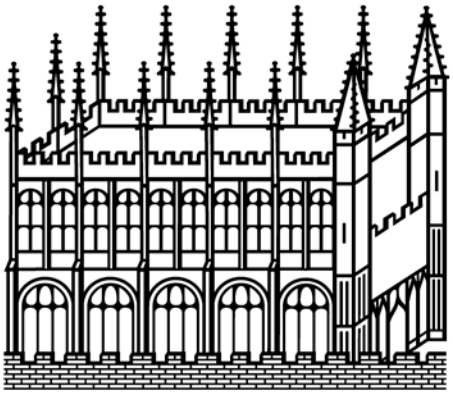

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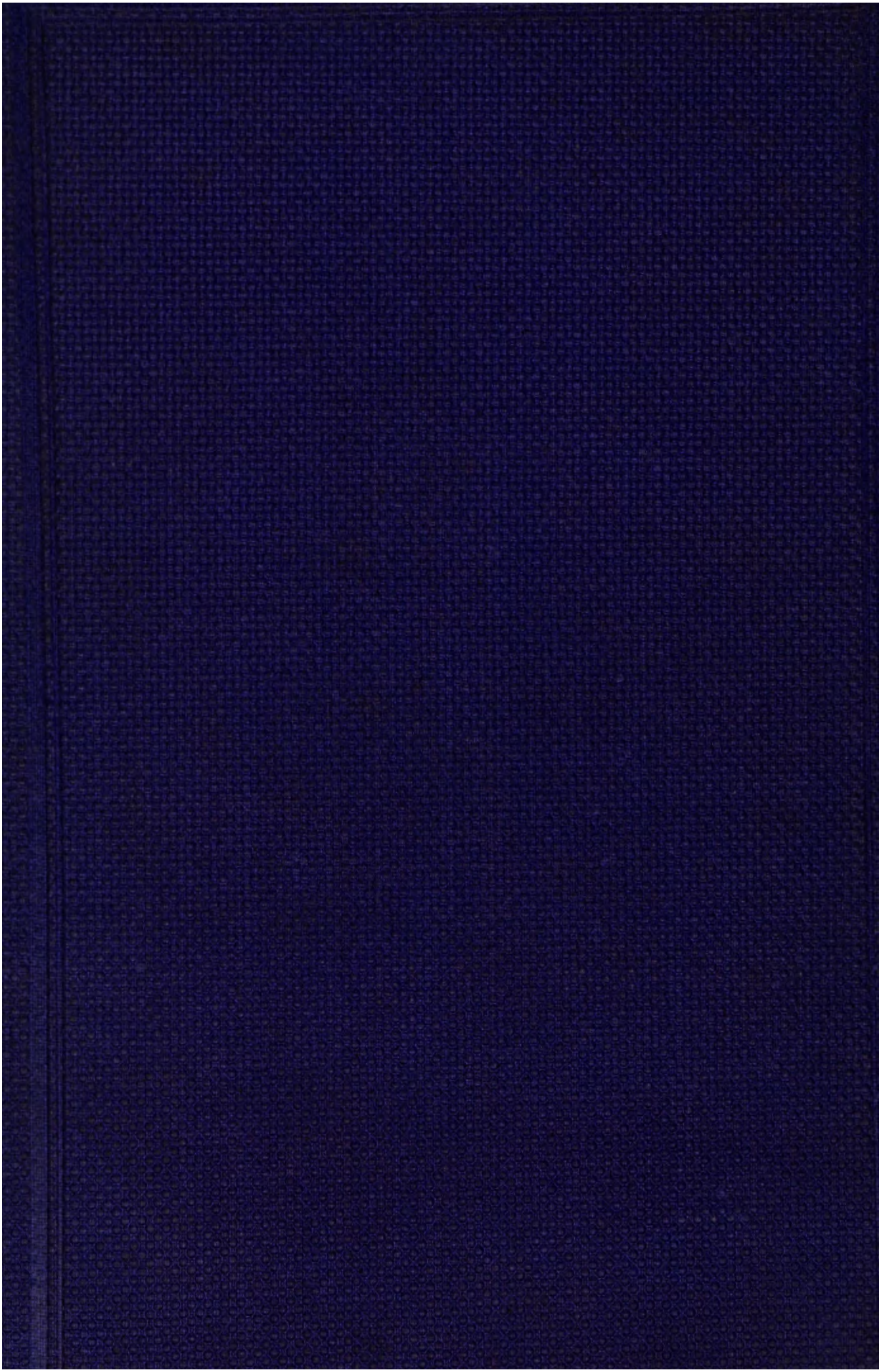

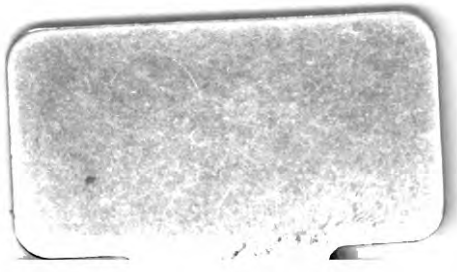

SERMONS AND OUTLINES

BY THE

REV. RICHARD WATSON.

HIS CHARACTER AND WRITINGS,

BY JAMES DIXON, D.D.

EDITED, WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH,

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM WILLAN.

LONDON: HAMILTON, ADAMS & CO.
EDINBURGH: OGLE AND MURRAY.
GLASGOW: BOLTON AND CO.
1855.

100. s. 83.

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TO

JOHN SCHOFIELD, ESQUIRE,

WATERLOO, NEAR LIVERPOOL,

This Volume

IS INSCRIBED AS A MARK OF ESTEEM

AND FRIENDSHIP

BY

THE EDITOR.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THE Sermons and Outlines, except the first four, have not been previously published, and are selected from a manuscript book given to me by my revered friend, the Rev. WILLIAM ATHERTON. From the character of the manuscript, I judge that the Discourses were taken down at the time they were delivered. The original owner, himself of cultivated taste, and a great admirer of Mr WATSON, has well preserved the lofty thought, the pathos, and the religious force of the preacher; and thus furnished good evidence of what Dr DIXON and the Essayist both state to have been the style of Mr WATSON'S pulpit ministrations. In preparing the Discourses for the press, I have exercised the freedom claimed by an Editor in making such alterations, etc., as were deemed justly necessary.

It is superfluous to offer any remarks on the Article by WATSON'S singularly gifted, and profoundly philosophic and eloquent son-in-law, the Rev. JAMES DIXON, D.D. I

am under special obligations to him for his generous kindness in allowing me to reprint the same. It first appeared in the *London Quarterly Review.*

The Essay on Mr WATSON, published in 1834, and which has for some time been out of print, is the production of a departed friend—a man of ripe scholarship, and whose modesty was equal to the greatness of his intellectual endowments. It merits the high eulogium of an eminent living minister, who pronounced it to be one of the finest pieces of criticism in the English language.

W. W.

GLASGOW, *March*, 1865.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

RICHARD WATSON could not boast of high lineal descent, nor had he the disposition to do so, even if he had been able. He made for himself a name. His memorial is in the grandeur of his character and the immortality of his works.

His father, the son of a respectable farmer, was apprenticed to, and afterwards carried on the business of a saddler. Honest labour is ever honourable. "Seest thou a man diligent in business? he shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men." The mother was a woman of superior mind, and her outward features the model of her son's. Nature had cast them both in the same mould. A large family blessed the house of Thomas and Ann Watson. Eighteen children were born to them. Richard was the seventh. February 22, in the year of our Redemption, 1781, was the day of his birth, and the honoured place of it, Barton-upon-Humber, Lincolnshire. That county has been fruitful of great men. The immortal Newton here first saw the light which afterwards he so wondrously unbraided. He walked among the stars in earnest contemplation, watched their movements, ascertained their laws, and unfolded their harmonious working by the mysterious power of an all-pervading gravitation. The Wesleys were born there: the one an eminent theologian and religious reformer; the other a distinguished Christian poet.

Richard's infancy was one of extreme weakness, ofttimes quivering between life and death. A mother's care anxiously nursed him—a benign Providence preserved the life that was so lovingly tended. In early childhood he was placed under the tuition of an elderly matron, who, pleased with his success, prognosticated that he "would be a great man." Grandeur of intellectual character does sometimes appear in its blossom in childhood, but not always.

At the age of six years he was removed to the school of the Rev. Matthew Barnett, curate of St Peter's Church, the clergyman who administered to him the rite of baptism. The intelligence of the youth awakened the interest and admiration of his master, insomuch that he prevailed upon the parents to allow him to commence the study of Latin. Thus the foundation began to be laid of sound classical learning. He had great aptitude in acquiring knowledge. Quickness of youthful perception, with a retentive memory, made his lesson-work comparatively easy. For two years he was under the able tuition of this clergyman; afterwards the family removed from Barton to Lincoln.

Richard's father was a Dissenter, strongly imbued with the religious sentiment, somewhat Calvinistic in his creed, and exact in the maintenance of family discipline. His children were trained up in a regular attendance on religious worship—a practice that cannot be too strongly enforced upon parents. Kindly but firm restraints from evil companionships and evil courses, and the loving culture of habits of Sabbath observance, of attendance on public religious ordinances, on family worship, and private religious teaching, are the sure methods, under God, of determining the young to forsake the false way, and to

cleave to the true and the good. The Assembly's Catechism entered as an essential part of home training. Catechetical instruction, depositing in the youthful memory definitions of Christian doctrines and duties, supported by Scripture evidence, is a wise course to pursue. It is casting the seed into ground which, under Divine influences, will in after years yield its golden fruitage. The Word of God, in its lofty and wondrous truths, even when not directly saving, exerts upon the mind and the morals a salutary influence. And so Infinite Wisdom dictated that His sacred lessons should be taught to children with a diligence and constancy that marked how He held it to be of paramount importance. "And ye shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." (Deut. xi. 19.)

After spending two years in a private school in Lincoln, he entered the Grammar School there, and became an example of diligence and proficiency. He acquired a fair knowledge of the classics that are taught in those venerable seminaries of learning—a fair knowledge for a boy not yet in his teens. Along with his school studies he cherished the love of reading, and delighted himself in history and general literature. Indeed, at this early period of his life, it became manifest that with him reading was really a passion; that he had already commenced to lay up, in the storehouse of memory, the treasures alike of ancient and modern lore which served him in such good stead in subsequent years.

When the family removed to Lincoln, the father continued for a time with the Dissenters, but afterwards became a member of the Wesleyan Methodist Society. The chil-

dren were regularly led by their parents to the house of God, and had the privilege of a faithful and an earnest ministry. No particular impression for a while seemed to have been made on the mind of Richard. He was volatile, sportive, negligent of religion, and sometimes inclined to profanity; indicating, moreover, a resolute and determined will, that went on the side of iniquity instead of righteousness.

