



Bodleian Libraries

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

This book is part of the collection held by the Bodleian Libraries and scanned by Google, Inc. for the Google Books Library Project.

For more information see:

<http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/dbooks>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0) licence.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

1. **The Social Worship of the One God, agreeable to Reason and to Scripture, a Sermon, preached in Prince's Street, Westminster, March 27th, 1796.**
 2. **Reflections on the State of Religion and Knowledge, at the close of the Eighteenth Century; a Discourse, delivered at the Chapel in Prince's Street, Westminster, in 1801.**
 3. **Unanimity and Energy in the present crisis, a Discourse, delivered at Lypston, Devon, Oct. 19th, 1803; being the Day appointed for a General Fast. London: for Johnson, Longman and Co. and Egerton.**
 4. **The Presiding Providence of God; a Sermon, preached in Mill-Hill Chapel, February 28th, 1810; being the Day appointed for a General Fast. London and Leeds.**
 5. **God the Author of Peace; a Sermon, preached in Mill-Hill Chapel, January 18th, 1816, being the Day appointed for a Public Thanksgiving, on the conclusion of a General Peace. London and Leeds.**
 6. **The Virtuous Claims of Humanity, a Sermon preached in Mill-Hill Chapel, Nov. 19th, 1809, for the benefit of the General Infirmary, Leeds. London: Johnson, Longman & Co. and Robinson and Co. and Baines, Leeds.**
 7. **A Volume of Sermons, 8vo. 1811. London and Leeds.**
 8. **A Funeral Oration, delivered at the Interment of the Rev. Joseph Towers, L.L.D. May 27th, 1799.**
 9. **The Energy of Talent, and the Reward of Active Virtue and Benevolence, an Address delivered at the Interment of Joseph Dawson, Esq. of Royds-Hall, County of York, at Bradford, December 18th, 1813.**
 10. **The Instructive Remembrance of departed Worth, a Sermon, preached in Mill-Hill, Chapel, September 5th, 1813, on the Death of the Rev. John Simpson, of Bath, with an Address at the Interment, and a brief Memoir of his Life. &c. London and Leeds.**
 11. **The Memorial of the Just; a Sermon, preached in Mill-Hill, Chapel, Leeds, January 26th, 1817, on occasion of the Death of the Rev. John Disney, D.D. F.S.A.**
- And other miscellaneous Pamphlets.

10

Two Sermons

ADDRESSED TO THE
PARISHIONERS OF BISHOP-WEARMOUTH:

THE FIRST PREACHED IN THE
PARISH CHURCH,
ON SUNDAY, THE 16th OF NOVEMBER;

THE SECOND DESIGNED TO HAVE BEEN PREACHED
ON THE 19th, THE DAY APPOINTED

FOR THE

Funeral

OF HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE

PRINCESS CHARLOTTE.

BY

ROBERT GRAY, D.D.

RECTOR OF BISHOP-WEARMOUTH, AND PREBENDARY OF
DURHAM AND OF CHICHESTER.

London:

PRINTED FOR F. C. AND J. RIVINGTON,
NO. 62, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD,
AND J. HATCHARD, 190, PICCADILLY;
By R. and R. Gilbert, St. John's Square, Clerkenwell.

1817.



TO THE
PARISHIONERS OF BISHOP-WEARMOUTH.

THE following Discourses were written under the impression of the moment, without design of publication. The second was not preached. On the day preceding that for which it was prepared, I was called away to participate in a scene of private sorrow, for the loss of a revered mother, whose life rendered exemplary by the uniform influence of Religion, protracted to a venerable age, and tranquilly closed with humble trust in God, has a claim to every tribute of filial respect.

But to speak only of that event which is of universal interest, and which awfully illustrates the uncertainty of human life, it must be the general wish that every memorial of that sorrow, which, so much to the honour of the nation, has been manifested, and which

cannot but be beneficial, should be preserved, and rendered permanently useful.

With this view, many Sermons, which have been preached by the Clergy in a manner adapted to their respective congregations, have been, and will, I doubt not, continue to be published.

In reflection upon the duties which attach to me, amidst a numerous and fluctuating population, I have been led to print the suggestions, which appeared proper to be offered to your consideration; in the humble hope, that they may contribute, in some degree, to strengthen those just convictions, which have been so warmly and so generally expressed, upon the affecting loss, which the nation has sustained.

I remain,

With every sentiment of regard,

Your faithful Friend and Servant,

ROBERT GRAY.

TWICKENHAM,
November 26, 1817

SERMON I.

JEREMIAH iv. 10.

Then said I, Ah, Lord God! surely thou hast greatly deceived this people, and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have peace; whereas the sword reacheth unto the soul.

THE Prophet Jeremiah, who had been employed by God to predict many evils to Jerusalem, lived to witness their accomplishment in scenes of desolation and misery, after his countrymen had been carried into captivity to Babylon.

In adverting to the calamities which preceded or attended that event, he expresses the very remarkable complaint in the text, which seems, at first sight, to contain an expostulation of a bold and presumptuous cast, and even to intimate, in a manner inconsistent with the reverence which became a prophet and minister of the Lord, that the Almighty had

B

acted with harshness, if not with deception, towards his people.

