 From a *prayerless* } state.
 From an *insensible* }

1. From a *thoughtless* state.—You are made for eternity; you are immortal beings. You must dwell either with GOD in heaven, or with devils in hell; and that to endless, endless ages. You know not how soon you may be summoned into the invisible and eternal world; the following night, for aught you can tell; or before the present hour is expired. Do you seriously consider, to which of these everlasting abodes you are approaching? for which of these unchangeable conditions you are meet?

Except a man be born again, says our LORD, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven *. This is the fixed determination of the righteous judge. You all hope for heaven; and I humbly beseech the LORD that you may not be disappointed of your hope. But do you diligently enquire, whether you have experienced this new birth? is there a spiritual change wrought in your souls? are your affections taken off from vanity, and fixed on the infinitely amiable GOD? is your memo-
 ry

* John iii. 3.

ry filled with the truths of the gospel, and are your desires rising to things above? To expect the blessedness of heaven, and have no concern about this renewal of your nature, is to contemn the counsels of CHRIST, and to trifle with his unalterable decree.

Without holiness no man shall see the LORD *. This is the standing rule for our present conduct, and indispensibly necessary for our future happiness. You may be civil and decent in your behaviour; you may attend the place of divine worship, and pass for reputable persons: yet, unless you are holy in your hearts, and holy in your conversation, you cannot enter into GOD's blissful presence. To be holy is to *put on CHRIST* †; to resemble CHRIST, in your spirit and carriage, as one man resembles another, when he puts on his dress, or imitates his manners. Do you look to CHRIST as your pattern; follow CHRIST as your guide; and, in the general course of your life, walk as CHRIST walked?—Perhaps you have never so much as aimed at this; never so much as seriously considered eternity, regeneration, and a conformity to CHRIST. These things are seldom, if ever in your thoughts: then be assured you are far from holiness: you are not turned from your evil way; no, nor so much as *beginning* to turn.

Say not, “ This duty of serious consideration is a slight
“ matter. If I had been guilty of injustice or perjury; if
“ I had committed adultery or murder; these indeed
“ were heinous crimes: whereas, the omission which
“ you have insisted on is but a small offence.”—*Small
offence!* Presume not to think so. However such guilt

may

* Heb. xii. 14. † Rom. xiii. 14.

may appear little in your view, or sit easy upon your conscience, it is heinous enough to make heaven and earth amazed. For *thus saith the LORD; Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people DO NOT CONSIDER* *. To say the truth, an inconsiderate careless life is an unintermitted course of sin: it is one continued act of rebellion against GOD.—It opposes his compassionate wish; *O that they were wise! that they understood this! that they would consider their latter end* †! —It disobeyes his positive command; *Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the supreme ruler of the world, consider your ways* †.—It defeats the design of his holy word, and would make the blood of his SON to be of none effect.

2. Turn from a *prayerless* state. Alas! how many of those whom we call Christians are strangers to prayer! How many *servants* rise to their work, and never bend a knee before their MASTER in heaven! how many *masters* set their servants an ungodly example; enter upon the affairs of the day, without imploring the GOD of all grace, either to prosper their business, or to sanctify their souls! How many *parents* know not what it is to make earnest supplications for the conversion and salvation of their children! and how many *children* are as ignorant of the nature, the necessity, the advantages of prayer, “as the wild ass's colt **!”

Shall

* Isa. i. 2, 3. † Deut. xxxii. 29. † Hag. i. 5, 7. ** Job xi. 12.

Shall I reckon *these* good people? are these turned to their GOD? No; they are despisers of the most HIGH; they cast contempt upon his majesty. The language of their practice is, "Depart from us. Omnipotent as thou art, we have no need of thee: no need of thy SPIRIT, to make intercession *in* us; no need of thy SON to make intercession *for* us."—Most justly therefore is it reckoned by Eliphaz, as part of a wicked and abandoned character, *Thou restrainest prayer before GOD* *. Nay, it is mentioned by the psalmist as the finishing part, that which seals up the soul under the dominion of iniquity; and shuts out all reasonable hope of a reformation: *they are corrupt; they do abominable works*; and there is no prospect of their doing otherwise, since *they call not upon the LORD* †.

Religious, yet neglect prayer! Impossible. Can a man live without food? can he breathe without air? No more can you withstand temptation, or exercise godliness, unless you *watch unto prayer* ‡.—The neglect of prayer is not only sinful in itself, but the sure sign of an un sanctified heart, and the wide inlet to every unrighteous practice. "Shew me a prayerless person," said one, "and I will shew you a graceless person."—Turn then, sinners, turn, without delay, to a habit of prayer; of secret, serious, earnest prayer: otherwise, you cannot expect that the wrath of GOD should be turned away from you. No; when he whets his glittering sword, and his hand takes hold on judgment, *you* are the persons that cause the indignation; *you* are the persons who have reason to tremble at the stroke. For

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thus

* Job. xv. 4.

† Psalm. xiv. 4.

‡ Eph. vi. 18.

thus it is written in that venerable book, which is a transcript of the divine will, and the rule of the divine procedure; *Pour out thy fury upon the heathen, that know thee not; pour out thy fury upon the families that call not on thy name* *.

3. Turn from your *insensible* state.—Be sensible of your guilt, your misery, your ruin. Thoughtless and prayerless people, you are sinners before the GOD of heaven; you are the children of his wrath; you are the objects of his vengeance; condemned and accursed by his holy word. O! may the LORD of all power rend the vail from your understandings, and shew you your perilous, your dreadfully perilous condition.

If, while I am speaking, the *earth* should *reel* to and fro, and be in strong convulsions under your feet; if it should open its horrid jaws, and gape frightfully wide to devour you; not one in the assembly but would be greatly alarmed. How then can you be careless and unconcerned, when hell from beneath is opening her mouth, to swallow you up in endless perdition?—If this building was *rocking* over your heads, and tottering on every side; if the beams were bursting, and the walls cleaving; you would be struck with astonishment and horror. And how is it that you are under no apprehensions, when the indignation of an almighty GOD is ready to fall upon you? which, far more insupportable than the fall of loaded roofs, or ponderous millstones, must even grind you to powder.—If the French were landed, and an army of desperate Papists ravaging the nation; if you were pursued, or surrounded, by those
barbarous

* Jer. x. 25.

barbarous enemies of your religion and country; if their swords, reeking with British blood, were now at your throats; you would tremble for your lives. And will you not feel some concern for your souls, when the sword of Omnipotence is sharpened to cut you in pieces? when, for aught you know, it may be already unsheathed; may have received a commission to give the fatal blow; and, before another hour passes, may actually strike.—If the late distemper among the cattle should turn to a *plague* among men; if it should sweep away thousands and ten thousands to an untimely grave; if you should see multitudes of your neighbours *sickening, dropping, dying* on every side; certainly you would be terrified. How then can you remain unimpressed, when the curse * of GOD is approaching you? when the curse of GOD is hovering over you? when the curse of GOD is ready to be poured out upon you; and turn all your delights into weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth?