At the age of fourteen years he ceased his school life to enter upon business. His parents did not possess the means of training him for a profession, even if they had been desirous of doing so. He made choice of the trade of a carpenter and joiner. His health, however, was not robust; nor could it be, seeing that he had, by this time, reached his full stature, six feet two inches—almost a prodigy of natural growth.

Not long after his apprenticeship he gave unmistakeable evidence that his spirit and conduct were under the strong mastership of evil. Study he almost entirely relinquished; books were not his chosen companions; knowledge in its various branches was not his pursuit. Was it new associates—was it the presentation of sin in more glaring and enticing forms, that led him to throw off religious restraints and abandon himself to wrong and mischief? The workshop, alas! is still the nursery of vice rather than of virtue. Parental authority was disregarded, the house of God forsaken, the Lord's-day desecrated, wicked companions chosen, religion ridiculed—these told the sad tale that sin had gained a vigorous power over him, and caused sore grief and alarm to his parents and friends. The evil tree, alas! flourished in youthful luxuriance, and brought forth much deadly fruit.

At length he was arrested in his sinful career. Singular

enough, controversy with the loquacious wife of a good man whom he sometimes visited for the pleasure of his conversation, and yet more especially for his help in mathematical study, led him to resume attendance at the Methodist chapel, that he might peradventure be furnished with arguments to meet his fair antagonist. The "Five Points" were the chief topics on which they disputed. He went to the chapel to find weapons to wield in doctrinal controversy. Under the first sermon, however, God's own arrow pierced his conscience; sin was made to appear sin; personal guilt and defilement became to him terrible realities; the law flashed its awful fires upon his inward spirit, and he was convinced of all, and judged of all. Service over, he retired from the chapel, not to dispute, but to meditate and pray in secret. Conviction of sin was deep, poignant; it wrought in him godly sorrow, alarmed his fears, filled him with wretchedness, and constrained him to cry out of the depths of his troubled soul, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

This was the turning-point in his history—the grand arrest that saved him from the way that leadeth to destruction. He was still in bondage, but he was not a willing bondsman. Sin held him still in its fearful thrall, but he was struggling for freedom. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!" His whole soul was bent on deliverance. This is repentance unto life.

Christian friends afforded him their instructions, and encouraged him by their experience and their prayers. They taught him the way of life. Having passed through the same sorrow for sin, and having also believed on the Lord Jesus with their heart unto righteousness, they were well fitted to show unto him that eternal life which was

with the Father and was manifested to them. The doctrine of atonement for sin by the sacrificial death of the Son of God, incarnated in our nature—the doctrine that faith in Jesus the Saviour, without the deeds of the law, was the only method by which sinners could be justified from all their offences, was clearly made known to him, and pressed with loving earnestness on his attention. The truth as it is in Jesus, accompanied by the light and grace of the Holy Spirit, wrought in him a living, personal, appropriating faith in the atoning Redeemer. He believed to the saving of his soul. What a grand epoch in the history of an immortal spirit! How marvellous the change that passes over it—from darkness to light—from guilt to pardon—from moral defilement to spiritual purity—from death to life—from the slave of sin to the servant of righteousness—from the horrors of an intelligent nature wrecked utterly and hopelessly, to the salvation of that nature to the highest perfection of character and enjoyment for evermore! Who that has been the subject of such a conversion can ever mistake or forget it? He always retained a vivid impression of the grandeur and the happiness of the change he then experienced. To a friend present with him in his last hours he said, "What a light was that, what a day, when the blessed Spirit struck the light of heaven into our dark minds!"

"The principles which this truly great man recognised in conversion he cherished through the labours and afflictions of life. He regarded the sacrifice and intercession of Christ as the only ground of a sinner's justification before God; and faith in the blood of atonement as inseparably connected with salvation, from the guilt and power of sin. The Holy Spirit he honoured as the Author of saving faith, and of all holiness, power, and comfort in the mind

of man. The salvation of the gospel, consisting of these blessings, and obtained in this manner, he felt to be the great end of existence—necessary to prepare mankind both for the duties and trials of life, and the joys of heaven. An enlarged acquaintance with theology, the Scriptures, religious people, and the history of the church, only served to strengthen his attachment to these principles; and he realised their truth and efficiency when passing through the valley of the shadow of death." *

A change so real and so divine was impressively displayed in his entire life. "The good tree brought forth good fruit." The new creation in righteousness—radiant in the light, and replenished with the vital influences of heaven—put forth its peaceable fruits, which are by Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God.

His secular duties, as was meet, were performed with renewed diligence. His practical knowledge of business grew rapidly. Religion should always give its celestial colour, and infuse something of its sacred energy, even in the every-day duties of life. So it was with young Watson.

With yet greater evidence did his religious life and character appear. No longer the companion of sinners, he entered into the fellowship of the saints, and walked in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost. Having first given himself to the Lord, he gave himself to the church "by the will of God." With such exactness did he conduct himself, so beautifully consistent was his life—serious yet happy, cheerful yet devout—that he was proverbially pointed to as an example for youth; and some of them, by that example, were deeply impressed with the reality and power of religion. Christians ought to be

* Jackson's Life of Watson.

careful to maintain good works—to exhibit in action the pure and undefiled religion that is professed. Nor can the beneficial effects of such divine conduct be fully estimated. In all times, indeed, a bright, glowing, happy, consistent, godly life has been productive of immense good to mankind.

Such a decided change in the inward temper and outward conduct of the youth, would necessarily awaken ridicule and opposition on the part of his former evil associates. The wicked persecute the righteous. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. So he found it, yet maintained his fidelity. Regular attendance on the public means of grace, secret prayer, the reading and study of the Scriptures, watchfulness against adverse influences—these were the methods he employed for the cultivation of his piety, and to secure an increase in the knowledge and love of God. The light of Christian knowledge he combined with the fervour of Christian love. Thus early did he know and realise Christ to be the LIGHT OF LIFE.

Dr Dixon, in his masterly and eloquent Essay, shows the amazing influence which the religious life exerted upon all Mr Watson's faculties. Then the deep fountains of his being seem to have been opened up. With this new spiritual life his natural powers were unfolded in forms of wondrous beauty and strength. From this time he became an earnest student of divine things. His religious feelings deepened with the growth of his Christian knowledge; his sympathies were awakened; pity for perishing sinners was strongly excited, and he became ardent in his desires to labour for Christ.

Possessed and animated with Christian life, he entered upon Christian work. Indeed, according to the vigour of

the inward divine life, will be its outward manifestations —its actual embodiment in the conduct. He gave himself to public prayers and exhortations, and soon made the formal attempt to preach.

On the day after he had attained the age of fifteen years he preached his first sermon in a cottage, in the village of Boothby, near Lincoln. Can this early commencement of preaching be at all vindicated? A work of the highest importance and responsibility, demanding qualifications so marked and varied, should not be lightly undertaken by any one. If young Watson's early attempts cannot be thoroughly or successfully justified, they may, however, be fairly excused. His mind, like his body, soon reached the state of manhood. At this period of life he manifested maturity of judgment, fervour of piety, and sobriety and seriousness of outward manners. His preaching met with the approval of hearers pious and intelligent, and was accompanied by much success. But his case, so peculiar, can never be pleaded as a reason for juvenile preaching. Many are the ways in which youthful piety may employ itself in active labours for Christ, without aspiring to the pulpit, and assuming the functions of a preacher of righteousness. Pride, conceit, self-sufficiency, self-importance, an unwillingness to learn, are the evils that almost naturally attend a too early engagement in the sublime work of proclaiming the glorious gospel of the blessed God. If, however, a young man feels himself constrained by the love of Christ publicly to testify to His grace and truth; if the conviction of duty is strong, like pent-up fires; if zeal for Christ's honour in the salvation of sinners consumes him; if he cannot refrain because a woe is unto him if he preach not the gospel, then let him testify. But, even then, let there be

modesty, self-distrust, earnest prayer, reliance on God, and, withal, diligent attention to reading, to study, to whatever will make him thoroughly furnished for his high calling. In these days, an ignorant Christian ministry no one attempts to vindicate. Such an office claims and merits the noblest minds, the highest culture, the richest resources of knowledge. Timothy, a model for young preachers, meditated on the things of Christ—gave himself WHOLLY to them—that his profiting might appear to all; studied to show himself approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. In such a divine service an indolent, ignorant drone is utterly out of place. Christ walks amidst the seven GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS. He demands and appropriates the best to Himself. HE HOLDS THE STARS IN HIS RIGHT HAND.

It is not needful to dwell on the persecutions and petty annoyances to which he and other Methodists were at this time exposed, in their endeavours to spread scriptural truth and holiness in their famous city and neighbourhood. They had their trials of cruel mockings, insomuch that they were compelled to avail themselves of the Act of Toleration.

The youth of Richard, together with the marked display of superior gifts, rendered him popular, and excited the desire of many, far beyond his own home, to hear the noted boy-preacher for themselves. In the midst of his celebrity, caressed by friends, and admired in every place where he ministered the word of life, he preserved a serious, humble, devout spirit. Pride was happily kept from spoiling him. He walked humbly with God, cherished a deep reverence of His name, and showed how awful as well as how happy true religion was.

So good was the reputation he had already acquired, both for piety and abilities, that he was requested to occupy the place of the Rev. Thomas Cooper, of Newark, who had been incapacitated for his duties by ill health. With great fear and trembling he entered upon the discharge of his solemn, yet interesting, work. Much kindness and friendly counsel were afforded him by Mr Cooper. He continued at Newark until the Conference of 1796. Through the earnest entreaty of Mr Cooper, the Conference was prevailed upon to appoint young Watson to a circuit, though his name was carefully withheld from insertion in their printed Minutes. He was appointed to the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Circuit. During the first six or seven months, he was in labours more abundant, and the honoured instrument in bringing many sinners to the saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. The gospel came not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and with much assurance. His physical exertions proved too exhausting for his weak constitution, and he was compelled to return to the quiet of home, to recruit, if possible, his enfeebled strength. For some months he remained in retirement. By the good providence of God, however, health was restored, and he joyously resumed his ministerial labours.

The late Rev. Jonathan Edmondson, M.A., had young Watson as a colleague in Leicester, and rendered him the best of service. Mr Edmondson was a man of sound learning, an able preacher, orderly in his habits, and of a bland and kindly nature. Fortunate indeed is it for a junior minister to find himself in the fellowship and under the guidance of such a man. The following is Mr Edmondson's own account of his youthful fellow-labourer:—

"In the year 1798 Mr Watson was stationed with me

at Leicester. I soon perceived that he was a youth of very superior parts; that he had a most surprising grasp of intellect; and that if he held on his way he would become one of our brightest luminaries. I could not render him all the assistance he should have had at that critical period of his life, but I did what I could, and, with a generosity of soul worthy of himself, he always expressed a grateful sense of my poor services.