But though indeed there are instances in Scripture of the Prophets being permitted to plead the cause of the people, even in the language of complaint and remonstrance ; so that every thing might be urged in their favour, that even their own wayward thoughts would suggest, by an allowed intercessor ; as where David, who was a type of our great Mediator, exclaimed, when he saw the destroying angel stretching out the hand over Jerusalem, after his transgression ; “ Lo, I have sinned, and I have “ done wickedly ; but these sheep, what have they “ done.” Yet it is not to be supposed that the servants of God could intend, or be allowed to allege, any plea with irreverence ; or to give any representation of the divine attributes, which the Almighty had not authorised.

It will be found indeed, upon a full consideration of the text, compared with other passages in Scripture, that Jeremiah represents God only in that light, in which he is, by his own express declarations, described to have acted, by allowing the people, who gave themselves up to wickedness, and to the guidance of false prophets, to be entangled in the webs which they themselves had spun, and to be deceived by the guides in whom they had trusted.

The belief in strong delusions, was made to operate to the execution of a judicial sentence. Men became the victims of disappointment, under the failure of fallacious hopes which they formed, without any warrant, or good ground of confidence. Sins were made conducive to their own punishment: the very nature of the penalty pointed out the character of the offence.

Thus, as is described in the vision of Micaiah, when Ahab had recourse to false prophets, a lying spirit came forth, by the permission of God, who, under the promise of victory, allured the monarch to destruction.

God likewise expressly commanded Ezekiel to declare, with respect to those " who separated
" themselves from him, and set up their idols in
" their heart, that if a prophet were deceived when
" he had spoken a thing, he, the Lord, had deceived
" that prophet, that men might bear their iniquity,
" and that the punishment of the prophet might be
" even as the punishment of him that sought
" him."

In like manner also St. Paul affirms, in the Epistle to the Thessalonians, with respect to that anti-christian power, which is supposed to represent and characterize the Church of Rome; that he was

to be allowed to come with “ signs and lying wonders,
“ and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in
“ them that perish, because they received not the
“ love of truth, that they might be saved ; and for
“ this cause, God was to send them a strong delu-
“ sion, that they should believe a lie, because they
“ had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

Jeremiah then, in the text, supposes God to have appointed that the people should be deluded by the imaginations which they had blindly cherished, and in that reflection suffer a severer chastisement : and this supposition is not only consistent with other representations of Scripture, but agreeable to what is often experienced in life, and unhappily but too fully illustrated by what is witnessed in the present day.

If we look to the circumstances of the times which seem most evidently to bear the stamp and character of divine appointment, and at the same time consider the prominent features and predominant offences which distinguish the age, we cannot but admit, that there is sufficient ground to apprehend, that those afflictions which we have experienced in many recent and successive events, have had an especial reference to misconduct on our part ; and that without adverting to any points of doubtful character ; but confining our attention to excesses, condemned by reflecting men of every description, much of public guilt, and open ingratitude towards God, has

been manifested around us; while individuals, if they will examine themselves, will feel, in conscious reflection, on many secret sins, that there is much for which they must stand self-accused in the sight of God.

If God has “ removed our soul far off from “ peace,” and if we are commanded in adversity “ to “ consider our ways,” the first feeling of deep humiliation, the first wish of deriving profit from the tribulation in which the whole kingdom participates, is to enquire whether the Lord may not have “ afflicted the land for the multitude of her transgressions,” and with serious examination to endeavour to ascertain, by what offences it is but too probable, that the Almighty may have been incensed against us.

Assuredly, at least, it is the direct duty and immediate office of the Ministry to institute, both with respect to themselves and others, such an enquiry, and to bring to bear those reflections of religious consideration to the minds of men, which seem to have a direct reference to existing evils, and upon which it imports them to meditate, “ whether they “ will hear, or whether they will forbear.”

It cannot be denied, that during a long course of years Almighty God has admonished us with a

succession of warnings, which have had a particular relation to our conduct, as members of society ; as parts of a political body ; as subjects of the state.

In every successive event, in every diversified scene of misery experienced by neighbouring countries, under the oppression of those tyrants, who, from the first period of the Revolution on the Continent, established their precarious and short-lived dominion on the ruins of ancient institutions and social order, till the conspicuous fate of him in whom ambition “ enlarged its desires as the grave, “ and was as death, and could not be satisfied,” we read a series of awful lessons against civil discord, and a love of change ; and in the wide spread consequences of the destruction which had been introduced, and in the diffusion of the speculative and false opinions which had been engendered, as *α*’ they affected ourselves, we had sufficient reason to lament the mischief which resulted from the indulgence of those baneful and ambitious passions which are ever ready to agitate and disturb mankind.