Behold then sinners, inconsiderate and insensible sinners, you are this day impleaded at GOD's bar: you are found guilty before the JUDGE of the world: you are upon the very brink of everlasting destruction.—Not the earth, but *hell*, is opening her mouth to devour you: not the stones and timber of your houses, but the *vengeance* of the most HIGH, is rushing down upon you. The sword, not of an enraged adversary, but of GOD's most *tremendous* displeasure is drawn, perhaps stretched out to destroy you: the pestilence, or what is infinitely more to be dreaded than the pestilence that walketh in

* Gal. iii. 10.

darkness, the *curse* of GOD is ready to break forth upon you.—And will not these terrors awaken you, alarm you, persuade you *?—Thou GOD of the world, and GOD of our souls, let not thy judgments and thy threatenings go forth in vain!

I hope some of you are inclined to ask—How or to what should we be persuaded? If so, my second particular will suggest the proper answer.

II. What the wicked man should *turn to*?—*To do that which is lawful and right*: to repent of sin, and love GOD; to be pure in heart, and holy in all manner of conversation. This is implied in the exhortation of the text; this is the indispensable duty of all men; and to promote this is the continual aim of our ministry.

But you are guilty, ruined, impotent creatures.—*Guilty*, and can you, under a load of trespasses, arise and do your LORD's will?—*Ruined*, and can you, amidst such discouraging circumstances, have any heart to set about the work of reformation?—*Impotent*, and can you, under the most deplorable weakness, perform the most difficult of all services?—No: you must first be relieved and enabled, before you can be sufficient for these things. Like the woman bowed down with a spirit of infirmity, or like the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, you must receive restoration and strength from GOD your SAVIOUR. Turn then to CHRIST, who says by his prophet, *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in ME is thy help* †.

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* 2 Cor. v. 11. † Hof. xiii. 9.

If you should enquire, What shall I find in CHRIST? — All that you can want; all that you can wish: incomparably more than I am able to express. For *it hath pleased the FATHER, that in CHRIST should all fulness dwell †.*

Because you are *guilty*, and have a burden of iniquity on your souls, HE is *the lamb of GOD, that taketh away the sin of the world **: a lamb of GOD's own appointing; a lamb of infinite excellence and dignity; to whom nothing is equal, nothing comparable. This lamb of GOD has shed his blood for sinners; has suffered death for sinners; yea, has died in their stead, and endured all that vengeance which they have deserved. In this most wonderful and perfect manner has he obtained their pardon! pardon, not of some only, but of all sins; be they ever so numerous, or ever so heinous, it maketh no difference with him. An infinite SAVIOUR taketh away millions, unnumbered millions of the most abominable iniquities, with as much ease as he expiates a single offence, or the smallest fault. *He blot-teth out transgressions, aggravated transgressions, innumerable transgressions, as a cloud †*; as easily and as compleatly as the wind sweeps away a floating cloud from the face of the sky. Delivered from this load of guilt, you will be fitted to *walk in the way of GOD's commandments, and not be weary; yea, to run, and not faint **.*

Because you are *ruined*, and have nothing that may recommend you to the most high GOD, CHRIST has brought

† Col. i. 12.

* John i. 29.

† Isa. xlii. 22.

** Isa. xli. 31.

brought in a righteousness—a complete righteousness—a divine righteousness. Consider the unspotted purity of his nature, and the unflinching obedience of his life; consider his fervent charity to man, and his patient resignation to GOD; consider all his exalted virtues, and all his exemplary actions; these, all these, in their utmost perfection, are not only for the imitation, but for the justification also, of such sinners as you and I. *His name is JEHOVAH*, which speaks incomprehensible grandeur in him; *JEHOVAH our righteousness* *, which speaks unutterable comfort to us. In this righteousness we may be fully accepted, and entitled to life eternal. Of this we may make our boast, and say, *In the LORD have I righteousness* †; I, a transgressor, have a real righteousness; I, a defective creature, have a consummate righteousness; I, a frail relapsing Christian, have an invariable and everlasting righteousness. O! what a treasure is this! what an unspeakable gift is this! Is there a cordial that can revive our spirits, is there a motive that can animate us to duty, like justification thro' IMMANUEL's righteousness?—Blessed LORD! this makes thy yoke easy, and thy burden light.

Because you are weak and *disabled*, CHRIST has the *residue* of the SPIRIT †; the *fulness* of the SPIRIT **; the *seven SPIRITS* of GOD are before his throne ††. The HOLY GHOST, in all his operations, and with all his graces, CHRIST sends to whomsoever he pleases ††. —He gave this inestimable blessing to Saul the persecutor and blasphemer: he gave this inestimable blessing

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* Jer. xxiii. 6. † Isa. xlv. 24. † Mal. ii. 15. ** Col. i. 19.
 †† Rev. i. 4. †† John xvi. 7.

to many of his murderers and crucifiers: he still confers the heavenly gift on his enemies; *yea, on the rebellious also* *. And *the promise*, the free gracious promise, is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the LORD our GOD, by the preaching of his gospel, shall call †.

How salutary and beneficial are the effects of this gift! our LORD himself, who best knew, has admirably shewn. *He that believeth on ME, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water* ‡. This spake he of the SPIRIT, which every one that turns to him, and believes on him, shall receive. Observe some beautiful and copious river; how it exhilarates the country, and fructifies the soil through which it passes; bestows a thousand conveniencies, and gives birth to a thousand delights, where-ever it takes its winding course. So the COMFORTER dwelling in the heart, gives such charming views of CHRIST and his unsearchable riches, as gladden the conscience, and make us truly happy. Hence, as from an inexhaustible source, true holiness flows, and every spiritual good. This disposes us to love our neighbour: this teaches us to be meek in spirit: and this will raise our desires far above earthly, sensual, transitory things; even as David's thoughts were raised far above the shepherd's scrip, when he sat exalted on the throne of Israel.

Under the influence of this divine SPIRIT, you will say, "CHRIST has taken away the execrable filth of
" my sins; and shall I wallow in the mire of iniquity
" again?—CHRIST has delivered me from the pit of
" everlasting

* Psalm lxxviii. 18.

† Acts ii. 39.

‡ John vii. 38.

“ everlasting destruction ; and shall I leap into those
 “ unquenchable flames, from which, as a brand, I have
 “ been snatched?—In my adorable REDEEMER, I
 “ have a perfect righteousness, and am completely justi-
 “ fied ; and shall I not endeavour to walk worthy of
 “ such favours ; to shew my gratitude for such benefi-
 “ cence, by bringing forth the fruits of righteousness
 “ in all my conversation ?”

Yes, brethren ; when you are turned to CHRIST, to receive his atonement, to rely on his righteousness, to be filled with his SPIRIT ; it will be with your soul as it is with the *earth*, when it is turned to the *sun*. The earth, you see, is now barren and unfruitful, because it has been very much withdrawn from the enlivening beams of the sun. Erelong it will be replaced under the full influences of that fountain of light and heat. Then what a change will take place ! how will the flowers appear on the ground ! how will the leaves adorn the trees ! how will the singing of birds be heard in our land ! So shall holiness and a heavenly temper be produced in your souls ; so shall obedience, with all the fruits of godliness, flourish in your lives ; when this *sun of righteousness* manifests himself in your hearts, makes you partakers of his salvation, and thus *arises upon you with healing under his wings* *.

Should any one doubt, whether *this* is the way to do that which is lawful and right ; I ask—Is it not a *pleasing* way ? such as we should wish for ; such as we should prefer above all others ; and such as will render our LORD’s service perfect freedom ?—Is it not a *rational* way ?