"As an inmate of our family, he was social, friendly, and affectionate. He gave no trouble, was well pleased with everything, and was greatly beloved by all under my roof. We never saw him out of temper. He never put on any lofty airs, but was humble, modest, and unassuming. We never had an angry word, an unkind look, or the slightest interruption of a most delightful friendship; and, when he left us at the end of the year, we sustained a loss in our domestic circle which we deeply deplored.

"The studies of Mr Watson before he came to Leicester had been extremely irregular and desultory, and he had acquired such a habit of passing rapidly from one thing to another, without going to the bottom of any, that it was difficult for him to fix his thoughts for any length of time upon any given subject. But when he conquered that habit, he could acquire more information in a few days than some others could in as many months. Perceiving this defect, I strongly urged the necessity of steady perseverance in all his literary pursuits, and afterwards found that my advice had not been disregarded.

"The principal subject of his study was divinity; but he did not altogether neglect the sciences. What he had learned of Latin when a boy he had partly forgotten, and he had never turned his attention to the Greek of the New Testament. But, in after life, by persevering appli-

cation, he acquired a familiar acquaintance with both those languages.

"As a reader, he had no taste for common and ordinary works. Standard books of high reputation were his favourites, and that circumstance assisted him much when he became an author, both in regard to the style and sentiments of his valuable publications, though I am not aware that he adopted any writer as a model of composition. His memory was remarkably strong. He told Mrs Edmondson that if he read a work once, it was almost all his own; and, that if he read it twice, it was his own altogether.

"I gave Mr Watson a plan of reading and study, adapted to the itinerant life, which I had formed for myself, and which I afterwards published in my essay on 'The Christian Ministry.' How far this plan was observed by him, while he continued to travel, I cannot say, but I know it met with his approbation, and that he adopted it while we were stationed together. When we went out into the circuit our saddle-bags were loaded with books, and when we returned we generally gave an account of what we had read and studied. Our circuit was not one of the most extensive, but it included Melton-Mowbray; and we were a fortnight out and a fortnight at home. During the fortnight at home, we walked thirty or forty miles a-week, and supplied Leicester, and six or eight adjacent villages, generally returning home three or four miles after the evening service. I mention this to show the necessity and utility of the plan now given to an itinerant preacher." *

His profiting was soon apparent: he rapidly increased in pulpit and pastoral influence.

* Jackson's Life of Watson.

For a while he left the Wesleyan Society, and entered the ministry of what is called the New Connexion of Methodists. It is needless to detail the circumstances that led to such a change. Some may be disposed to charge him with indiscretion; if so, it was only the result of his noble and generous nature. His integrity and honour were unimpeachable. After a time he returned to the church of his early choice, and became one of her most distinguished sons. He received appointments to the most important spheres of ministerial labour, and in all of them his preaching won the admiration and excited the interest of the people. His ministry was eminently instructive and forceful. Numbers were converted to God through the truth. In every place the same gracious results followed. He knew the truth himself; he realised it in his own spirit; he delighted to dwell in serious and holy thought on its grand character and design, and cherished a deep conviction of the need of the Holy Spirit's agency to render it effective. Hence his power in the pulpit. It was not simply the utterance of lofty thought; it was not the rich and beautiful display of style and imagery in which thought was embodied; it was not the impressiveness of his manner and elocution that rendered him so successful. It was his devout and earnest spirit; his profound conviction of the reality of what he declared; his firm reliance on the Holy Spirit—"the Lord and Giver of life"—that was the secret of his great usefulness.

There is no need to enumerate the various towns to which he was appointed, nor the names of the ministers who were his associates in the pastoral relationship. He was a noble, generous, affable colleague. He was an earnest—not a boisterous—preacher. He was a loving,

tender, watchful pastor. Many gems will irradiate his crown. Many sons will be found at the last day to have been brought to glory through his labours. That is the richest reward a minister can have.

Whilst the pulpit was his throne, and divinity the chief theme of his study, he was ready for every good work. His heart expanded to benevolent and philanthropic objects. He was a vigorous opponent of slavery in the British colonies. His works in this department of service praise him!

Christian missions to the heathen secured his strongest sympathies, and engaged his strenuous efforts. He was one of the founders of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. For some time the cause of missions in that religious body was mainly indebted to the zealous labours of the Rev. Dr Coke. Indeed, he may be said to have the distinguished honour of being the Father of Methodist missions to the heathen. His zeal never tired: like the fire on the altar of sacrifice, it burned with a steady and continued brightness. He consecrated his fortune to this cause; he ceased not from house to house to solicit contributions. Not less than eighteen times did he himself cross the Atlantic to preach the gospel to the perishing outcasts; and, at the advanced age of sixty-seven, he determined on a voyage to the East. During this voyage he ended his glorious career, and entered into the joy of his Lord.

Dr Coke's destination to India led to the adoption of plans for a more systematic and vigorous working of this noble cause. The first missionary service was held in Leeds on the 6th October, 1813. Mr Watson preached in the morning from the text—"Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they

may live." (Ezek. xxxvii. 9). The sermon was one of remarkable eloquence and power. In the afternoon was the public meeting. From this time he became a zealous advocate and an untiring labourer in behalf of foreign missions. For some years he acted as one of the secretaries of the society; he pleaded its claims from the pulpit, the platform, the press. He, with his gifted and sagacious friend, Dr Bunting, were the most prominent, and rendered the greatest service, in the formation and extension of this evangelistic institution. Steadily has it grown since its commencement; now employing missionaries in almost every part of the world, realising more than £100,000 annually in contributions, and exerting an influence for good equal to any missionary society in existence. What hath God wrought!

The literary labours of Mr Watson were very considerable. At the age of twenty-four he wrote two biographical sketches, which were the first-fruits of authorship. In the succeeding year appeared his first printed sermon on Religious Meditation (Gen. xxiv. 63). Like the brief memoirs, it revealed, in more than rich promise, all the high excellences for which he was afterwards so justly celebrated. Though from that time he continued to employ his pen on subjects of general interest and importance, it was not until the year 1818 that he wrote any thing of a strictly theological kind, when he published his "Remarks on the Eternal Sonship of Christ, and the Use of Reason in Matters of Revelation." At once his character was fixed as a profound and an accomplished divine. More elaborate works soon followed, such as the "Theological Institutes" and "Biblical Dictionary," and bore witness to the extent of his toil in the fields of Christian literature. With so many other duties pressing

heavily upon him, it was a marvel that he could devote any time to the press—a still greater marvel that he should write so much. There can scarcely be a doubt that excess of labour laid the foundation of his fatal disease, and shortened, by many years, a life of such unspeakable preciousness and promise. Had he observed the wise counsel of his valued friend, Mr Edmondson, it would have been for his own health, and greatly to the advantage of the church and the world. "Do not exert yourself above your strength; God does not require it; and men should not fix your rule."

Except his "Conversations for the Young," the copyright of his works, so varied and so valuable, he freely gave for the interests of the body with which he was connected. What an instance of self-denying and self-sacrificing generosity! I remember the late Rev. John Mason telling how he urged Mr Watson to accept of some remuneration for his writings, but he promptly and most decidedly refused. Mr Mason still urged the matter, and so far succeeded as to obtain a promise that he would consider it. It was not long ere he came to the final determination to accept of no money, adding emphatically, "When I gave myself to Methodism, I gave all I had or could do for it." Noble, disinterested nature! Honour! all honour to his memory! Worthy successor of John Wesley, whose name and works he so revered and admired!

It is right to add, that, after his death, the Wesleyan Book Committee gave a handsome acknowledgment for the benefit of his family. There was real honour on both sides!

Mr Watson's home life was in beautiful harmony with his high Christian character. It was orderly—it was

happy. He had great joy in his children, and delighted to watch and encourage whatever would help them in their studies, and, above all, whatever would promote and foster their religious life. His letters to them are beautiful specimens of a father's tender Christian solicitude. Whilst rejoicing in his own domestic felicity, he was kindly mindful of his parents. A faithful loving son was he to the last; a good husband of a good wife; and an affectionate and devoted father.

His public labours were continued as long as his strength would allow. Disease, at length, made him a prisoner at home, and gradually wasted his frame. In the midst of it, however, his mind was kept in profound peace, and his heart rested in the consciousness of the Divine goodness. Every element and feature that go to the formation of a complete and mature Christian character found their existence, and were impressively displayed in the closing days of his earthly life. Thankfulness, humility, godly sorrow, trust in God the Saviour, love, joy, peace, hope, submission, reverence, holy thought—all these were manifested in beautiful and in rare combination.

To come into the fellowship of such religion in such circumstances, is strengthening to our faith and most refreshing to our spirits. Hear him as life ebbs away:—"Pain is a great blessing; it tends to detach our thoughts and affections from the world, and to concentrate them on things eternal. I feel it to be so great a blessing that I cannot pray for its removal. Pain, sorrow, sickness, death—its time, circumstances, and manner—are all in the covenant. How much is contained in those words: 'Nothing shall by any means harm you!' If I am cut short, it will not be by chance. Life and death are at the disposal of an infinitely wise and good Being, and all will be right.

'A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
Into thy hands I fall;
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Saviour, and my all.'

"Dying and death are two distinct things. There is something gloomy and melancholy about dying; whereas death is nothing, but as it opens the way to glory. I seem like a worm creeping into the glory of God, and coming before the throne. I feel that death is upon me, but Christ is in my heart. He is mine, and I am His. O what a state will that be, when I shall be singing hallelujahs to God and the Lamb! when I shall be able to love Him, and serve Him, without the possibility of sinning against Him! Oh, it is sin that keeps us at such a distance from God! What a wonderful scheme is that of redemption by Christ! What a glorious state, when mind shall expand to take in the heights, and breadths, and depths of love divine! to be able to enter largely into the mysterious wonders of Providence without this clog of corruption! I shall see God—I, individually; I, myself—a poor worm of the earth, shall see God! How shall I sufficiently praise Him! I am very ill; but I am where we have so often placed others—in the hands of the Lord. He has imparted sweet consolation to me during my affliction. We have not preached cunningly-devised fables. Oh, no! There is real, solid, substantial comfort and support in religion. I have been many times heavily afflicted, and have been often brought, so to speak, into the waters, but I have always found the rock firm beneath. I have never been so powerfully impressed with a sense of my own worthlessness as during this illness; and, in the prospect of approaching the majesty of God, my feeling is that of a worm crawling into the brightness

of the sun. I feel as if about to take my place near some glorious throne; but I wish to creep low and feel my own nothingness. I am a poor, vile worm; but then the worm is permitted to crawl out of the earth into the garden of the Lord." . . . . .

"I shall behold His face—
I shall His power adore,
And sing the wonders of His grace
For evermore."