Yet no sooner were we delivered from the dangers in which we had been involved, by the signal victories through which God conferred success on our exertions ; no sooner was peace obtained to the country, with greater honour and fairer promise of

permanent security than at any former period, than the salutary impressions which had been excited, seemed in a moment to have been dispersed; and because men continued to feel the lingering effects of a long protracted warfare; and the inconveniences which necessarily resulted from a long suspended intercourse between nations, spoiled and impoverished by rapine and injustice, a burst of discontent and clamour broke forth, and injurious aspersions were industriously scattered against those, who had the strongest claims on our gratitude and respect.

Nevertheless, those very difficulties which we felt, were, by the goodness of God, designed, and in some measure they contributed, to produce a salutary moderation and restraint.

As, however, they occasioned in the wicked and depraved, only disappointment and vexation, as murmurings and dissensions continued to prevail, the Almighty, if we may presume to judge, was provoked to augment our difficulties, and to increase the pressure of our distress. Then it was, that God withheld his accustomed bounty, and that the earth yielded only a scanty and ill-matured produce.

What was the impression? Did we humble our-

selves in the sight of God, and endeavour to draw instruction from his appointments? This cannot, with any general application, be said. Many, indeed, employed themselves in mitigating the distress which prevailed, and in endeavouring to persuade a suffering people, to recommend themselves to God, by a patient endurance of what it had pleased him to ordain; yet how many also exerted a malevolent industry, in exaggerating the calamities which were felt; endeavouring to excite—not resignation and submission to the will of God, but turbulence and discontent; circulating with a depravity which admits of no excuse, and with an injury which never can be repaired, mischievous publications, calculated to undermine all those religious principles, from which alone consolation was to be derived; employing even blasphemy to promote the cause of sedition, and to subvert all moral feeling, thereby cruelly stimulating disaffected or deluded men, to acts of disorder and insult, against the constituted authorities of the state; which could only bring disgrace upon their country, and destruction upon themselves.

But for the influence of such malignant activity it could not have happened that men should be instigated to those excesses which we have witnessed; to those fearful crimes in private life, and those outrages of public violence which there has been so much cause to deplore.

When we look with contrite reflection to these circumstances, and at the same time take a retrospect of the many marked and peculiar instances and proofs of the interference of God, to awaken and to reclaim the world; it is useful to consider by what striking circumstances he has, at different times, made the fate of conspicuous individuals administer to his moral designs.

How often, during the arduous contest in which we were engaged, did it seem good to the Almighty, at critical periods, to deprive us, under circumstances of peculiar impression, of many eminent men, on whose distinguished talents, valour, and experience, we had depended for defence; in order (if we may be allowed to judge) that we might know and feel, that we were not to place our confidence in any human strength.

If it has pleased the same great Arbiter of events, to draw a dark veil between our sovereign and his people, whose reverence and affections he had conciliated by the piety of his character, and the equity of his government, sparing him the sight of many troubles, and withholding from us an object so justly dear; is it not manifest, that by such affecting demonstrations of his power, God has designed to awaken a constant regard to his attributes and claims upon us.

If after these repeated calls, we continue to observe many striking marks of depravity among the people, so that their character appears in many respects greatly changed ; if we notice a failure in ancient probity, a flagrant spirit of misrepresentation, on subjects of high importance to the interest of mankind, a disposition to pervert the Scriptures to the maintenance of false doctrines, and an increase of atrocious crimes, multiplied in proportion as the ordinances of God are disparaged and neglected ; and all this in a country more fully instructed in the laws of God, and more peculiarly favored by blessings, than any other land, is there not cause to fear, that where the Almighty extends his arm, it is from indignation against us ? Can we be surprised that God should visit for these things ? that those who cherish delusive hopes of his favour, should be deceived in their vain imaginations ? and a nation suffer for the wrath which the conduct of many has excited, so that “ when we looked for “ peace, the sword hath reached unto the soul.”

“ Can the heart endure, or can the hands be “ strong, on the day that the Lord dealeth with “ us.” None can resist his judgments, aggravated with encreasing weight, as the obstinacy of men requires. He regulates his appointments, with exact regard to the circumstances and conduct of the people, whose offences he would correct, and

whose spiritual recovery and welfare he would promote. He, alone can concert his measures with such wonderful combination of interests, and with such fearful and affecting connection and influence in all their operations, as to appal, at once, every mind, to spread a general gloom throughout a land, and to carry a deep impression into every bosom.

By the painful events which we at this time deplore, every house is turned into mourning, and throughout the whole extent, and vast dependencies, of a mighty empire, every family must feel, as if, "the joy of their heart was ceased," as having lost a relation dear to their affections, and in the preservation of whose life, if it had pleased God to prolong it, many most important interests were involved.

If some, in the contemplation of the painful circumstances which have occurred, have felt the pang, as of an irremediable calamity to the nation, and considered the sources of future hope as cut off, it becomes us to moderate our sentiments by a just and religious control ; to trust, that the providence of God will preserve the succession to a throne, established on all the undisputed rights of sovereignty ; in a family which has been long distinguished for its justice, moderation, and paternal go-

vernment, and for its unshaken adherence to those principles, on which our civil and religious liberties depend.