* Mal. iv. 2.

way? apparently adapted to engage the heart, to strengthen the hand, and thereby to fit the whole man for every good work?

Besides; is it not the way appointed by GOD?— Would we “earnestly *repent*, and be heartily sorry for “all our misdoings?” The wisdom of GOD assures us, this sorrow must arise from believing views of CHRIST; from *looking unto him whom we have pierced**: looking unto him as wounded for *our* transgressions, and bruised for *our* iniquities. This, if any thing, will incline us to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep, for all our abominations. Thus, and thus only, shall we experience that *godly sorrow, which worketh repentance not to be repented of.*

Would we *love* GOD? The oracles of heaven inform us, that we must first see his love; his infinitely free, and infinitely tender love towards us; his love not imputing any sin to our souls, but laying all our iniquities upon his own SON. Then shall we *love him*, when we perceive and know, that *he has*, in this most divinely gracious manner, regarded—loved—blessed us.

Would we be *pure* in heart? The LORD *purifieth the heart by faith* †: faith in CHRIST, as shedding his most precious blood, as giving his most glorious person, for our ransom: and, by his one oblation, *finishing our transgression; making reconciliation for our iniquity; yea, perfecting us for ever*: infomuch that we may boldly and assuredly say, *Through this grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST we shall be saved.* He that

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hath

* Zech, xii, 10.

† Acts xv. 9.

hath this faith and this hope *purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*

Would we *renounce all ungodliness?* would we *live soberly, righteously and godlily* *? By grace we must be enabled; even that grace which brings salvation, a finished and free salvation to sinners. That grace, appearing in the heart, and appropriated by faith, is the sure, the effectual means of true sanctification; the sure, the effectual motive to willing obedience.—Therefore our LORD says, *He that eateth me, even he shall live by me* †. *He that eateth me*, that receiveth my righteousness and redemption; that maketh a daily use of me and my benefits, for the refreshment and health of his soul; as people make a daily use of their necessary food for the nourishment and support of their bodies: *even he shall live by me*; he shall live to GOD in real holiness here, and live with GOD in everlasting glory hereafter.—This method will strengthen and prepare us for discharging all the duties of a Christian life, as bread strengthens and prepares the labourer for dispatching the business of his toilsome calling. Whereas, without using this sovereign expedient, we shall be as incapable of exercising ourselves unto godliness, as the hireling, deprived of his usual meals, would be incapable of performing his daily task.

Upon the whole, brethren, we do not urge you to make brick without straw: we do not call upon you to arise and work, without shewing you from whence your ability and vigour are to proceed.—Some, perhaps, might exhort you to all holy obedience; but, neglect-

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* Tit. ii. 12. † John. vi. 57.

ing these most necessary directions, their exhortations would be comfortless and insignificant; because, you might fetch a sigh, and make answer, "All this we would gladly do, but alas! we are not able."—Whereas here is grace sufficient for you in CHRIST. Whatever hinders you, CHRIST removes; whatever you want, CHRIST bestows: *that, being delivered from your enemies, and from the hand of all that hate you; from the influence of all that embarrasses, and all that discourages you; you may serve him, without slavish or disquieting fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of your life* *.

Happy deliverance! thrice happy conduct! but happier still the issue of all!—Which reminds me of my last enquiry; namely,

III. What will be the effect of this turning?—*He, the wicked man, thus turned, shall save his soul alive.*

He shall *save*—Safety shall be his companion; safety shall be his guard; safety shall escort him through the dangers of life. All the days of his appointed time *he shall dwell under the defence of the most HIGH, and abide under the shadow of the ALMIGHTY* †.—Most desirable situation! especially when judgments, desolating and destructive judgments, are abroad.—While the storm of calamity is gathering, or when the tempest of tribulation is raging, O! what a calm must it create in the heart, to have the eternal GOD for our refuge ‡! to say within ourselves, "The hand that is stretched
"over the sea, and shakes the kingdoms of the earth;

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"the

* Luke i. 74, 75.

† Psalm xci. 1.

‡ Deut. xxxiii. 27.

“ the hand that *rends the mountains, and scatters the*
 “ *everlasting hills* †; that hand is my defence and
 “ my shield !”

Save his *soul*—It is not improbable, but his bodily welfare may be secured. GOD may set a mark upon his forehead, and command the sword of the destroying angel to pass over his house. But however this may be determined, his soul shall be safe. As to his spiritual welfare, he has a *writ of protection* under the great seal of heaven. The LORD JESUS is his ever-faithful guardian, and *none shall pluck him out of the divine REDEEMER's hand* *. The roaring lion may go about, seeking to devour him: but he has a strong city, which the infernal adversary cannot storm; he has an impregnable bulwark, which the powers of darkness cannot scale: Though he fall, the arm of CHRIST will raise him; though he be defiled, the blood of CHRIST will cleanse him; though he die, it will be no loss, but gain. HE that has the keys of the grave will give commandment concerning his mouldering bones; HE that lives for evermore will receive his departing soul.—This, perhaps, may be meant by that other emphatical word, *alive*;

He shall save his soul *alive*—He shall not barely be safe, but happy. He shall enjoy what truly deserves the name of life. A man may escape from his enemy, by flying to a fortified castle: but in the castle there may be drought and famine. He may perish by these disasters, though preserved from the pursuing foe. It shall not be thus with the returning, believing, renewed sinner,

† Hab. iii. 6. * John x. 28.

sinner. He shall be saved with a complete and everlasting salvation. He is a child of GOD, and an heir of glory: he shall rejoice in CHRIST JESUS here, and shall enter into the joy of his LORD hereafter.—When the earth is burnt up, he shall see it; when the heavens pass away, he shall stand with boldness; when all nature sinks into dissolution, he shall not only survive, but enjoy the ruin. He shall leave a dissolving world, to possess a kingdom in heaven; to wear a crown of righteousness; and to be for ever with, for ever like, his blessed and glorious LORD.

We have now shewn—what the wicked man should turn *from*—what he should turn *to*—what will be the *effect* of this turning.—Give me leave to ask, Has the arm of the LORD been revealed? are you impressed by the awful, or encouraged by the comfortable truths? If so, perhaps you will be ready to say, “ Will CHRIST “ receive *me*? will he make *me* a partaker of these incomparable benefits? shall such a one, who is so “ very *unworthy*, find favour in his sight?”

Yes, such a one may find favour. Any one, every one who comes, he will receive. He sends his ministers to *invite* you; he sends his judgments to *compel* you; he uses every expedient to *gain* you.—He bids earthquakes tear the foundations of nature, and turn mighty cities into ruinous heaps, that you may be built on that rock which shall never be shaken. He calls the sword of war out of its scabbard, and commands it to be bathed in blood, that you may fly for safety to the Prince of peace. While ruin and desolation are pursuing

fining their dreadful work all around, he throws open the doors of his grace and righteousness, and most compassionately cries, "Come, my people; come, poor offenders; enter into these chambers, and find rest †."