On Sunday, 30th December, he became much worse, and seemed fully conscious that his end was nigh. Whilst his beloved daughter was supporting his head, he looked at her for some moments with intense affection, and said in a very solemn and emphatic tone, "May the blessings of the upper and nether springs be yours for ever!" This was his parting benediction; and from that time he said but little connectedly. He lingered until Tuesday evening, January 8, 1833, having nearly completed his fifty-second year, and then exchanged mortality for life.

ESSAY.

——— "Longe refulsit,
* * * sicut inter ignes
Luna minores."—HOR.

OLD BYROM, in one of his quaint humours, tells us—

"Tall men are oft like houses that are tall,
The upper rooms are furnish'd worst of all."

And in many cases it may be as he has said. But here is a splendid instance to the contrary—one who is a tall cedar in the Lebanon of intellect and morals, as well as in that of flesh and blood; and whose "upper rooms are furnished" in Nature's best and highest style, or there is no truth—we do not say, in that artificial and mechanical phrenology which has acquired so monstrous a popularity in these days, but—in that genuine though less pretending physiognomy which Nature taught ere Gall or Spurzheim lived, and the unerring principles of which she will continue to teach, with honour and success, when their names shall be forgotten.

There are certain heads which one loves to see partially bald—at least, a head like *this* gains in its external character much more than it loses by the decay of the *cæs aries*. It is as if the veil of hair retired spontaneously, or at some mysterious bidding, to make way for the out-shining of

those insignia of intellectual glory which are impressed upon it, the wide, and lofty, and well-arched forehead being, like Truth in her majestic simplicity, a much more noble and attractive object of contemplation, without the aid of ornament than with it. We say, the *forehead,* for in the present instance—partly through that "weariness to the flesh," which, as Solomon informs us, is the result of "much study," and partly through the indirect but wasting influence of some disease which, as we venture to opine, has a local habitation somewhere in "the earthly house of his tabernacle"—the lower part of the visage is so wan and shrunk and sapless, that it might seem to pertain to a corpse rather than a living figure. And thus, by one of those anomalous yet instructive contrasts which are so frequently exhibited, the indications of those qualities of his being which are spiritual and immortal, and of those which are "earthy" and corruptible, are found in juxtaposition and in contact with each other; the pale and sunken cheek and jaw reminding one of the decay which comes upon all flesh, while the illustrious forehead, beaming upon us, as if in triumph o'er the show of mortality beneath it, bids us remember the immortal spirit which therein inhabits, as in a watch-tower, and will survive

> "Unhurt, amidst the war of elements,
> The wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds."

According to our notion of such things, there is a sort of incongruity, in the abstract, between a figure generally thin and meagre, and a character of majestic and imposing dignity, especially if it so happen that the figure is unusually lengthy; and perhaps it was some fancy of this kind that prompted the satirical epigram with which we

started. Nor, in surveying the individual in question—provided that we keep his head out of the field of view—do we find anything that contradicts our prejudice. But the moment that the head appears—we mean the *occiput*—the prejudice is gone, and we are almost angry with Byrom and ourselves for having entertained it. We have seen many heads which have tempted us to turn phrenologists, not after the *neo*-sophical system before mentioned, but after a system of our own; and, should the temptation very frequently recur, it will be much if we do not prove too feeble, with all our resolution, to hold out against it, particularly when it comes upon us in this imposing and attractive fashion. We need not say, "Look at this head;" for we defy you, if once you have it fairly in your view, to take your eyes away from it, till you have got "the very form and pressure" of it as fully wrought into your mind as if it had been taken in a mould of plaster. And when you have recovered a little from your admiration, tell us, whether there be not *here* a character of dignity and grace sufficiently rich and superabundant to extend a character of like import to the whole figure, though it were twice as meagre, and twice as lofty as it is. Only let this head "be honoured," as it deserves to be, and "all the members rejoice with it."

After looking at his countenance for some time, we cannot forbear saying, "O that *he* would speak to us!" And, lo! our wish is gratified; for he is already in the pulpit, and in the act of opening the service. How solemn and impressive his manner of giving out the hymn, and with what grace and power the words fall through our ear into our heart! We honestly confess, though we have often heard the hymn before, we never, until now, suspected there was so much in its matter and

composition, to awaken those deep and stirring emotions which are now created by it. Nor did we ever see so clearly as we do just now, how advantageous it is—to the congregation—that the hymn should be given out by the preacher himself, rather than by a hired and droning substitute. It may be taken as a fact not a little in recommendation of the "Hymns for the use of the people called Methodists," that they do not, like the language of *Monsieur*, when it attempts to carry epic poetry, break down under the weight of power and feeling which this man puts into them; or, we should rather say, it is convincing proof of their superior and sterling excellence, that they should be capable of furnishing the power and feeling which he draws out of them. We cannot imagine a more complete burlesque than that which would occur by *his* giving out, in the same style, certain other compositions, yclept "hymns," which we could mention. In his prayer, also, there is a delightful combination of simplicity with dignity—we do not mean dignity of *feeling*, but of language. The spirit of the man is evidently awed to a most reverent and profound humility, by an overwhelming sense of the exceeding majesty and greatness of the Being whom he is addressing; but, for the same reason, he is not hasty to utter with his lips anything before God, but what is really befitting the solemnity of the occasion. We would that his example in this respect were generally followed, and that there were always such gravity and dignity, and scriptural propriety of language, in those who are the mouth of the people unto God, as in the specimen before us.

The same majestic dignity which characterises his general appearance and his prayer, continues unimpaired in his discourse. It is impossible for any one who hears

him not to perceive that his sermons are methodically constructed; but the "heads"—or, as modern phraseology will have it, the "divisions"—are eminently natural and simple; and the form of their enunciation shows that he is far above the paltry ambition by which some preachers are so strangely captivated, of *tuning* the terms in which they are expressed, so as to sound in jingling harmony with one another. In short, they are generally such as any man of plain discourse and moderately good understanding would be prompted to adopt. And we like them the better, for the straightforward and unforced character which they sustain. We thus escape, so far, the mischief of having our attention diverted from the importance of the subject to the ingenuity of the speaker; and the things to be discoursed of begin in the very outset of the sermon, from the simple, and consequently truth-like form in which they are proposed to our attention, to recommend themselves to our belief and acceptance. Still, though simple in their general outline and structure, his discourses are so regular, and so exactly in accordance with the best principles of rhetorical composition, that, if elaborated *ad verbum* in the study—which, we believe, is very far from being the case—they could not, in general, either in the arrangement or the filling up, be more complete and perfect than they actually are. An ear well practised to fastidious criticism may sometimes detect a certain negligence and looseness in his composition; but we are not quite sure that in pulpit compositions this should be considered as a fault. On the contrary, it seems rather to be required, that in compositions which purport to be extemporaneous, whether they be really so or not, there should now and then appear such blemishes (saving the *grammar* and the *sense*) as may convey to hearers

the impression that the sentences have not been rigorously studied. And as such blemishes are in some sort necessary, in most cases, to the maintenance of the character of pulpit discourses, as being, in a great degree, extemporaneous compositions, they also serve the purpose of relief to the hearer. In short, occasional departures from that strictness of construction and arrangement, which is required in written compositions, have much the same effect in *viva voce* discourse, as the discords which skilful composers are accustomed to throw in at intervals into a piece of music. The fault of many modern preachers is, that they are too correct, and that, for fear of violating the rules of composition, they fail to give to their discourses that freedom and power, which otherwise they might possess. Even admitting that, in the preacher now in view, there are occasional traces of a redundance and negligence, amounting to a positive fault, we cannot deal harshly with it. A genius so rich and copious as his must be excused, if it take leave, at intervals, to overflow its banks.

As he proceeds in his discourse, one is powerfully struck with the flashes, which ever and anon appear, of new light upon old subjects, and with the unexpected, yet most happy introduction of various scriptural phrases and allusions which hide themselves, as it would seem, from ordinary preachers, but before the magic wand of this enchanter come forth in spontaneous profusion, and sparkle in his speech like diamonds. It is most evident, that in a *literary* sense, as well as otherwise, he has "read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested all Holy Scripture;" for his thinkings and his phraseology are eminently scriptural, and the savour of "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth," may be perceived in almost every

sentence. There are, however, indications of his having rambled extensively in other gardens than those of Paradise, and his speech is sometimes graced with flowers not of Eden. We should rather say, with the odour of those flowers; for his compositions are constructed, as to the ornamental part of them, on the just and elegant principle that flowers in discourse should be smelled rather than seen, and that their real use, like that of flowers in nature, is rather to charm us with their fragrance, than to surprise us with their glare. It is one of his peculiar excellences, *to touch* a metaphor just as the dragon-fly kisses the honey-suckle. A moment's rest upon it—and having sipped its sweetness, and imbued his wings with its odoriferous *pollen*, away he flies. And it is in this, as well as in certain other things hereinafter to be mentioned, that he displays his vast superiority over ordinary men; for, as Aristotle has somewhere remarked, the *skilful* employment of metaphor, more than any other ornament of language, may be regarded as a mark of genius.

It is a notion which has acquired a very general currency, that a lively and excursive imagination is scarcely compatible with a vigorous intellect and a discriminating judgment. We shall not make it our business to inquire how far this notion is founded on fact, or on the nature of the qualities supposed to be inconsistent with each other. It is sufficient for our present purpose to observe that, in the case before us, the *incompatibles* combine in a most elegant and effective harmony, and instead of hindering, serve mutually to heighten and assist each other. His intellect, we do not hesitate to say, is of the highest order; and, in one class of its capabilities, it exhibits an approximation to "the image of God," such as has rarely been vouchsafed to man. We now refer particularly to the

faculty with which he is endowed of discerning things microscopically small, as well as things vastly great; and to the fact, that his powers are so versatile and elastic that he can, with apparently equal ease, employ them in the purest and most definite abstraction, or expand them into the widest and most comprehensive generalisation. If there be a preponderance either way, it is perhaps in favour of the latter faculty. Give him a fact or proposition, and in a moment he finds out, as if by instinct, a clue by which he is at once conducted to some general principle, just as the immortal Newton, from the simple circumstance of having noticed the descent of an apple to the earth, found his way to the universal law of gravitation. We have sometimes thought that "his mind's eye" must be furnished with a sort of *iris*, somewhat similar in its use to that which is well known to answer so important a purpose in corporeal vision. If the object of his contemplation be one which, from its own nature, or from the circumstance under which it is contemplated, is involved in comparative obscurity, he seems to have the power of *dilating* the organs of his intellectual vision, so as to take in the full effect of every ray of light which is reflected from it; and he thus acquires an idea of it as clear and perfect as the nature and circumstances of the case allow. On the other hand, if the subject on which his mind desires to occupy itself be one of those subjects which are "dark with excessive bright," he can *contract* his intellectual *pupil*, so as to perceive it, without being overpowered or dazzled into blindness "through the abundance of the revelation."