Nevertheless, while we regulate our reflections by such salutary restraints and views, we may be excused, where we suffer under the disappointment of reasonable hopes, long cherished and raised to the highest pitch of expectation, if we indulge in a fond retrospect of that scene of felicity which is now for ever closed.

If it was honorable to the nation, to look with sentiments of respect and attachment to an union, sanctioned by every regard to the happiness of the illustrious individuals concerned, and to the welfare of the kingdom; it must be permitted, while we bow to the dispensations of Providence, and are persuaded, that there is mercy in all his designs; to mourn over the severe loss which has been sustained, to dwell on the heavy calamity, in all its public and private effects; and to sympathize with sorrow, which admits not of earthly remedies, but is to be supported only by religious considerations.

In the contemplation of an union, formed under the happiest auspices, and which has been thus prematurely dissolved, it is impossible to withhold

our admiration, from those who often voluntarily retired in youth, from the splendour of exalted stations, to cultivate in private life, under the influence of religion, those qualities, which while they presented an exemplary pattern of domestic virtue, appeared to strengthen and fit the mind for the high functions of the elevated sphere in which they were apparently destined to act.

Deeply to be deplored, with respect to us, it is, that an example, in which great firmness of character was moulded by mature reflection under the mild guidance of reason and experience, to a love of whatsoever things are holy, just and good, to moderation and to every office of condescension and benevolence, is no more with living illustration to impart its impression to the age ; but with respect to her who is now withdrawn from " all the delights of the sons of men," it is ever to be remembered, that she is removed to a state, in which an earthly sceptre and human distinctions are no subjects of regret.

If not suppressing the suggestions of sympathy, it be allowed to direct your attention to the bereaved consort, we behold the native of a country, from which we derive the first rude sketch of our constitution, and to which we look, as to the land in which the earlier assertors of the Reformation, prosecuted their arduous task, under the support and coun-

tenance of his ancestors. Considering him, also, as connected in alliance with many of the royal families of Europe, bearing many honorable distinctions, conferred upon him by its sovereigns, in well-earned reward of signal merit and essential services, we reflect, with satisfaction, that every title and pledge was holden out, to justify that confidence and high esteem, to which he has established so just a claim.

Trained in scenes of trying adversity, he had sustained, with filial affection, the declining years of afflicted parents, whose possessions were spoiled by the late oppressor of nations; and having assisted in the restoration of his illustrious house, and the deliverance of Europe, he was elevated by a flattering selection to a union with the heiress of these realms.

If elevation, thus worthily obtained; if pre-eminence, raised to an alliance with royalty, yet blended with all the enjoyments and affections of private life, have been dissolved, as visionary scenes, after a short possession, we are presented indeed with a striking example of the transitory and perishable nature of all earthly concerns; we perceive that God hath respect to objects beyond the boundaries of life, and that he regardeth not this as the place of reward, but as the state in which we are to work

out a recompense. Here, if ever we contemplate an affecting instance of the vicissitudes of life, and of the vanity of those distinctions for which men so ardently pant and labour; we behold a reverse of circumstances, which we trust will be supported by the power of that religion to which a well regulated mind will not fail to have recourse; and soothed by that general testimony of respect and sympathy which his qualities have procured.

If the whole people of this kingdom, if all civilized nations, mingle their regret with associated feelings upon this occasion, it may allay even the sharpest sorrow, to reflect that a religious impression is made by this event, of which the moral and spiritual effects may be of incalculable importance. The virtuous expression of feeling, which has been manifested throughout this kingdom, must be considered as highly to the credit of the nation. It affords the strongest proof of a beneficial effect upon the public mind, and it is calculated, in the assurance of the mediation of Christ, to plead for the mitigation of the offences which we may have committed in the sight of God.

But let us for a moment consider what other feelings, and what other impressions, it becomes us to cherish. If offences, distressing to every reflecting mind, if injustice, intemperance, and inhumanity

have prevailed, to an unprecedented extent, are we not called upon to pray that we may not be involved in the just judgments of God?