Is any of you still inclined to reply, "Will CHRIST indeed receive me, who am not only a sinner—but a *great sinner—a long persisting sinner—and now seem to come but at the last hour; more like one driven by fear, than drawn by love?*"—What thinkest thou? would the widow of Nain, who went mourning after the corpse of her only son, almost inconsolable with her loss; would she be unwilling to receive him, when our LORD reanimated the cold clay, and *delivered him alive to his mother* *? Would she need much importunity, and hardly be prevailed on, to embrace her beloved, her lamented child? Impossible to suppose. Remember what CHRIST has *done* for sinners; what he has *suffered* for sinners; how his bowels *yearn* over sinners; and it will appear equally impossible that he should reject any returning profligate.

Reject! No. The good father, aged and venerable as he was, hastened; yea, *ran* to meet the prodigal. He fell on his neck, and tenderly kissed the dissolute youth †. So, with such readiness and such compassion, will the everlasting FATHER receive you to his family, his favour, his love.—Nay more, he will receive you with *joy*. He is the good shepherd; you are the lost sheep; he is come in his word to seek you; when you turn to him, he has found you. Then, says the scripture, the good shepherd goes home with his recovered sheep, *re-*

† Isa. xxvi. 20.

* Luke vii. 15.

† Luke xv. 20.

joicing *. O let your minister, and (which is unspeakably more engaging) let the blessed JESUS have joy of you, my brethren: even that JESUS by whom sinners are *dearly beloved and longed for* †; who has no greater delight than to save them from their iniquities, and number them among his children.

If you should answer—"This is a matter of the utmost importance. It lyes at the very root of all my comfort. Let me hear it confirmed from our LORD's own mouth. *I will hearken what the LORD GOD will say concerning me* ‡."

Hear then his own *promise*; the most precious promise that words can form, or fancy conceive; *Whosoever cometh to me, for pardon, for justification, for holiness, I will in no wise cast him out* **.—*Whosoever*; whether he be high or low, learned or illiterate; whether he be a servant or a master, a prince or a beggar; no one is excepted, no one shall be refused.—*In no wise*; on no consideration of past transgressions, on no account of present depravity, on no fore-knowledge of future failings. Only let him come, *only let him come*, and nothing shall debar him from the enjoyment of my benefits; nothing shall separate him from the endearments of my love.

Hear his kind *invitation*; *Return unto me, for I have redeemed you* ††. Ye that have hitherto been strangers to seriousness, and always alienated from me; *turn unto me*, and I will not so much as upbraid you †† with your folly.—Ye that are now backsliders, and have for

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* Luke xv. 5. † Philip. iv. 1. ‡ Psalm lxxxv. 8.
** John vi. 37. †† Isa. xlv. 22. †† James i. 5.

a season ungratefully departed from me; *turn unto me,* and I will heal your backslidings; my stripes shall make you whole.—Ye that have been slaves to vice; have sold yourselves to work wickedness; and are grown old in abominable practices; it is not too late even for you. *I have redeemed even such as you.*—I shake the pillars of nature, and rock the foundations of the world; *I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering* *. Yet, for such as you, *I gave my back to the smiters, and hid not my face from shame and spitting* †. Yes, sinners; sinners of every kind; I bore the curse of the law, and died the death of the cross, on purpose that I might redeem such as you.—Most amiable REDEEMER! who would not listen to a call so wonderfully endearing? Sinners, how can you withstand a motive so sweetly constraining?

Hear his solemn *oath*; *As I live, saith the LORD GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel* ‡? Was there ever any declaration so charming? or any address so affectionate?—See! how the high and lofty ONE condescends! He commands in heaven, on earth, through hell; yet, more like a supplicant than a sovereign, he vouchsafes to solicit and beseech you. From the habitation of his glory he cries, *Turn ye, poor perishing creatures.*—Again he cries, *Turn ye to your GOD and SAVIOUR;* that ye may be delivered from all your transgressions, and iniquity may not be your ruin.—To take away all your
reluctance,

* Isa. l. 3.

† Ver. 6.

‡ Ezck. xxxiii, 11.

reluctance, he pleads, he expostulates, *Why will ye die? why will ye destroy yourselves, and be undone for ever?*—That you may have no doubt of a free pardon and a favourable reception, *he swears; swears by himself, by his own life and immortal perfections, that he has no pleasure in your death; but shall rejoice, infinitely rejoice in your recovery and salvation.*

Here then you have the *promise*, the *invitation*, the *oath* of the LORD. Can there be greater encouragement? will not this threefold cord draw you?—Should you say, “I cannot turn: I am tied and bound with “*the chain of my corruptions. O! that CHRIST*”—Fear not: he will, he will. He that sends his minister to give you this exhortation; he that has sent his SPIRIT to work this desire in your soul; he that spilt his blood to obtain all blessings for you; he will put forth his strength, and turn you to himself. He stretched his beneficent hand, and saved Peter from sinking in the tempestuous sea. What he did for him is a pattern and a pledge of what he is ready to do for you.—Only continue to seek his face; let your heart talk of him; set his unbounded goodness and almighty power before your eyes; meditate on his infinite propitiation and incomprehensible merits; consider his everlasting righteousness and never-ceasing intercession: look upon all these as your own. To look upon them as *your own*, you have a *warrant*, you have a *command*.—And if CHRIST has done so great things for you, you may assuredly believe, that, in his due time, in his wise manner, he will *bring you spiritual health and cure*; he will carry on what he has begun, and enable you to grow

in grace. He will comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good work.

Shall I proceed?—I have already been copious, perhaps somewhat tedious. Yet you will bear with me on this distinguished and solemn occasion! yes, you will bear with me a little longer: for I am loth, very loth to dismiss you, without persuading you. Persuading! alas, I cannot. *GOD, and none but GOD, can persuade Japheth**. However, as an instrument in his all-powerful hand, let me address you once again.

I observe several persons here, on this day of humiliation, who very rarely attend the public worship.—Why, my friends, why do you wrong your own souls? why do you withdraw yourselves from the preaching of the gospel? Know ye not, that *JESUS passeth by* †, in the way of his ordinances? Here you may, like Bartimeus of old, approach the Son of David; here you may obtain faith and holiness. Faith cometh by hearing, and holiness by the word of GOD. And are not these blessings worth your attendance? can you live happily without them? can you die comfortably without them? or can you, without them, be prepared to meet your GOD, when he cometh to judge the world?—Why should you forsake the assembling yourselves together? do you hear terrifying or distressing doctrines in this place? is not this the house of praise, as well as of prayer? does not the *joyful sound* echo under these roofs? is not CHRIST set forth crucified before your eyes? crucified for such offenders as you! crucified that

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* Gen. ix. 27.

† Mat. xx. 30.

such offenders as you may be pardoned, may be accepted, may be glorified! And will you despise such a divinely compassionate SAVIOUR? will you refuse such astonishingly rich mercies? O! that hereafter you may be glad when they say unto you, *Let us go into the courts of the LORD**.

Should my wishes prove vain, I have at least delivered my message. If you perish through obstinacy and unbelief, I am clear from your blood. I call heaven and earth to witness, you have been *warned*, you have been *instructed*, you have been *exhorted*. You cannot say, you perish for lack of knowledge; for life and salvation have been set before you, have been brought to your very door, and you are importuned to lay hold of them. You will therefore be without excuse, and have no cloke for your guilt.