His hearers will often be disposed to compare him to the eagle, for the lofty, and majestic, and heavenward bearing of his flight; and he is like the eagle in his vision

too. He can look at the sun, if need be, without blinking; and he can also, at the same time, apprehend, with a telescopic observation, the speck which, at the distance of many a mile, is moving on the extremest verge of the horizon. The misfortune sometimes is, that although *he* is not dazzled in his vision nor bewildered in his course, yet those who watch his flight grow weary with looking upwards to the glorious heights and "heavenly places" in which he is expatiating. For we have no other way of accounting for the fact, that, with all the charms arising from commanding intellect and brilliant genius, and a style of discourse which, besides being richly evangelical, is often elegant to downright fascination, he is not very eminently, in the popular sense of the expression, popular. On extraordinary occasions, it is true, the announcement of his name is sure to attract an overwhelming congregation; for on such occasions it seems to be expected, as a thing of course, that he will come forth "as the sun when he shineth in his strength, or as the moon when she walketh in brightness." But in his ordinary ministrations —though perhaps scarcely, if at all, inferior in sterling interest and value to his more public and notorious services—there is no such "gathering of the people" as the celebrity of his name would lead one to expect; and very frequently, on such occasions, if his congregation be a good one, it is for the quality, rather than for the number of the persons who compose it. To say that he is not at all "followed," as the phrase is, would hardly be correct. There is generally a small but select *coterie* of persons of both sexes, by whom his ministry is frequently attended, in most of those places of regular appointment that are within a reasonable distance. For, as the system of the Wesleyan Methodist ministers is distinguished as being

itinerant, so many of their hearers are, on a small scale, itinerant too, being seldom to be found two Sabbaths in succession in the same place of worship, and rambling here and there—*arbitrio popularis auræ*. This practice, though it may sometimes be excused, cannot be commended on the whole, since it attaches more importance to mere instruments of good than is consistent with the glory due to Him who "worketh all in all." At least it is a practice not exactly consistent with the general principles on which an itinerant ministry has been established, it being one of those principles, that "*diversities* of gifts" are most for the edification of the church of Christ in general, as well as of the smaller societies and congregations into which that church is subdivided. In the present instance, however, we are not disposed to be severe; for, with regard to those who "ramble" for the sake of hearing such a preacher as the one before us, it may with some degree of truth be said—"the light which leads astray is light from heaven;" and by most persons, we are sure, notwithstanding all the censure which ourselves or others may be pleased to heap upon it, the failing will be regarded as one that "leans to virtue's side." We dare not say that, had we the same liberty of sinning in this way as other persons have, we should have the grace to overcome the powerful temptation to rambling which *we* should find in this man's ministrations.

We have occasionally heard it said that his style of preaching, with all the excellences usually admitted to belong to it, is still faulty on the whole, as being of too lofty and abstract a character, and as involving illustrations and allusions too remote from vulgar knowledge to be adapted, as it ought to be, to the general edification of his hearers. If this objection were well founded, it

would constitute a very serious abatement from his real value as a preacher. But we are not inclined at present, nor shall we be easily persuaded, to admit that the objection can be fairly and reasonably made. It does not follow that, because a preacher's style and reasoning are suited to persons of refined and cultivated taste, they must therefore needs be totally unsuited to persons of plainer intellectual character and habits. The rainbow which so frequently appears to span our sky, is not more an object of delight to the philosopher who understands the *rationale* of the brilliant phenomenon, and who scrutinises the precise number and the relative quantities of its constituent colours, than to the clown who, never dreaming that the rainbow which he seems to see *is really in his own eye,* (and not, as he supposes, in the heavens above him,) runs forward to obtain a nearer view, and, if possible, to touch it; and the degree of *moral instruction* conveyed to the mind of the latter is perhaps, in general, quite equal to that which is acquired by the former. It may be, that a style approximating more nearly to the ordinary style of pulpit discourses, and a mode of reasoning and application less recondite and elegant, might have the effect of bringing the truths which he delivers into a more direct and effectual contact with the judgment and conscience of the unconverted portion of his hearers, as in hearing such a man as this, *they* are peculiarly apt to satisfy themselves with a merely intellectual admiration of the preacher's talents, and to substitute such admiration in the place of that cordial reception of the truth, by which alone it can become to them "the power of God unto salvation." But with respect to those of his hearers who "obey the truth," we do not see what they could reasonably hope to gain by the descent of the preacher

from that ethereal and holy elevation, in which, as a preacher, he lives, and moves, and has his being. We are humbly of opinion that, instead of coming down to the people, it much more beseems his character, and beyond all doubt is much more for the advantage of the people, that he should by all means invite and win them to come up to *him*. If the terrors of the moral law are to be published, it seems to be required that the minister of the Divine holiness and justice should come down from the mount in which he has been talking with God. Let him, moreover, if need be, veil the spiritual brightness which might prevent the people from steadfastly beholding him, and let the commandments come to them without the accompaniment of "thunderings, and lightnings, and earthquake." But if the preacher's object be to unfold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and to set forth the doctrines and privileges of the gospel, let him call upon his hearers to go up with him into "the holy mount," where Moses, or some other prophet, or even Christ Himself may, through his medium, speak to them words of Divine instruction and comfort, such as erst, upon the Mount of Transfiguration, were heard by "three of His disciples" when He "spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." They may at first be dazzled and overpowered by the surrounding brightness, and even wish that they had tarried in the plain below; but they will say at last, "it is good for us to be here."

If any say that, with regard to "the world that lieth in the Wicked One," the Christian ministry is not in general sufficiently awakening, we are not disposed to meet such a complaint with a direct and open contradiction, though we are far from coinciding entirely with the

notions which have been entertained by Mr Ward, of Serampore, and others, on this subject. But we incline to the opinion that, with regard to those who have been gathered out of the world into the fold of Christ, the Christian ministry is often not sufficiently didactic, and that, amidst all the zeal so laudably and efficiently directed to the conversion of "the sinner from the error of his ways," it is too frequently forgotten that according to the ordinance of God the people who are already "of His pasture" should be fed "with knowledge and with understanding." It was a matter of considerable daring on the part of the individual now under notice, to aim at a style of preaching so far above the ordinary standard, and so replete with elegant and ornamental illustration; but he has gloriously succeeded, and has exhibited a model of pulpit eloquence, consisting of such combinations of the beauties of rhetoric with the simple and majestic force of truth, as it would be difficult to parallel in any merely human composition. The public have already given him their meed of approval, though there is reason to fear that, for want of better taste and judgment, much of the admiration with which he is regarded, like the great bulk of human thinking, is but at *second-hand.*

There is another particular in which he seems to us to be singularly excellent. We now allude to his management of emphasis. The importance of this, in elocution, is generally felt and acknowledged, everybody knowing that much of the effect of public speaking depends on the proper distribution of emphasis, as the effect of painting depends, in a great measure, on the right management of light and shade. But the art itself is one of rare attainment, there being few public speakers who do not err, either in the quantity or location of their emphasis, in

almost every sentence which they utter. It is refreshing, therefore, to find, as in the case before us, an instance in which an art so important, and at the same time so rare, has been actually acquired. He has a voice which, from its flexibility and compass, is capable of an extensive range of intonations; and the player is worthy of the instrument.

We hold it to be proof of no mean skill and taste in rhetoric to be able to distribute emphasis in right places and in due proportion throughout a single sentence. But this man has a system of emphasis so comprehensive, and yet so full and perfect, that, in his distribution of it, he takes into his account whole paragraphs at once; and each successive sentence, as well as each word of every sentence, receives its just and legal *modicum* of emphasis and intonation, with an effect as delightful as the exactness is surprising. We travel with him through his sentences and paragraphs with a sense of that combination of variety with ease, which is the proper medium between dull monotony and violently-distorted emphasis. In short, in hearing him, we seem to ourselves to be gliding forward, under the impulse of an elegant and powerful engine, yet at a steady and majestic rate, upon an undulating railway.

We do not pretend to speak for others on this matter, but to us it is really a musical as well as intellectual treat to listen to him through one of his longer paragraphs, and especially to hear the energetic and impassioned roll of sound which bursts on the concluding sentence, where the force of the preceding sentences is, as it were, concentrated, and made to fall upon the ear and upon the spirit of his auditory with a break like that of thunder—the violence of the clap, or, as the author of the "Prosodia Rationalis" would have called it, "the explosive force," resting not on

the very last words of the sentence, but on one or more of the words immediately preceding. As he approaches the middle of the sentence, out flashes some brilliant and dazzling coruscation of genius, sudden and vivid as the lightning, and the thunder-clap immediately follows—its roar gradually dying away in words pronounced in a tone of voice so low as by the remoter part of the congregation scarcely to be heard at all.

On the whole, it will be generally acknowledged that his style of composition and his delivery are in most admirable keeping with each other. Tradition says it was not always so, and would lead us to conclude that the latter has in a considerable degree been moulded by the former. In his earlier years, as we are informed, his delivery was, like that of many other young and unpractised speakers, ungracefully hurried and impetuous, and in a strain approaching to vociferation. But his grave and truly dignified speech has put its rein upon the tongue that utters it, and the "member," once "unruly," is now managed with perfect ease and with consummate skill. And as his delivery is slow and solemn, so his sentences are often short; and, when they are lengthy, the pronunciation of them is relieved by the frequent intervention of becoming pauses. He is thus never out of breath; and his hearers have time, as he proceeds, to take in the full meaning and impression of all that is delivered.

One circumstance which has greatly tended, in conjunction with others, to confer an air of originality on his discourses is, that many of them are founded on texts of Scripture which have rarely been "handled" before. But in thus deviating from the beaten track, he has had too much good sense and taste to fall into those quaint and

affected singularities which have sometimes disgraced the pulpit. His text never appears to be chosen, merely because it is short or uncommon, but as containing some great and interesting doctrinal truth, or as illustrating some general principle which stands in vital connection with the all-important matters of experimental and practical godliness. Such, at least, has been our observation of his preaching. With the exception of two instances, it has never been our lot to hear him discourse upon a text on which we had heard a sermon from any other preacher; and in all cases the subject of discourse has been of great importance, plainly showing that the preacher's object was, not to surprise or to amuse his congregation, but to instruct and edify them.

Some of his sermons, and certain others of his works, are now before the world. Of these productions, we presume that in point of style the sermons will by most persons be judged to be pre-eminent. Perhaps this is a prejudice on our part, arising from the circumstance of our having frequently been favoured with the privilege of hearing him, in consequence of which we read his sermons with a very vivid and delightful recollection of the emphatic and impressive manner in which they were delivered; and we seem to ourselves to be actually hearing from his own lips all that we are reading. We are the more willing to admit the existence of a little prejudice, as having in this case some share in the settlement of our opinion, because we have had occasion to observe that sundry persons, by no means destitute of taste and judgment, but who have seldom or never heard him preach, have not been so favourably impressed by the perusal of his sermons as we ourselves were, and as we expected them to be. But, after making all reasonable

allowance for the prejudice, we still think it not difficult to "show cause" why his sermons should in reality be the best of all his compositions; we mean, of course, as specimens of *style;* for on other points connected with their character we shall forbear to call for "judgment."