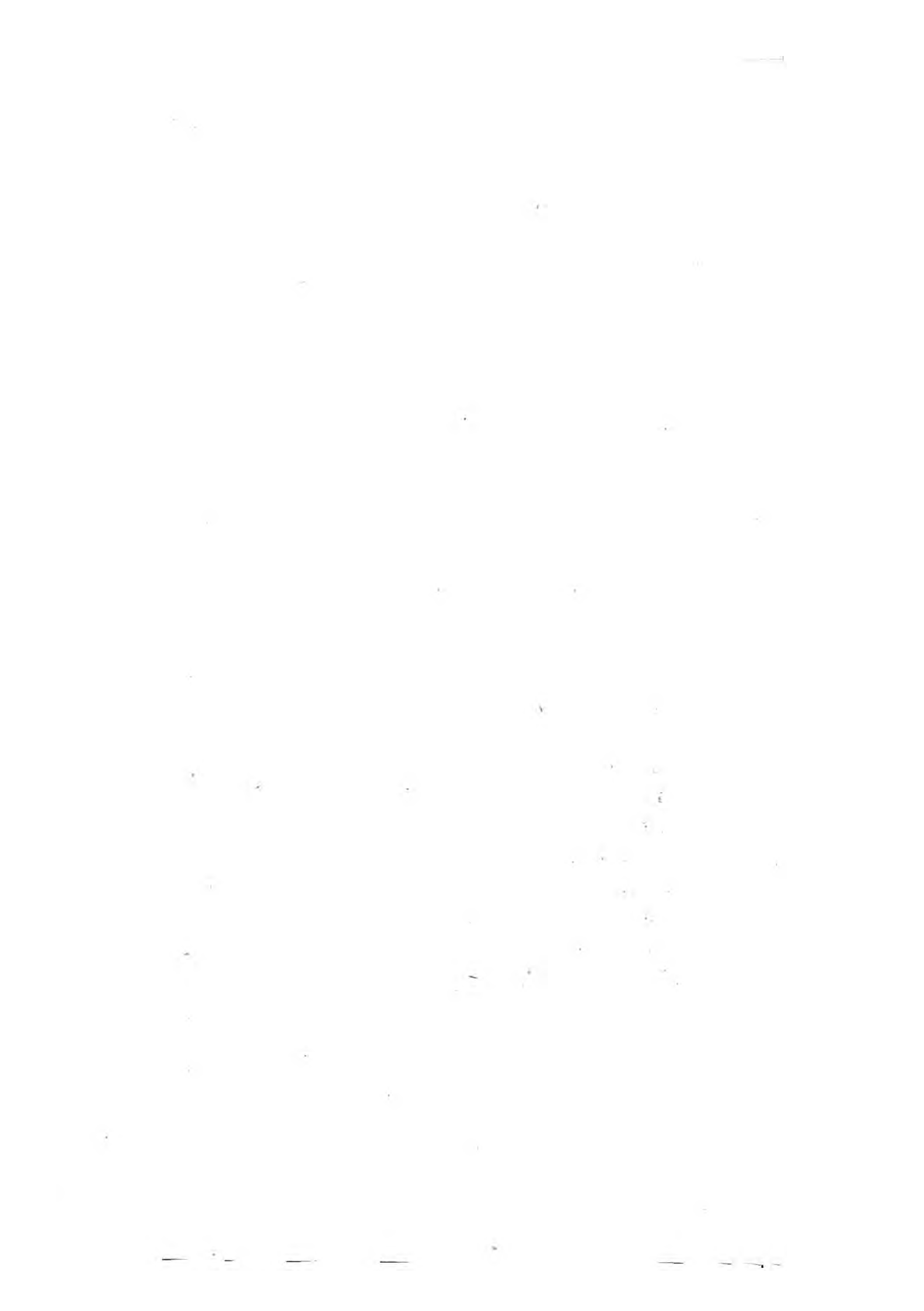
If a spirit of insubordination too frequently disturbs the confidence and security of social life, does it not become us to maintain, with a love of freedom, a regard also to the just principles of obedience, by which liberty is best secured. If I have been warranted in presuming that God may have been offended by discontent, and by a disposition to a malicious abuse of liberty, it must be by gratitude, and by a reverence for lawful authorities, that we recover the divine favour.

Loyalty to the sovereign is founded on a just reverence for the powers of government ordained by the Almighty. It is enjoined by sacred precepts, in conjunction with the fear of God. It is, in general, blended with a regard to the rights of primogeniture and hereditary succession, and it is sanctioned by a respect for transmitted, as well as personal, claims to gratitude. It binds the people to the sovereign, and conciliates the affections of the sovereign towards the people. It gives stability to the throne, and strength to the empire. It is not productive of any servile or abject spirit, but scorns to corrupt by adulation those by whom it would be governed in wisdom, and it is well calculated to protect the

welfare of society, while it controuls those lusts of ambition, which, if not restrained, introduce incessant fluctuation and discord.

If, lastly, by the awful event, of which the impression cannot for many years be effaced, every one must feel a diminished confidence in all the concerns of life, surely we are instructed not to depend on any foundation laid by man. "Go to now, ye, that say, to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life, it is even a vapour, which appeareth a little time, and then vanisheth away."

Instructed to look to "an abiding city," in a kingdom which shall remain when the heaven and the earth shall have passed away. Let us intreat him, who hath declared that "he cometh quickly," and that "his reward is with him," that he may raise us from the dead with the spirits of just men made perfect, and that he may receive us to participate in a glory which exceedeth all that the imagination can conceive, and endureth through all ages, indestructible and eternal.



S E R M O N II.

PSALM XC. 11, 12.

Who knoweth the power of thine anger ? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath. So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

THIS Psalm is represented, in the title prefixed to it, as “ a prayer of Moses, the man of God,” who had been appointed by the Almighty to communicate his first dispensation to the Jews. The work is understood to have been a solemn meditation, expressed by the divine legislator, when the people had greatly provoked God in the Wilderness, by murmuring against his servants ; because the spies, who had been sent to examine the land of Canaan, had “ brought up an evil report against it,” as unable to support its inhabitants, and as possessed by men whose strength and stature excited terror.