But why should I leave you with such melancholy apprehensions. Let me hope better things of you: let me hope that you will not disregard *these* admonitions, however you may have disregarded *too many* exhortations of this kind. This is a remarkable day: O! that it may be memorable on account of your turning to GOD. Let this be its distinction through all your future life; let this be its distinction through all the ages of eternity: that you may say—when death summons you into the invisible state; when the trump of GOD calls you to the great tribunal; when you mingle with saints and angels, in the kingdom of heaven—“Blessed
“ be GOD for that solemn day, and its sacred exer-
“ cises! That was the day of my better birth. Then

* Psalm cxxii. 1.

“ I began to consider ; then I began to pray ; then I
 “ began to see my undone condition, and my extreme
 “ need of a SAVIOUR : then too I saw JESUS, giv-
 “ ing himself a sacrifice for my sins, and redeeming me
 “ to GOD with his blood.”—Happy ! thrice happy !
 inexpressibly happy day ! if *thus*, if *thus* improved !

You have, I presume, abstained from your usual food, as you have been joining in confession, supplication and prayer. This is well done : but this is only half ; rather, it is, by infinite degrees, the smallest part of your duty. It is not said, when the wicked man abstaineth from his usual food ; but *when he turneth from his wickedness*, as the consequence of his believing in CHRIST. It is not said, when the wicked man joins in public confession to GOD ; but *when he doth that which is lawful and right*, as a fruit of his fellowship with CHRIST : THEN he shall *save*—he shall *save his soul*—he shall *save his soul alive*. O that all, from the king on the throne, to the labourer in the barn ; from the highest nobleman, to the meanest tradesman ; that all might now be inclined, now be enabled, to turn unto the SAVIOUR of the world. In him millions, unnumbered millions of wretched sinners, have found recovery and liberty ; *recovery* from the death, and *liberty* from the bondage of sin. *And* (blessed be his unbounded grace) *yet there is room*.

Then the national fast would be a *national blessing*. Whereas, without this all-important turning to the adorable SAVIOUR, what will the formalities of our devotion signify ? They will be a mere lip-labour, a religious trifling : nay, they will be a solemn mockery of
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the ALMIGHTY, and provoke his abhorrence.—Does not JEHOVAH himself speak to the same purpose? *Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him*?* to discontinue your ordinary business, and refrain from a meal's meat? to make a little doleful lamentation, and put up a few petitions extorted by fear? *Will you call this a fast?* saith the high and holy One, with an air of sovereign contempt; *this an acceptable day to the LORD?* No verily: it is the most odious hypocrisy; like crying, Hail master, with the tongue, while treachery and enmity fill the heart: *unless* you turn to CHRIST, that you may be washed, that you may be justified, that you may be sanctified; that, having remission of sins through his blood, and peace of conscience through his grace, you may feel the bands of wickedness loosed, and may become the willing servants of righteousness.

What is the *grand* sin of our nation? Ignorance and neglect of CHRIST.—What is the *cause* of all our other sins? Ignorance and neglect of CHRIST.—Why are the *judgments* of the ALMIGHTY hanging over our heads? For ignorance and neglect of CHRIST. Never, therefore, shall we answer the end of our sacred assembly, nor the design of GOD's alarming visitations, till we begin to know CHRIST, to receive CHRIST, to make use of CHRIST by faith. When this is done, we may reasonably hope—that our prayers will go up with acceptance, and not return again, till a blessing be sent—that, as individuals, our *light shall break forth like*

* Isa. lviii. 5.

like the morning, and our health shall spring forth speedily—that, as a community, the favour of GOD shall go before us, and the glory of the LORD shall be our reward.*

Then may we look *around* on our most enraged enemies, and say with the psalmist, *Though an host of men should encamp against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid†*—Then we may look *backward* to the late desolating earthquake, and say with the believers of old, *GOD is our refuge and strength; therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ‡*—Then may we look *forward* to an incomparably more dreadful scene, even to the righteous JUDGE, and the great tribunal, and say with the triumphant apostle, *Who shall lay any thing to our charge? It is God that justifieth; who shall condemn us? It is CHRIST that died**.*

Let me entreat you therefore, brethren, for the sake of your own immortal souls, and for the welfare of our endangered nation; let me charge you, by all that is desirable in time, and awful in eternity, not to neglect these counsels. Being so solemnly reprov'd, if you *harden your neck*, your destruction cometh suddenly, and *that without remedy ††*. Having these warnings from the divine word, and warnings from the divine providence, *if ye still do wickedly*; it is not man, it is not an angel, it is GOD HIMSELF who declares, *Ye shall be consumed—even ye—your country—and your king ††*.

* Isa lviii. 8. † Psalm xxvii. 3. ‡ Psalm xlvi. 1, 2.
 ** Rom. viii. 33, 34. †† Prov. xxix. 1. †† 1 Sam. xii. 25.

The Cross of CHRIST the Christian's Glory †.

GAL. vi. 14.

GOD forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

THE cross of CHRIST was the favourite topic of St Paul's contemplation:—the cross of CHRIST was the chosen subject of his sermons, and the grand theme of his writings.—At all times, and in every capacity, he professed, he avowed, he *gloried* in the cross of CHRIST—Nay, what is very remarkable, he gloried in *nothing* else—and, what is still more observable, he *abhorred* the thought of glorying in any thing else. He speaks of such a practice in the language of detestation and dread, accounting it a high degree both of folly and of wickedness: *GOD forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.*

It may therefore be an employ worthy of our present attention, to enquire into the *nature*, the *reasonableness*, and the *wisdom* of this resolution. All which, I hope, will appear, if we consider,

I. In

† Preached at the visitation of the Rev. John Brown D. D. archdeacon of Northampton; held at All-saints church in Northampton, on 10th May 1753.

- I. In what the apostle would *not* glory.
- II. In what he *did* glory.
- III. What *reason* he had to glory in the cross of CHRIST.

These points being briefly dispatched, I shall beg leave to add a word of *application*, suggested by the tenor of the discourse, and adapted to the circumstances of my several hearers. And may that adorable JESUS, who has exchanged his cross for an heavenly crown, accompany all with his *divine blessing!*

Let us then enquire,

I. In what the apostle did *not* glory.—Not in the *greatness* of his *learning*, as a scholar. He was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel; educated by the most famous tutor of the age. Nor was his genius, or his industry, inferior to the other advantages of his education. Yet all these advantages, with their correspondent acquisitions, he accounted no better than pompous ignorance, or refined folly.

Not in the *strictness* of his *life*, as a Jew.—In this respect he profited above his equals; *was taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers**; *after the strictest sect of their religion he lived a Pharisee†*: was zealous, exceedingly zealous, of the whole ceremonial law, and of all the traditional constitutions. Which accomplishments must finish his character among his countrymen; must open his way to some of the first honours of the nation; and give him a name among those worthies, who were reputed *the excellent*

* Acts xxii. 3. † Acts xxvi. 5.

of the earth. But what others counted gain, this *he* counted loss for CHRIST.