In the first place, the pulpit style is that in which he has been the longest and most frequently practised, and to which he has devoted his best and most diligent attention; and it would argue a dulness and incapacity on his part, strangely at variance with his general character, if he had not attained to a degree of excellence in that department correspondent with the time and pains bestowed. Moreover, as his style has had the effect of correcting the excessive rapidity and vehemence which formerly marked his utterance, so now his utterance exerts a reflex influence on his style, at least on all those of his written compositions which come to us in the character of addresses from the pulpit. If it is impossible for us to read those compositions without the fancy that we are actually hearing them, it must be equally impossible for him to have written them without an impression and excitement on his mind, as if he had been actually speaking. And thus that just and exquisite perception of rhythm and cadence, which gives so great a charm and power to his enunciation, is by a species of sympathy between the pulpit and the study transfused into his composition; and every sentence is tuned to the measure, which to the mind of the preacher in the act of speaking would be suggested as the most appropriate. Especially if, as we presume, these sermons were preached previously to their being written at full length, they must have been finally written in the form in which they now appear under a very powerful and animating recollection of the circum-

stances under which they were delivered; and such a recollection could hardly fail to impart to them a large share of that interesting and impressive character with which, in the presence of the great congregation, they came forth bright and burning from the lips of the preacher. We are therefore still of opinion, that when himself and the generation of those who have been wont to hear him shall have passed away, his sermons will be generally regarded as greatly exceeding all his other compositions.

There is one excellence apparent in him which we must mention, as being even more important than all those excellences of style and manner to which we have adverted, and we mention it the rather because it is too commonly imagined that persons gifted as he is have a prescriptive licence to dispense with it. Rather, we should say, that by theologians of a certain class it is supposed to be a weakness and not a virtue. Having given this hint, we scarcely need to say expressly what the virtue is. Those who have often heard him must have noticed that, in his theological reasoning and discourse, there is a very marked anxiety to maintain a humble and devout submission to the authority of holy writ, and to acknowledge that authority, not only by an implicit acceptance of its teaching on matters of positive revelation, but also by a religious abstinence from presumptuous and blind inquiry into those mysteries which the Scripture veils in silence. We half suspect that at some former period in his history he was more daring and excursive in his range, and that his present horror of presumption in matters of theological dispute arises partly from a retrospect of the peril which himself, perhaps, once ventured to approach too nearly, and into which he might have fallen, but that—ere he became irrevocably

mazy with looking over the scanty battlement which fences the precipitous verge of lawful speculation—he was rescued by the intervention of a celestial power.

Let the proud reason of man appear in any case to exalt itself in competition with the wisdom of God, or let it affect to be wise above what is written, and immediately his reproving and warning voice is lifted up; and, whilst admonishing others in such cases, one might almost imagine that one heard him saying—*we* have in one such instance heard him say, and, as we thought, with some allusion to himself—"Once have I spoken, yea, twice, but now will I keep silence." He seems to have adopted it as a maxim, that one of the best securities of orthodoxy on religious subjects is to abstain from merely curious speculations, and to contemplate no question in theology but in connection with the leading and vital doctrines of the Christian system. It is not that, like some preachers, he confines himself, in his discourses, exclusively to the first and cardinal "principles of the doctrine of Christ;" but whatever subject he approaches he brings to it the light and savour of those principles, and carries out their animating and refreshing influence through every part of an expanded and comprehensive circle of theology. And thus those subjects which lie upon the very limit of such a circle, and which in less devout or less skilful hands would have the character of unimportant and unedifying speculations, are exhibited by him as subjects from which the Christian may be "nourished in the words of faith and sound doctrine." It is worthy the ambition of all ministers to aim at this delightful art of *evangelising* every topic in theology, and of making it subservient to the glory of Him to whom it is intended to bear witness. And happy are those

ministers of whom, in attestation of the fact that they do thus, in all their meditations and discourses, see and acknowledge their Great Master, it may with truth be said, "Lo! He is with them always."

To revert for a moment from his matter to his manner, it may be noted, that in his delivery there is a peculiarity, though by no means an offensive one, consisting in a kind of nodding movement of the head, and occurring generally at the close of an important or emphatic sentence. We do not pretend to say what is the feeling associated with this movement in the mind of the speaker himself; but on his hearers it seems to have the effect of solemnly confirming what he has advanced, as being something of great importance—something to which their unreserved assent is requisite in order to a right understanding and reception of what is afterwards to follow. It seems to say to us, "Deny what I have now been saying if you can," or, "Reject it if you dare." And, from the air of authoritative dignity which it is made to carry, it has sometimes reminded us of that nod with which, we are so often told, the Jupiter of the Greeks and Romans "*totum tremefecit Olympum.*" It has been hinted to us that there are others who are beginning to affect this singularity; but we would hope there is no just foundation for the charge. It is hardly fair to infer that in any case in which there may appear to be some resemblance to his manner, there is therefore a studied and affected imitation of it. The movement may be perfectly involuntary and natural in one case as well as in another. If there be any one to whom the charge at all applies, we take this opportunity of warning him that it is not less foolish and presumptuous to imitate the *nod* of Jupiter than to imitate his *thunder*.

There is a distinction not unfrequently made; certain preachers being, by way of eminence, denominated "useful" preachers, and we have no objection to the term in general. But if it be applied to preachers of a certain class exclusively, as a character by which they are distinguished from preachers like the one now under notice, we must certainly demur. The usefulness which is the most apparent to a casual observer is not on that account the more real or important; and the good influence which may be traced in a great number of individual instances is often much inferior in actual amount to that which is exerted on large masses of society at once, although the results in the latter case are frequently less palpably manifest than in the former. The distinguished individual now before us is perhaps a preacher of the latter class. His usefulness is less in the detail than in the gross, and it is rather felt than seen. And yet there are occasions when his usefulness is eminently seen as well as felt. On those occasions when a master advocate is wanted to vindicate, through the medium of the press, the doctrines or privileges of the body, he is the man to whom all eyes look up; and in that particular department, to which, during several of his latter years, his talents and influence have been especially devoted, he has communicated a character and an impulse which will long survive his actual labours, and cause his name to be associated with the names of those who have most eminently honoured and served the connexion of which they were the members.

In the acquisition of the character by which he is distinguished, he has not been very greatly indebted to early education; his own genius and industry have chiefly made him what he is. But let none from such an instance

argue that no other means than those already existing are necessary or desirable in order to the improvement and training of the great mass of those who are called out as preachers. There are comparatively few individuals who possess the talent *to educate themselves;* and even those who do possess it would be greatly aided in their use of it by the guidance and encouragement connected with an early discipline. We therefore hail with unfeigned satisfaction the prospect which is now appearing—if current rumours may be credited—of such means as may secure to the young preachers generally "a *commencement* so devoutly to be wished." It is no mean argument in favour of the project—we mean the *principle* of it, for the *details* seem yet to be *in embryo*—that the individual now before us is among the foremost to plead for its adoption—conscious, no doubt, to what an extent he might himself have been advantaged if, instead of being left to "the course of his own heart" and to the chance of circumstances, he had been guided *by the nearest path* into that way which it cost him the loss of so much time and pains to find by his own labour. It is a moral negligence and cruelty no longer to be tolerated, that so many minds capable of an improvement so much higher than that to which they usually rise, should be abandoned to the hazard of so many perilous and adverse chances—against their intellectual character and habits—as those to which, for want of a more rigorous and systematic training, they are now generally subjected.

We have only further to add, before we take our leave of one on whom we have dwelt with so much pleasure, that, to a spectator not acquainted with him, his aspect gives the idea of something austere and supercilious. If in his general temper and habit he is really otherwise,

and if by those who have the honour of a nearer acquaintance he is justly said to be affable and condescending, we can only say that, according to our judgment, the virtue is in his case doubly virtuous, as having been acquired by hard-earned victory over an opposite propensity; and we most cordially congratulate him on a triumph which adds so great a lustre to his character. In other respects, as must appear from the preceding observations, he has "profited above many his equals;" and if in this respect also he has outstripped some others of our brethren, he justly challenges our affectionate esteem as well as our unfeigned admiration,—

Victor ducum, victor et ipse sui.

CHARACTER AND WRITINGS OF WATSON.

BY JAMES DIXON, D.D.

Our intention in the present Essay is to endeavour from the works of Mr Watson to form some estimate of his mental character. The writings of a man are the best *memento* of his mind and of his intellectual *status*, as well as of his attainments. The soundness of his views, the strength of his reasoning, the depth of his feelings, and the characteristics of his genius, must appear in these imperishable impressions of thought and sentiment. There, too, must stand embodied the principles involved in his theories, whether of religion or of any other branch of knowledge. The author may be said to live as long as his works are read; he has secured for himself a species of immortality on earth; and though his bodily form is no longer seen, yet his spirit lives and speaks amongst men.

The remarkable man, whose mental character we thus wish to examine, rose to eminence in despite of many appalling difficulties in the commencement of his career. He seems to have owed little to birth, to his original position, or to education; and still less to the smiles and favours of the world. He had to begin at the beginning,—to work his way upward,—to struggle hard and long with adverse circumstances, and, by his own skill and energy,

to enlist in his favour such assistance for the acquisition of knowledge, as, by a succession of casual opportunities, fell in his way. The growth of the cedar, from its root to its gigantic proportions, may be considered a fitting emblem of the growth of the mind, the moral elevation, and the public usefulness of Mr Watson, from the germ of life. We have unmixed pleasure in tracing the development of character from its starting-point, and willingly accord to those men our meed of admiration, who, in despite of untoward circumstances, have succeeded in reaching the height of that excellence which deserves and insures the affections and homage of their fellow-men.

The intellectual character of Mr Watson seems to have been very much developed by the religious element. Placed in this element by his conversion and connections, its effect was to draw forth his powers, and to give them expansion, polish, and direction.

The religious and purely intellectual worlds differ as to their respective capabilities of eliciting mental power; and, as we think, the difference is greatly in favour of the former. In the latter case, the soul itself, with the use of the appliances that lie within its reach, being the basis of such strength as is found to exist, the mind may be morally bad, and yet be strong; the faculties may be all perverted to evil, and yet be vivid and acute; the imagination may revel in scenes of debauchery, and yet be poetic;—or, to put the same thing another way, the powers of perception may be penetrating and elevated, and yet be limited to the scenes of earth; the beautiful and sublime may be seen and appropriated, whilst all that belongs to these sentiments in morals and religion may be repudiated; the affinities of the soul to terrestrial objects may bring it into harmony with whatever in

those objects touches the sympathies of human nature, and yet the wonderful loveliness of Christianity may leave this heart of susceptibility untouched.