It should seem from the account given in the

book of Numbers, that but for the intercession of Moses, God would have destroyed the people upon this occasion, and have raised up a greater and more powerful nation from him ; but upon his entreaty, the Almighty in part withheld his wrath, declaring only, that those who, after beholding his miracles, had refused to hearken unto his voice, should not see the land which he had sworn unto their fathers. Moreover it has been supposed, though perhaps without sufficient authority, that it was upon this occasion, that God shortened the general average of human life, reducing it to seventy or eighty years ; whereas before, in the instances at least of Moses, Joshua, and Caleb, it was protracted to one hundred and ten, or one hundred and twenty years : and it should seem, if the supposition above referred to, be received, that in allusion to these circumstances, Moses remarked in this Psalm, that “ a
 “ thousand years in his sight are but as yester-
 “ day when they are passed, as a watch in the
 “ night ;” that “ the days of our years are threescore
 “ years and ten ; and if, by reason of strength, they
 “ be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour
 “ and sorrow ; for it is soon cut off, and we fly
 “ away ;” adding, in the words of the text, “ Who
 “ knoweth the power of thine anger ? even ac-
 “ cording to thy fear, so is thy wrath : so teach us
 “ to number our days, that we may apply our hearts
 “ unto wisdom.”

The first of these verses of the text is rendered in the earlier translation, which is in the Book of Common Prayer in somewhat different words, though nearly in the same sense: "But who regardeth the power of thy wrath? for even there-
" after as a man feareth, so is thy displeasure:" that is, who is there that seriously lays to heart the tremendous effects of thy wrath, which are equal to all that even the terrified imagination of man can conceive, in its utmost apprehension and alarm.

We perceive, then, with what propriety this Psalm is introduced into our Burial Service, and consecrated to a ceremony the most affecting to all our feelings, the most important in all its solemn relations to our everlasting welfare and happiness, of any that express the sentiments, or fulfil the offices of religion.

If the reflections also of Moses with respect to the shortness of human life, and the frequent indications of divine displeasure, had a strong application to the contemporaries of the Jewish legislator; how greatly are the observations enforced by the experience of successive ages, which have passed away since the period in which they were uttered.

By irresistible demonstration hath it appeared in the records of Scripture, and in the events of life, that the judgments of the Almighty, and the afflictions which he appoints when he causes "the arrows of his quiver to fly abroad," are as severe as the imagination can anticipate, and the fear of man forebode. "Remember the days of old, and the years of many generations; ask thy father and he will shew thee, and thy elders, and they will tell thee." Inexorable were the decrees of the Almighty, when the administration of his government had in contemplation, objects of importance to the spiritual welfare of mankind.

Even Moses, who expressed the inspired convictions, which I have chosen for consideration, though "his eye was not dim, nor his natural strength abated," even as he uttered his sublime raptures of piety, and his ardent exhortations to the people, was commanded to ascend to the mountain Abarim; and to behold the land of Canaan, which he was not to enter, but to die, and be gathered to his people in the Mount; as also it had been ordained with respect to Aaron, that he should incur the forfeiture of death, because he, as well as Moses, "had trespassed against God, and sanctified him not in the congregation of the children of men."

There are many other relations of Scripture, in which individuals, (especially those in whose fate and character, great and national interests were concerned, and who were raised to conspicuous stations as objects of public attention,) seem to have been exposed to those circumstances in which they might be made most effectually subservient to extensive benefits or heavy calamities ; to have been permitted to attain to long extended age, or to have been hurried prematurely to an early grave, as the moral interests of mankind required.

By the marvellous regulations of God's providence, the public interests were implicated in the circumstances, and involved in the event which preserved, or deprived the community of the object of its regard. God, who was the judge, regulated the effects of his decrees with exact and measured operation to every person, as might best conduce to the complicated designs which he had in view. The proofs of wrath, or of forbearance which were displayed, were designed, doubtless, to awaken contrition, and to prevent, if it might be, the necessity of final condemnation. But whatever illustration of the divine judgments was afforded in present rewards or punishments, it was evident that there were ulterior purposes, which had relation to another state of existence. If, to overcome the hardness of Pharaoh's heart, God smote all the first

born in the land of Egypt, so that " there was not a
" house in which there was not one dead ;" and if
Josiah, who " did that which was right in the sight of
" the Lord, and turned not aside to the right hand
" or to the left," was slain in battle, the object of
general lamentation, by a long-continued ordinance
in Israel, it is evident that God must have appointed
a time in which he will recompence those whose
conduct he approved ; as likewise that they who
" humbled themselves, and rent their clothes, and
" wept before the Lord," were not only like Josiah,
" gathered to their fathers, that they might not see
" the evil," which God had determined to inflict ;
but that they were well instructed, when " dying in
" the faith, and not having received the promises,"
they confessed that they were " pilgrims on the earth,"
declaring thereby, that they sought " a country, a
" better, that is, a heavenly country, and looked for a
" city which had foundations, whose builder and
" maker was God."