Not in the *eminency* of his *gifts*, nor in the *extent* of his *usefulness*, as a Christian minister.—He had been caught up into the third heaven; had heard the words of GOD, and seen the vision of the ALMIGHTY; had wrought all manner of wonders, and signs, and mighty deeds.—What was still more valuable, he had planted churches, and converted souls. His labours were gone out into all lands, and his words into the ends of the earth.—Yet all these acquirements, before the infinite GOD, were *defective*; all these performances, in point of justification, were *insufficient*. Therefore in *none* of these he gloried.—Which reminds me of the second enquiry;

II. In what the apostle *did* glory.—He gloried in a cross. Strange! What so *scandalous* as a cross? On a cross rebellious slaves were executed. The cross was *execrable* among men, and *accursed* even by GOD *. Yet the apostle glories in the cross.—Crucifixion not being used among us, the expression does not sound so *harsh*, neither is the idea so *horrid*. But to the ear of a Galatian, it conveyed much the same meaning, as if the apostle had gloried in a halter, gloried in the gallows, gloried in a gibbet †.

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* Stupid

* Gal. iii. 13.

† Some persons, I am informed, were disgusted at these words, *halter*, *gallows*, *gibbet*; they are so horridly contemptible!—To whom I would reply, that the cross in point of ignominy and torment, included *all this and more*. Unless the English reader forms to himself some such image, he will never be able to apprehend the scandalous nature and shocking circumstances of his divine Master's death, Th:

“ Stupid creature,” perhaps some may reply, “ to undervalue the most substantial endowments, and glory in infamy itself!”—But stop a moment, and hear the apostle farther. He glories in the cross of CHRIST; that illustrious person, who was *anointed* to be the all-instructing prophet, the all-atoning priest, and the all-conquering king of the church—In the cross of CHRIST JESUS; who, by the discharge of all those important offices, should *save* his people from the dominion of sin, and from the damnation of hell—In the cross of CHRIST JESUS our LORD; and not ours only, but LORD of all: who doth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth*; *who hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS* †.

And is it possible for any human heart to contemplate the cross of so *divine* a being, and not to glory? is it possible to say, *Angels, he rules over you; but he died, he died on a cross for me; and not exult in such transporting beneficence?*—This will be more evident if we examine,

III. What *reason* the apostle had to glory in the cross of CHRIST.—The cross, though in itself an ignominious

The words, I must confess, were *diversified*, and the sentiment was *reiterated*, on purpose to affect the mind with this astonishing truth. Neither can I prevail upon myself to expunge the expressions; unless I could substitute others of a more ignominious and execrable import. Only I would beg of the serious reader, to spend a moment in the following reflexion:—
 “ Is it so, that a *polite* and *delicate* ear can hardly endure so much as the
 “ *sound* of the words? How amazing then was the condescension! how
 “ charming and adorable the goodness of GOD’s *illustrious Son*; to bear
 “ all that is signified by these intolerably vile terms! bear it *willingly*,
 “ bear it *cheerfully*, for us men, and our salvation!”

* Dan. iv. 35. † Rev. xix. 16.

ous tree; yet, being the cross of CHRIST, is infinitely ennobled. It becomes the *tree of life*; it bears the divinest fruit; its clusters are all *spiritual* and *heavenly* blessings. Two or three of those clusters you will permit me to select; and may the GOD of all mercy make them better than a feast to every humble soul!

One blessing is the *pardon of sin*: the pardon of *all* sin, original and actual; sin that is remembered, and sin that is forgotten; sin, however circumstanced, or however aggravated. The pardon of all was purchased by the death of CHRIST;—completely purchased:—so that, against the true believer, sin shall never rise up in judgment; *shall not so much as be mentioned unto him**; shall be done away, as though it had never been. For thus saith the ambassador of the prince of peace, “*Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things †.*”—Oh, my soul! my guilty soul! what are all the kingdoms of the world, and the glories of them, compared with this ineffable blessing! Yet this is but one among a multitude.

Another benefit, accruing from the cross of CHRIST, is *reconciliation with GOD*.—*When we were enemies, we were reconciled to GOD, by the death of his Son ‡.* Not pardoned only, but accepted; from a state of *enmity*, restored to a state of *favour*; even that *favour which is better than life **.*—A privilege of such superlative excellency, that it was celebrated in the hymns of an-

* Ezek. xviii. 22. † Acts xiii. 38, 39. ‡ Rom. v. 10. ** Psalm lxiii. 3.

gels. When the heavenly host uttered a song, *this was the subject of their harmonious joy; Glory be to GOD in the highest; and on earth peace, good-will towards men* ††. “By the birth of this wonderful child, and
 “the death he shall sustain, peace is made between
 “heaven and earth: and not *peace* only, but a divine
 “*friendship* * commences. GOD regards the poor apostate race of men, not only without indignation,
 “but with complacency and delight. *He rejoices over*
 “*them, to do them good* †.”

Another benefit is *holiness*; or, if you please, the true, the Christian morality.—Let none think, the believer in JESUS disparages *true morality*. True morality is the image of the blessed GOD: it is most charmingly delineated throughout the whole bible: it is the beginning of heaven in the human soul; and its proper origin is from the cross of our divine Master.—For, thro' the merits of his death, sinners are made partakers of the *holy Spirit*; who writes upon their hearts, and makes legible in their conversation, what was antiently written upon the mitre of the high-priest, HOLINESS TO THE LORD—And oh! what a *motive* is the cross of CHRIST
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†† Luke ii. 14.

* There seems to be a beautiful *gradation* in this angelic hymn. *Good-will* is more expressive, and denotes a richer blessing, than *peace*.—The original *Eufonia* is a word of the most amiable and noble meaning. It signifies a very *high esteem*, and a very *tender benevolence*. By a word of the same import, the Almighty Father expresses his infinite satisfaction in the person and undertaking of his beloved Son; Mat. iii. 17.

Would my reader have the liveliest paraphrase on this passage, or see the actings of this divine complacency described with inimitable delicacy; let him attend to the prophet Zephaniah; *The LORD thy GOD, in the midst of thee, is mighty. He will save: he will rejoice over thee with joy: he will rest in his love: he will joy over thee with singing*, ch. iii. 17.

† Deut. xxviii. 63.

to the exercise of every virtue! *He died; my LORD, my JUDGE, my KING, died; to redeem me from all iniquity, and make me zealous of good works.* How powerfully, far beyond any *naked instructions, or abstract reasonings,* do such considerations invite us—urge us—constrain us ‡, to *renounce* all ungodliness, and *adorn* the gospel of GOD our SAVIOUR!

Another blessing is *victory over death.*—This also is the fruit of that once detested, but now ever beloved tree. For thus it is written, *That, through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who, thro' fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage †.* The devil is said to have the power of death; because, by tempting too successfully our first parents, he *brought* death into the world; because, by tempting their posterity to sin, and too often prevailing, he *arrays* death in horror; he *arms* death with its sting. But CHRIST, by expiating our guilt, has disarmed this last enemy; has taken away its sting; and made it not loss, but *gain to die* *.—The *gay,* and the *healthy,* know not how to form an estimate of this deliverance: nor can any words of mine describe it with proper energy. Go to *dying beds;* *there* you will learn its true worth. Ask some *agonizing* friend; he, and he alone, can tell you, what

‡ 2 Cor. v. 14. † Heb. ii. 14, 15.

Religion! thou the soul of happiness;
And groaning Calvary of thee! *There* shine
The noblest truths; *there* strongest motives sting!
There sacred violence assaults the soul;
There nothing but *compulsion* is forborn.