This shows that human nature, even in its ruin, is still great; and that, when circumstances are favourable, it can rise, in its own sphere, to beauty and eminence. But it shows, also, that this sphere is limited. The barriers of sense, of the material, cannot be passed by the unaided mind of the most gifted; and, as a consequence, all that belongs to the Divine must be lost to the consciousness of such persons. There is, no doubt, much in which the soul may expatiate, below things sacred; but an infinitely more expanded region is opened up when the spiritual world, too, is within reach, since its enjoyment does not preclude or interfere with the true enjoyment of the earthly.

The religious character, then, rests on a double basis—the mental powers, possessed in common with all other men, and that "faith of Christ," which so greatly quickens and enlarges them. None of the individual characteristics are lost, in their fullest and most perfect absorption of the religious influences passing into the soul. If nature has given genius, this remains in its peculiarities; if philosophical intuitions are found, these continue in their vividness; if men are born poets, the poetic fire continues unextinguished; if those passions which unite with reason to make the orator are the gift of nature, they are undestroyed; if judgment and common sense, they are left in their practical vocation; and, even in case a man be an economist, a mechanist, or a politician, he may remain so for any influence upon him by the Christian faith.

But whilst Nature is left intact in all her gifts, religion,

like the morning, brings many secret powers into beautiful prominency and vigorous activity, which might otherwise have lain in perfect dormancy, covered over and hidden in the obscurities of an imperfectly developed manhood, as the world is lost to view in the dark. It exhibits persons and things in their true colours and dimensions; presents to view the odious nature of vice and of crime; rebukes folly and evil, by placing them on their own level of debasement; and unveils the exaggerations and showy fripperies of worldly gaiety and non-substantial pleasures.

The truths of Holy Scripture and the dissemination of the Gospel must, as a general rule, do two things—they must antagonise the depravity and ignorance of human nature, and, with more or less success, lay a new deposit of truth and principle in the public mind. How far society is affected by this twofold action it is impossible to know; but that a process of amelioration must be constantly going on is certain. Men cannot be the same in the midst of the light of the gospel as in a state of pagan darkness. The intellect must be roused from its slumbers; and though, perhaps, it may not be drawn into the *focus* of spiritual truth, yet the fact of its being awakened from torpidity and put in motion, will, in the issue, lead to elevation of mind. In the nature of things, nothing can be so calculated to produce even mental activity as that teaching which places man in the highest position of his being; presents to him the most stirring motives to seek for himself intelligence and wisdom; leads him to become conversant with the greatest objects; and connects immortality with wisdom, goodness, and piety. As the genial influences of the heavens cannot descend upon the earth without giving life to vegetation,—tints, colouring, and fragrance to flowers, ripe harvests to the

husbandman, and plenty and gladness to all,—so the light of the Word of God cannot descend on a community without mental effects of the most beneficial nature.

These effects are twofold, namely, the entrance of the truth into the soul, though perhaps neither acknowledged nor recognised, producing a wholesome agitation of the faculties, and the presentation to the mind of the perspective of everlasting progression of being and of happiness. Men who are not living for immortality, are nevertheless influenced by the idea, and this idea of itself must be a mighty stimulus to mental energy.

But our race is not made merely intellectual; other elements enter into the mysterious compound that we call "Man." In the operations of Divine grace, it is certain that the sentient powers are not always the first to be moved. On the contrary, the *primum mobile* is often to be found, not in the affections or conscience, but in the intellect; it is not a passion, but an idea. In this case truth, beaming upon the intellect, awakens emotion, and not emotion the intellect. In the highest order of minds we are led to believe that this is the common process; it is analogous to the movements of our rational nature in other cases; it places faith on its valid ground of conviction; and it thus makes the feelings follow, and not lead, the intellect. It must, however, be confessed that the phenomena of religious life give us no precise rules on the subject; only it appears to be granting more than the argument requires, to admit that in all cases the mind is agitated by the sentient emotions produced by religion, to the exclusion of the opposite—the agitation of the feelings by the intellect.

We have been speaking, first, of the general effects of Christianity on communities; next, of its effects on indi-

viduals, with an especial reference to the distinguished person now before our attention. Yet we trust our former remarks are not misplaced, as the general good is essential to the specific—individual eminence always pre-supposing that which lies below, the substratum of moral worth amongst the masses. The amount of this is greater than we can imagine, and its effects on characters who ultimately rise above the common level must, when examined with care, be seen to be very great. When we see men passing from the ranks of the people in any department, and obtaining the great prizes of the world for themselves, we may be certain that this could not have occurred but in English or some other similar society. The building supposes the foundation; the outspread branches of the tree, the root; the man, the child; and ultimate eminence of character supposes a starting-point corresponding to the final elevation. When Christianity is well diffused; when religious freedom prevails; when societies of Christians exhibit the virtues of our holy religion; it will always happen that every now and then great minds will be attracted to the Cross, and become the pillars of the Church, the ornaments of their profession, and the lights of the age. Such was the case with Richard Watson.

It was well that he had to work his own way: the faculties are brightened by the uses of necessity, and the virtues of early life are deepened by trials. We shall give no more of the biography of Richard Watson than a few general facts. He was born at Barton-upon-Humber, in Lincolnshire, February 22d, 1781. After attending a dame-school, he was put under the tuition of the curate of the parish at the age of six years, and remained two years, in which time he began Latin. On his father's

removal to Lincoln, he was placed in the seminary of a Mr Hescott, where his classical studies were suspended. He then passed into the grammar-school of that ancient city, where he resumed these studies, and continued them till he was fourteen years of age, when he was withdrawn from school altogether. Soon afterwards he was awakened to a sense of religion, and united himself with the Methodist Society; and then, at the age of sixteen, was called to the ministry, and began his public career.

Such, so far as outward things are concerned, were the germs from which grew all that followed. They are perfectly insufficient to account for the fruit which afterwards adorned his character. Something more profound must be sought as the basis of his attainments than any thing which appears in the above enumeration. Where are we to look for this? Unquestionably, in the first place, to the riches of the grace of God, to the anointing and call of the Holy Spirit, to the effective influence of Divine truth upon his heart, to the sovereignty of God's providence; and then, in the second place, to the innate powers of his own mind. The precocity of his genius appears in the fact, that he began to preach at so early an age; but precocious genius does not always turn out to be enduring or of much strength. Many promising saplings which for a time spring up with great rapidity soon expend their vigour, and afterwards appear before the world as feeble and sickly plants.

Not so with Richard Watson. The disproportion betwixt his boyhood and his mature manhood; his base and his altitude; his starting-point and the goal he reached; his morning and evening of life; his scanty stock in the beginning and his riches in the end; his first crude essays and his finished performances; his unfledged

efforts and his eagle flights; his stammering addresses at sixteen and his burning eloquence in the zenith of his pulpit power; his undigested knowledge when he first took pen in hand, and the breadth, strength, beauty, and sublimity of his style and sentiments when he laid it aside; the distance, we say, in his favour betwixt these several points must have been as great as can well be conceived.

We have been furnished with the history of many remarkable men who have surmounted great impediments in their career, and become very distinguished without much school training; but we know of no instance equal to the gigantic strides made by Mr Watson. Most men who are indebted to themselves alone for their success, although they may attain to much massiveness, vigour, tone, and amass great stores of knowledge, and often a creditable amount of learning, yet retain through life a certain rusticity, and possess but little power of arrangement or analysis over their acquisitions. In the case of Mr Watson, strength and elegance grew together; the expansion of his mind was like that of the morning into the brightness and glories of day. He turned everything he touched into gold. No truth however great, no subject however practical, no detail however dry, could pass into his mind or from his lips but a trace of beauty appeared.

We have no doubt Mr Jackson is perfectly correct in saying, that "it was not till after his conversion that his true intellectual character appeared: up to that period his mental faculties had never been fully called forth." But even after that event, although no doubt the spiritual change was complete, yet the mind of Mr Watson could not at once be formed.

The chief mental effect produced seems to have been an

ardent thirst for knowledge. The new power found a willing, an eager, and a glowing mind as its instrument, only unpractised, like a bird attempting to mount the heavens for the first time. But the religious element is well calculated to produce intellectual activity, and to assimilate to itself every kind of truth, and can adopt and receive into its own sphere all other forms of knowledge. To suppose that it is limited to questions of orthodoxy, to creeds and symbols, to church observances, to the contemplative and mystic, is to take a very narrow view of the matter. As the faculties of the soul have some relation to all existing things, and religion has some relation to all these faculties, it follows that religion, through the soul as its organ, stands connected with all nature. The question is in reality, whether a Christian man can so influence his own pursuits and acquisitions as to bring them into the circle of his spiritual life. Certainly he may. If the spiritual life is ubiquitous in the soul,—if it reaches to the whole intellectual nature,—if it touches every faculty,—then it must be equally ubiquitous externally. The sensible may pervert the spiritual; the natural, the Divine; the philosophical and scientific, the devout; but our position supposes that the religious power remains unimpaired, and that being the case it must be supreme, mastering all other things by its own potency and bringing them into its service, as God makes nature obey the behests of His will.

The philosophy of mind abounds in curious and difficult questions, and the mind of Mr Watson is a fine subject for this philosophy to try its principles upon. Both Scotch and German professors have tried to solve all difficulties connected with this intricate matter, and to reduce the phenomena of mind to the form of a science.

With what success this has been attempted it is not for us to determine, but the common-sense English people have not till recently troubled themselves much about it. That men possess faculties in common is certain; but the difference in degree is so obvious, that it seems to us that no standard can be fixed, no scientific classification of men can be scientifically made, no complete muster can be effected. We know not, for instance, to what class of men to reckon Mr Watson as belonging; he was *sui generis;* he was not like any of his contemporaries; he possessed an individualism of a peculiar stamp, and his faculties moved in a sphere into which none entered.

There is nothing singular in this—it belongs to all great men. In the period in which Mr Watson lived there were other eminent persons as well as himself belonging to Christianity; but they occupied, each one, an intellectual and moral ground of his own. Who could fill the sphere that was occupied by the mind of Chalmers? He became the head of a school—he had many imitators in style and language who more or less succeeded in their attempts to Chalmerise themselves; but no one got into his orbit, or thought, reasoned, and philosophised on his elevation. Who trod in the track of Robert Hall? No one. He occupied a place of his own. His oratory, his writings, his imagery, are all unique; and no other mind of his day could have thrown off the same brilliant and pure light, the same glowing and burning coruscations of sublime thought, the same torrents of profound, but, at the same time, beautiful and polished eloquence as this extraordinary man.

Mr Watson belonged to the class of gifted and first-rate men as much as these two lights of their age, but he was distinguished from both by characteristics of his own.