If those, who contemplated and experienced the
tremendous effects of divine wrath, which are de-
scribed in the sacred accounts, preserved an un-
shaken confidence in the promises which were
holden out imperfectly and in figure under the old
dispensation ; does it not become us, who live under
a covenant which brought life and immortality dis-
tinctly to view, to reflect, under the afflictions which

befal us, though they may indeed deeply affect our feelings by an apparent severity, that the decrees of the Almighty, however sternly executed, and however they may extend a melancholy shade over the fate of those, whose virtues might seem to have the strongest claim to his favour, and in whose sorrows or in the loss of whom we experience the heaviest calamities, are still but dispensations of a transitory nature, in a preparatory scene of existence, and are to be judged therefore, not only as perfectly compatible with the justice and goodness of God, but as essentially and indispensably requisite for the advancement of that spiritual economy, in which our eternal welfare is the chief concern.

True it is, that the appointments which shake or destroy the fabric of our present happiness, are often indeed heavy to be borne ; so painfully trying and severe, as to call for the full exercise of our faith, and the energy of every religious principle.

When those who are comparatively righteous are involved in tribulations of peculiar trial, they must look to that eternal glory which shall hereafter be revealed, and to which the "sufferings of the present life are not worthy to be compared." In the disclosure of all the operations of God, there are circumstances which intimate the assurance, and carry on the mind to the expectation of a final judgment, in which a just retribution shall vindicate all his attri-

butes, and every individual illustrate and acknowledge the equity of his government.

In the full conviction of the truth of what the Scriptures declare on this subject, we must be persuaded that all the measures of God are directed by a beneficial and corrective design. “ That there “ is mercy with him, and that therefore he should “ be feared.”

If it be “ better to go to the house of mourning “ than to the house of joy,” how salutary must be the solemn thoughts when the spirit of the whole nation is bowed as the spirit of one man, and we behold, in the mansions of the great, so affecting a proof of the perishable and precarious tenure upon which we hold the possession of human life.

In the retrospect of the events of sacred and profane history, there are many striking relations of the premature loss of persons in whose life the most important interests, and the most anxious hopes, were centered ; but with respect to merely human occurrences, and to the failure of merely earthly grounds of confidence, an instance of equal impression ; so complicated with great and extensive concerns — so momentous in all its public and private consequences — so combined with all the best affections of men, as that which we are now assembled to deplore, has rarely, if ever, occurred.

Without taking into contemplation the great ascendancy which this nation has established, or the effects which have resulted from its influence over other countries, in promoting whatever is connected with the cause of humanity; in exploring and in civilizing unenlightened countries; in propagating the Gospel, or in diffusing Christian knowledge; without considering the importance of power well directed in these respects; but looking only to the maintenance of the civil and religious interests, which are immediately connected with attachment to the house of Brunswick, and feeling a just and reasonable anxiety for the preservation of a family distinguished for its unshaken adherence to the principles of freedom and toleration, and for the protection of a Church justly regarded as the glory of the Reformation; we cannot, in the full sense of the value of the privileges which we enjoy, but feel every emotion excited when the succession to the throne, in the direct line of descent, is affected by two connected events. However we may trust in Providence for the continuance and renewal of the august family, under whose auspices we have so long flourished, and been raised to an eminence which the nation has never before attained; yet, we should be wanting in the expression of the right feeling that becomes us, if we should fail in any tribute of reasonable concern for the loss of a Princess apparently modelled to the wishes of a free and well

informed people, and justly fixing and centering in her person every affection, and every sentiment of respect.

I recently had occasion to state the grounds upon which it imports us to consider, whether we may not have procured this “affliction unto ourselves, “in that we have forsaken the Lord our God, when “he led us by the way” that we should go. I directed your attention,—alas! it required not my suggestion to point out the circumstances which enhance our sorrow—the motives to awful reflection.

It is felt by all, that the voice of nature calls upon us to mourn for events, which excite every sensibility, and extend to every department of society. The affections of the heart, when thus moved, operate to a renewal of all the principles by which it should be directed. When we bewail the loss of that which is truly valuable, there is some consolation even in the recital of its praise; and in this instance, that which is recorded in our remembrance, strengthens, by a common sentiment, the bonds of union between the members of the community, drawing closer the ties of mutual attachment between the sovereign and his people, and rendering us justly sensible, that every mark of respectful condolence is due to the Regent, to the Queen, and

to the Royal House—to the afflicted parent, and to the bereaved consort.

Moreover, if the Almighty has pierced the soul with a wound which he only can inflict ; if his displeasure is “ even as a man feareth,” and if its consequences have exceeded every thing which our imagination hath led us to conceive, are we not taught to entertain that reverent and holy fear, which is the beginning of wisdom.

Looking to the magnitude of many flagrant offences, especially of those of which it is expressly declared, that they bring down the wrath of God, when they “ cry,” as it were, “ from the ground,” against those who “ shed blood” upon it, have we not seemed literally to hear, what Jeremiah, in figurative representation, describes of Jerusalem, uttering a piercing reproach against the enemies of her peace, the awful admonition of virtue, worn out by suffering, “ the voice of a woman in travail, and the anguish of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion : that bewaileth herself, that spreadeth out her hands, saying, woe is me, for my soul is wearied.”