Night-thoughts, N. IV.

† Philip. i. 21.

what a blessing it is, to have the king of terrors converted into a messenger of peace.

One blessing more I would mention, and earnestly wish it, in due time, to all my hearers; *an entrance into heaven.* This too is the produce of our REDEEMER's cross.—St John saw a bright assembly of happy beings, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, rejoicing before the throne of GOD. *These,* said one of the venerable elders, *are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. THEREFORE are they before the throne*.*—*They came out of great tribulation:* they suffered, it is probable, in the service of CHRIST: perhaps they laid down their lives for his sake. But *this* was not their passport into the regions of bliss.—*They washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb:* they had applied to their own souls the merit and atonement of the crucified JESUS. By *this* means they were presented without spot and blameless; on *this* account they were admitted to “see the King of heaven in his beauty †;” and to be ever, ever with the LORD.

Since then the cross of CHRIST was *demonstrative* of such stupendous love; since it is *productive* of benefits innumerable, invaluable and eternal; was there not a *cause* for the apostle to glory on this behalf?—Nay, might not the very stones have cried out, to reproach him with *insensibility* and *ingratitude*, if he had neglected to glory in the cross of CHRIST?—And since this love was shewed, these benefits were procured, not for *him* only, but for *us*, and for all generations; does not
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* Rev. vii 9, 14, 15. † Isa. xxxiii. 17.

this afford me an opportunity of applying the doctrine to each particular hearer ?

1. Let me address, or rather let me congratulate, my *brethren in the ministry*.—Though you cannot controul the laws of nature; though you cannot see into the secrets of futurity; you have the same cause of glorying with the very chiefest of the apostles. A cause of glorying, which that holy man of GOD esteemed far above all such miraculous abilities. You have the cross of CHRIST,

For your *study*, as *men*;

For your *hope*, as *Christians*;

For your *preaching*, as *ministers*.

For your *study*, as *men*. Here the *reasoning* faculties may exert themselves with everlasting improvement, and everlasting delight.—Here we contemplate the wonders, the unparalleled wonders, of a GOD made *man*; dying as a pattern of patience, as a martyr for truth, as an all-perfect sacrifice for sin.—Here the LORD JEHOVAH hath fully granted, what his servant Moses* so earnestly requested; he hath made *all his glory* to pass before the astonished eyes of angels and of men.—Here *justice* has set her most awful terrors in array; even while *goodness* appears, with inexpressible loveliness, and the most attractive beauty.—Here *truth*, more unshaken than a rock, takes her immoveable stand: and *mercy*, tenderer than the mother's tear, yearns with bowels of everlasting pity.—In a word, the cross of CHRIST is

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* Exod. xxxiii. 18.

a conspicuous theatre, on which *all* the divine perfections unite, and harmonize, and shine forth with transcendent lustre.

As *Christians*, we have, in the cross of CHRIST, the *richest provision* for our own spiritual wants. This is a foundation of the sublimest *hope*, and a fountain of the most exuberant *joy*: this affords matter for the deepest *humility*, and yields fuel for the most flaming *love*. Faith in our crucified JESUS is an ever-active principle of the most cheerful and exact *obedience*: is an ample and inexhaustible magazine, from which we may fetch arms to conquer, absolutely conquer the allurements of the world, the sollicitations of the flesh, and the temptations of the devil.—By this a way is opened for us into *the holy of holies*: and what may we not venture to ask, what may we not expect to receive, who have the blood of the everlasting covenant to plead, in all our approaches to the throne of grace?—Having therefore *such* an high-priest; having, in his cross, *unsearchable* riches; who shall make our glorying void? what shall hinder us from rejoicing and saying? “Blessed be GOD for these opening beauties of spring!
 “blessed be GOD for the expected fruits of autumn!
 “blessed be GOD for ten thousand thousand gifts of his
 “indulgent providence! but, *above all*, blessed be GOD
 “for the cross of CHRIST!”

As *ministers* of the gospel, we are not left to set before our hearers a system of *refined heathenism*; or to entertain them with *cold, spiritless* lectures of virtue. No; we have the *infinitely tender* love, the *immensely*
free

free grace, of the bleeding, dying IMMANUEL, to display—to improve—to enforce. And is there a topic in the whole compass of *oratory*, is there an argument amidst all the stores of *reason*, so admirably calculated to touch the *finest* movements of the soul? to strike all the *inmost* springs of action, with the most persuasive, the most commanding energy?—Would we alarm the *supine*, or intimidate the *presumptuous*? we may call them to behold GOD's own Son weltering in blood, GOD's own Son transfixed with the arrows of justice: we may bid them consider, if judgment begins with the immaculate MEDIATOR, where shall the irreclaimable sinner appear? how will he *escape* the stroke? how *bear* the weight of GOD's everlasting vengeance?—Would we comfort the *distressed*? we may point them to an atonement, whose merits are infinite, and able to save to the *very uttermost**: we may lead them to a righteousness whose efficacy is unbounded, and sufficient to justify *the ungodly*. And what *balm* can be so sovereign for a wounded conscience?—Are we to support the *weak*, and animate the *doubting*? here we may shew them promises, free promises †, exceeding great and precious promises, ratified by the oath of JEHOVAH, and sealed by the blood of his Son. And what *cordials* can be so restorative to the drooping Christian?

In short; the doctrine of the cross is suited to answer all the *great ends* of our ministry, and promote all

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* Heb. vii. 25.

† To man the bleeding cross has promis'd all:

The bleeding cross has sworn eternal grace:

Who gave his life, what grace will he deny?

Night-thoughts, N. IV.

the truly *valuable interests* of our people. By this the HOLY SPIRIT delights to work: and this, O *Satan*, shall be thy plague; this, O sin, shall be thy destruction*. —However, therefore, the cross might be to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; GOD forbid that we should glory in any thing else!—Let this be the *alpha* and *omega*, the beginning and ending †, of all our *public ministrations*.—Let us leave a favour of this knowledge, which is far better than precious ointment, in every *private* company.—Let it appear, from *all* our conversation, that the *affections* of our heart, and the *labours* of our life, are devoted, wholly devoted, to our adored REDEEMER's cross.—Happy the *people* who are under the care of such ministers! and *blessed* the *ministers* who walk according to this rule!

2. Let me exhort all *true believers*; those who are *vile* in their own eyes, and to whom CHRIST alone is *precious*.—Remember, brethren, what is written in the prophet: it is a description of your state; it is a direction for your conduct. *In the LORD, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and in him shall they glory ‡.*

Let

* Hof. xiii. 14.

† The author who could write the *spirited* and *weighty* lines which follow must doubtless have had this conviction *deep* on his heart.

————— Thou, my *All!*

My theme! my inspiration! and my crown!
 My strength in age! my rise in low estate!
 My soul's ambition, pleasure, wealth!—my world!
 My light in darkness! and my life in death!
 My boast through time! bliss through eternity!
 My sacrifice! my GOD!—What things are these!

‡ Isa. xlv. 25.

Night-thoughts, N. IV.