Very mournful is the contemplation of her, who was so lately the object of admiration, yielding up her gentle spirit, in early youth, by a sudden and

unforeseen dissolution, and without having experienced that reviving comfort, in which a mother " forgetteth her sorrow, for joy that a man is " born into the world ;" but under the disappointment of her hope, and the earnest wishes of the people, with expressed resignation, breathing out her last sigh, in meek submission to the will of God.

What! and how different were the expectations of men! If looking to a sceptre, to be wielded by a female hand, we had examples in the brightest periods, of reigns glorious in history, distinguished by external success and by the cultivation of arts, literature, and science; we had also good ground when we considered the endowments of nature, and the probable result of well-directed pursuits, to trust in the confirmation and continuance of the great blessings which we possess, and to anticipate years of well-sustained dominion, established on the reverence and affection of a grateful people.

The illustrious personage, on the disclosure of whose early character, we founded a strong confidence, appears to have displayed, as far as our distant observation could discover, great decision of mind, arising from conscious dignity, and generous affections, eager to indulge the feelings of condescension and kindness to others. Her fortitude established on religious convictions, and confirmed by

religious preparation, had but too melancholy occasion to demonstrate its strength.

It has pleased God that all our fond anticipations should fail, and that a disappointment should be experienced, as affecting as the fancy, in its most gloomy presage, could apprehend.

The bright object in which the imagination of men, in its happier dreams, beheld the royal mother of a numerous offspring, the parent of a long line of sovereigns, who might perpetuate the care of a constitution, justly ranked among the noblest works of human wisdom, and uniting the excellencies of every form of government, in a manner, which the philosophical historian of antiquity deemed unattainable, is withdrawn from us ; at the moment, when with thoughtless confidence, we trusted that she would strengthen, and in some degree, secure to be transmitted to the latest posterity, the proud structure of our civil and religious liberty.

But, farther, it is not devoid of instruction to reflect, that the illustrious person whom we lament, and who often veiled the splendour of her distinctions, in the garb of private virtue, conferred a dignity on the domestic character, and held out the high example of respect for simplicity, for

rational pleasures and improving pursuits of retirement. With unaffected reverence for the revealed word of God, she looked to the Scriptures for instruction, and introduced the cheerful light of Religion to shed its lustre around her path, in the public walks or the secluded vale of life; hallowing the Sabbath to its holy purposes, and not omitting to participate of its solemn sacrament, searching out the attributes of God in the works of nature, and exciting the industry of men by adding the improvements of art to embellish the retreats of domestic life.

What must be the change to those who have to lament the dissevered connection with one so justly endeared, and who, while they beheld the unambitious path in which she trod, trusted that God would, in his appointed time, lead her "to do judgment and justice on the throne."

What must be the unutterable anguish of him by whom she was so lately received with gladness and rejoicing, and who has now only the melancholy, but soothing consolation to reflect, that she who was apparently ordained to intimate reproof in her time, has, indeed, effected a salutary, though painful impression; has left a "memorial" which shall be cherished with universal regret, and a name to be remembered throughout all generations.

“ May the Lord hear his prayer, and with his eyes
“ consider his calling,” may the voice from Heaven
“ console him, which proclaims “ Write from hence-
“ forth, Blessed are the dead which die in the
“ Lord, even so saith the Spirit, for they rest from
“ their labours.” May He who “ died for our re-
“ demption, and rose again for our justification,” in-
“ struct him, to trust in his power, who “ has the keys
“ of life and death,” and may the admonition of St.
Paul administer to his support, teaching him “ not
“ to sorrow as men without hope for them that
“ sleep in Christ,” so that “ at the general resur-
“ rection, at the last day,” he may “ be found ac-
“ ceptable in the sight of God, and receive that
“ blessing which his well-beloved Son shall then
“ pronounce to all them that love and fear him,
“ saying, Come ye blessed children of my Father,
“ receive the kingdom prepared for you from the
“ beginning of the world.”

Let us also, with a contrite and humble spirit,
pray to God that he may teach us to derive from
this, his heavy appointment, the short and pre-
carious continuance of human life, and that reli-
gious sorrow which worketh unto repentance,
and that we may be instructed “ so to number our
“ days that we may, indeed, apply our hearts unto
“ wisdom.”

Thus may a Princess, in whose life we looked for the preservation and enlargement of our earthly blessings, administer to the spiritual good of those who, through faith in Christ, rely on the efficacy of his atonement, to the promotion of their eternal welfare.

Lastly, may that Almighty God, “ with whom do
“ live the spirits of them that depart hence in the
“ Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful,
“ after they are delivered from the burden of the
“ flesh are in joy and felicity, be pleased, of his
“ gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the
“ number of his elect, and to hasten his kingdom,
“ that we, with all those that are departed in the
“ true faith of his holy name, may have our perfect
“ consummation and bliss, both in body and soul,
“ in his eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus
“ Christ, our Lord.”

FINIS.