Let none say that religion is a *gloomy* or *uncomfortable* state; I call upon you this day to *rejoice* *. Let none say that religion is a *mean* or *despicable* thing; I call upon you this day to *glory*: and have the *divine* authority for both †.—You will dishonour the blessed JESUS, you will disparage his surpassing excellency, if you do not *confide* in him, and make your *boast* of him. CHRIST is king of heaven, CHRIST is judge of the world, CHRIST is GOD over all. And of *such* a SAVIOUR shall we not glory? Yes, verily; and in all circumstances, and on every occasion.

Amidst your manifold *infirmities*, glory in CHRIST. For, though he was crucified in weakness, he hath all power in heaven and earth. And it is written before him, it is one of his immutable decrees, *Sin shall not have dominion over you* ‡.—Amidst your various *failings*, glory in CHRIST. For his righteousness covers all your imperfections, his righteousness secures you from wrath and condemnation; and, though deficient in yourselves, you are complete in him **.—Under the pressure of *tribulations*, lift up your heads, and glory in the cross: because the captain of your salvation was made perfect through sufferings. If you suffer with him, you shall also reign with him. And the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the happiness which CHRIST hath purchased with

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* 'Tis this makes *Christian triumph* a command;

'Tis this makes joy a *duty* to the wife.

Night thoughts, N. IV.

† *Καυχασθαι*, the word in our text, denotes the act of *rejoicing*, as well as of *glorying*. Thus it is translated, Rom. v. 11. And indeed this it always implies.—See Psalm v. 11. Psalm cxlix. 5. *Sept. transl.*

‡ Rom. vi. 14. ** Col. ii. 10.

his agonies, and willy quickly bestow on his people.— When *death* approaches, death that cuts off the spirit of princes, and is terrible among the kings of the earth; do you still glory in the cross. Adhering to this banner, you may boldly and triumphantly say, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory*?* — When that great, *tremendous day* shall come, which puts an end to time and terrestrial things; when that awful, that *majestic voice* is heard, which commands all the race of Adam to appear at the bar; *then*, my dear brethren in CHRIST, *then* also shall you glory in the cross. When others, in an agony of terror, call upon rocks to fall on them, and mountains to overwhelm them; *this* shall be *your* sedate appeal; rather, *this* shall be *your* heroic challenge; *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of GOD's elect? It is GOD that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died* †.—Then shall you enter the harbour of eternal rest; not like a shipwrecked mariner, cleaving to some broken plank, and hardly escaping the raging waves; but like some stately vessel, with all her sails expanded, and riding before a prosperous gale ‡.

3. Let

* 1 Cor. xv. 55. This is evidently the language of a *conqueror*, addressed to some *formidable*, but *vanquished* enemy.— We shall form no improper idea of this significant and beautiful passage, if we picture to ourselves the good apostle, in the attitude of those Hebrew captains, who set their feet on the necks of the five Canaanitish kings, Josh. x. 24. If we suppose him in such a posture, to utter this animated exclamation, or rather this *pious insult*, over the two grand, but prostrate adversaries of mankind; “*O death, where is now thy sting, since CHRIST has expiated sin, by the sacrifice of himself? O grave, where is now thy victory, since CHRIST is both risen himself, and has ascertained to his people a joyful resurrection?*”

† Rom. viii. 33, 34.

‡ St Peter's expression *Εισοδος πλασιως επιχορηγηθησεται*, is perhaps too nervous, and too noble to admit of an *adequate* translation.

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3. Let me caution the *self-righteous*: those who more frequently think of *their own* piety than of CHRIST'S *obedience*; are more apt to cry out with the Pharisee, *I am no extortioner, no adulterer*; than to confess with the Publican, *GOD be merciful to me a sinner*.—What shall I say to these persons? Let me not be thought *ensorious*, when my only aim is to be *faithful*. Beware, I beseech you, lest you build for eternity, not on a *rock*, but on the *sand*. However you may appear in *your own* sight, before the *adorable* majesty of the everlasting GOD, before the *consummate* perfection of his holy law, you are less than nothing, you are worse than nothing: you are, indeed you are, deficiency and sin. Renounce, therefore, renounce all dependence on self. Trust no longer in a refuge of lies; lest all your admired attainments, at the day of final retribution, be like *straw*, and *hay*, and *stubble*, in Nebuchadnezzar's burning fiery furnace.—Imitate the blessed penman of my text. Are you blameless in your external carriage? so was he. Are you exemplary in many points? so was he. Yet all this righteousness he *accounted but dung*, for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS his LORD*.—Be this your pattern. Write *emptiness* upon your own duties, *emptiness* upon your own works; and you shall be filled with all the *fulness* of GOD your SAVIOUR. Every other cause of glorying will be like the morning cloud, or the early dew,
which

The above comparison is, I think, a very pertinent illustration of the delicate sentiment, and the delightful doctrine. A ship wafted into the port, under the full influence of wind and tide, seems to afford the finest representation of a *large*, a *rich*, an *abundant* entrance; 2 Pet. i. 11.

* Philip. iii. 8.

which *passeth away* † : but this cause of glorying will stand fast for evermore as the moon, and as the faithful witness in heaven †.

Can I conclude, without adding a word of admonition to the *wicked*? those, I mean, who are enemies to the cross of CHRIST; who mind earthly things, but neither hunger nor thirst after righteousness.—My soul remembers the wormwood and the gall of such a state, and cannot but tenderly pity these unhappy people.—Alas! my friends, what have *you* to glory in? The devil and his angels expect ere long to glory in your destruction. Those malignant fiends are eyeing you as their prey, and are impatient to begin your torment. Great, inexpressibly great is your danger; the LORD Almighty open your eyes to discern it.—Nevertheless, your case is not desperate. You may yet be *delivered*, “as a bird out of the snare of the fowler.” Look unto the crucified JESUS. *Why* does he hang on that bloody tree? *why* are his hands pierced with iron? *why* is his body racked with pain? *why* his heart torn with anguish? It is for *you*, sinners, for *you*. That blood is poured out, to cleanse *you* from guilt; those wounds are sustained, to heal *your* consciences; that anguish is endured, to obtain rest for *your* souls.—In that mangled body *dwells all the fulness of the Godhead* *. Great, beyond imagination great, is the merit of those sufferings. Why then, O! why will you die? why will you perish for ever, who have an *all-sufficient* propitiation in the cross of CHRIST? Fly to this sanctuary: fly, before

† Hof. vi. 4.

‡ Psalm lxxxix. 37.

* Col. ii. 9.

before it be too late: fly, without a moment's delay. 'Tis an *inviolable* sanctuary. None ever perished that fled by faith to the compassionate, the *divinely compassionate* REDEEMER.—His death shall be a *full* satisfaction for your iniquities. A sense of his immensely rich goodness shall *win* your affections; shall incline (what all the threatnings of damnation could never effect) shall incline you to *lothe* your sins, and to *love* his service; shall smooth your path, and expedite your progress, to the regions of immortal honour and joy.

Having now, with great plainness of speech, addressed my *brethren* in the *ministry*; having exhorted *believers*, cautioned the *self-righteous*, and warned the *wicked*; let me commend the whole to your *serious recollection*, and to GOD's *gracious benediction*.—And, “O LORD most holy! O GOD most mighty! O holy and merciful SAVIOUR! by thine agony and “bloody sweat—by thy *cross* and *passion*”—let not the word now spoken be in vain in the LORD! *Amen* and *amen*.

F I N I S.