He did not possess the vehemence of Chalmers—that internal mental force which drove him along the line of his argument as an express train is driven by the superior power of its fire and mechanism. An argument of Dr Chalmers is very much like a journey by one of these trains—he neither gives himself nor his auditors opportunity to look about. For the time being, we have nothing but the argument; and from the earnestness with which it is impelled forward upon the attention of the listener, there might be no other in the universe than the one truth embodied in this specific theme. A sermon of Dr Chalmers is like Paganini's playing of a fiddle on one string. *His* was, no doubt, a magnificent piece of cat-gut, and the touch of the artist exquisitely fine; he could make his one string utter many sounds, but still it was but one string. The eloquence of a one-stringed instrument excites you; indeed, drives you mad for the time; but when sober reflection returns, you discover that, in your eager following of your guide, you have left much more behind you than you have gained in the chase, and, moreover, that the one truth enforced upon your attention has, by its undue prominency, been thrown out of harmony with other cognate truths.

Hall was different from Chalmers, and, as we think, superior in mental power, in beauty, in pathos, and in the balance of the faculties, yet he was less effective. He was probably so because of the harmonious blending of one excellence with another, it being found in experience that the mind, like a fortress, soonest yields to the assaults of a battery which plays upon it a succession of shot and shell in the same direction—by this process, striking the soul at the same point till a breach is effected, and an entrance prepared for the admission of the principle enforced.

Robert Hall did not possess this power as Chalmers did, and hence, though his productions are amongst the most philosophical, broad, and beautiful of the human intellect, yet because they strike not one sense alone, but every sense—gratify not one taste in particular, but every taste—administer not merely to one moral sentiment, but to all—lift up not one faculty only to the ethereal regions of pure and heavenly light, but carry forward the whole nature alike—the same effect is not perceived as when one of Chalmers' powerful batteries is playing upon one point. Through nature, the principle of equilibrium is always at work, and as the heavens resume their serenity after a tempest by the force of this law, so, after being agitated by one of the mental explosions of Chalmers, we are delighted to repose in the sunshine of Hall.

There seems to be a difference between the Church celebrities and those found in the ranks of Nonconformity. Owen, of the Bible Society, was one of the most eloquent men we ever listened to, and yet we are not aware that he had much fame beyond that of the platform. He was an extemporaneous preacher, and must have been an eminently accomplished one—Bishop Porteus saying, as we heard at the time, that Owen was the only man in his diocese fit to preach extemporaneously. And yet we hear nothing of his pulpit performances. What can be the reason of this? Is it because in the "Church" pulpit eloquence is held cheaper than amongst others? Is it because the people are more advanced in intelligence, and thus are less influenced by talent—this gift only approximating to their own state of advancement? We can understand how it may be essential for an Oxford or Cambridge man to possess very extraordinary attainments in order to his excelling amongst his fellows; but the

people are not of this class, and, consequently, remain open to the influence of popular oratory. They seem not, however, so much affected by it as the people on the outside of the "Church," and the problem must remain unsolved. How it came to pass that, in the period of great preachers amongst the Dissenting bodies, no one rose to the distinction of Hall, Chalmers, and others, we know not. It augurs well, however, that, as a rule, distinctions in the "Church" arise from piety, simplicity, laborious exertions. Men possessing these requisites are invariably popular, whilst extraordinary talents and attainments seem only to have a limited sphere.

Be this as it may, in the age of Chalmers, Hall, and Owen, Watson took rank amongst them as their equal. He had not the earnestness and force of Chalmers; but he possessed much more thought, philosophy, calm ratiocination, and harmonious fulness. He had not, perhaps, the metaphysical subtility and rapid combination, the burning affections and elegant diction of Hall; but he possessed as keen a reason, a more lofty imagination, an equal or superior power of painting, and, as we think, a much more vivid perception of the spiritual world, and a richer leaven of evangelical sentiment. Owen's oratory seemed to be more flowing, spontaneous, and impassioned than that of Watson; but the latter exceeded Owen in stretch of thought, sublimity, beautiful imagery, and deep and touching pathos.

We do not make these comparisons for the sake of exalting one of these men at the expense of the other. Each was great in his own sphere—they had few points of resemblance, and it would be illiberal in the extreme to judge one by the other. But it must be seen that one who can bear comparison with the greatest of his

age, in mental power and the essentials of eloquence, must himself be great; and although party feeling and sectarian bigotry may cause the genius of Watson to be neglected or unknown, yet those who knew him, and those who have read his works with impartiality, will be ready to confess that he belonged to the highest order of humanity, and that, though his genius was different from that of his most gifted contemporaries, yet, in fact, it was second to NONE.

The mind of Mr Watson seems to have been a *universal mind*—universal, that is, in its sympathies. Let us be understood in this. No man can know all things, and even the attempt to master too many subjects must produce feebleness. But the universal mind will, at any rate, have a *passive* side for all things, if not an active. The *active* side of nature is developed in real pursuits; but they who attain to eminence in their own particular line and department may, nevertheless, possess the universal mind in question—may listen to the hum of the world in their chamber—participate in all the ebbings and flowings of society—sympathise with the pulsations of the public mind—give their prayers and their help to all philanthropic exertions for the amelioration of our humanity—commingle their faith and zeal with the efforts going on amongst all Christians for the diffusion of the gospel—and, moreover, though they may not be able to overtake all the improvements of the age, to speak *ex cathedrâ* on every subject, keep abreast of literature in its exhaustless creations, or be equal to the task of tracing all the radiations of science—yet they may have a love for all, and their own peculiar profession will receive accessions from every quarter, as one truth invariably strengthens another.

Some men possess this catholic idiosyncrasy. The sects claim them as their own, whereas they belong to universal humanity. By birth and language they are English, French, or German, but in fact they belong to the whole human family. The profession or science to which they happen to be devoted gives them a name when, in reality, they more or less stand identified with all kinds of knowledge. The *universal* man is at home on every ground in every sphere; the *sectarian* only in one region. In this he may be eminent—may argue with clearness and force —set forth his dogmas with great confidence, and be a perfect master in his line; but bring him on untrodden ground, and he is bewildered, puts forth his powers in the dark, guesses at principles and conclusions with ludicrous indecision, and hastens with eager step back again to his old habitation. But, to do him justice, the world is much indebted to him. His one ideal, or line of mental action, having the effect of absorbing all the resources of life, gives him great strength. The man of general ideas and study is rarely an enthusiast, whereas the man of one pursuit is almost always so. This enthusiasm is admirably adapted to carry him forward in his career. And as it must, of necessity, limit him to his one object, it enables him to devote all the energies of his mind to his vocation; and when charged only with such sentiments, passions, and knowledge as belong to one department, the soul becomes a mighty engine.

No doubt theology has been much promoted by Professors who have given their attention not merely to this one object, but even to one view of it. Nothing could be more entire than the devotion of the Puritan Divines to their theories, both doctrinal and ecclesiastical. In their ponderous writings, biblical criticism, metaphysical sub-

tility, logical acumen, historical research, analogical deduction, the laws of human nature, the experiences of the Church, the nature of God, all are brought with infinite skill and industry to support the theory of the Genevan theology. And equal talent and singleness of purpose were displayed to demonstrate the *jure divino* claims of the Genevan platform of church government. We do not object to this—it has brought the whole case before us. We know, apparently, as much as we can know respecting the Calvinistic theory in both branches. It is easy for sectarian divines to make their single truth as prominent as the Pyramids on the plains of Egypt; but in the end other truths, neglected or repudiated for the time, will claim their place and find their position, as the waters of the estuary, dammed up for a season in some inland nook, rush back again to embrace the parent ocean.

Isolations can only be partially successful, and remain in their pristine state but for a season. This has been the case with Puritanism. It was, in its best days, a majestic structure, and seemed to bid defiance to opposition. Time, however—with the progress and changes of the human mind, with its studies and discoveries, with its swell of events and developments, with the altered convictions and sentiments of mankind—has at length undermined this noble system. We turn to the piles of theology created by Puritanism with a zest and a pleasure which few other writings produce. When we have any longing for the holy, the experimental, the beautiful, the profound, the sublime; when we desire to become better acquainted with the cross of our Lord; with the ways and works of God; with the soul's mysterious walk in the spiritual world; with the exercises of the religious life; with the

modes of triumph over our sins and miseries; when we desire to get away from the cares and perplexities of this shadowy state, to converse with heaven and eternal life; when these emotions are felt, we instinctively turn to these teachers.

And the men were as great as their works; their spiritual life was a concentration of the truths they held in their own souls; their devotional exercises embraced the loftiest aspirings after God; their morals were austere and strict; their character as men amongst men, conscientious, firm, courageous, and eminently practical; and their devotion to God seems to have partaken of the nature of an offering constantly presented on the altar of His will. But Puritanism is gone! Its age has passed away, never to return; and no class of religionists possesses its spirit.

In accounting for this we are willing to adopt the best theory within our power—that is, the most charitable. May we not then consider Puritanism as *basal*, the foundation-work of God, on which much, though not all, which has followed has been built? In this view of the case it still occupies a most important position in our existing Christianity. The massive, granite-like character; the logical compactness and skilful bevelling of one doctrine into another; the depth and breadth of their great work; all this considered as a foundation for succeeding ages, gives to their labours the highest place that can be given to men. Would the Protestant religion have been safe in the perils through which it had to pass had it not been for Puritanism? Would religious liberty and the rights of conscience have been secured in Great Britain and in America, had not Puritanism uttered its voice? Would science, civilisation, commercial enterprise, liberal

legislation, and ameliorated laws, have found place in our national state without Puritanism? Especially, would the Christian cause in all its departments of home evangelization, educational progress and activity, and missionary enterprise, have been in its present position without Puritanism? One thing always springs from another; and in looking back for the motive power of the ever-progressive advance of Christianity, next to the Bible and to God, no sufficient cause can be found but Puritanism. We do not by any means undervalue the truth as developed at the period of the Reformation; but the Puritans consolidated, amplified, and gave life and vigour to the doctrines then elicited.

But Puritanism, though as a foundation-system admirably adapted to serve the interests of Christianity, was, nevertheless, much too exclusive. It could not for this reason become a universal system. That which is too narrow to become general itself may, however, put other principles and agencies in motion by which universal effects may be reached. After securing the conservation of Protestantism in the world by its heroic spirit, is it too much to believe that Puritan piety has unveiled the mysteries of prophecy, and put men to work out the great results predicted; has given a practical turn to those glorious evangelical doctrines on which they dwell with so intense an interest; has touched the springs of all Christian hearts, and drawn them forth towards their fellow-men in compassion and love? May it not have produced a spirit which has passed beyond its own doctrinal standard, and taken a more benign mould, a more catholic type, and exhibited a less restricted benevolence? This, we may believe, has led its disciples from the dogmas of man to the Word of God; from theories to

principles; from metaphysical and logical demarcations to the broad and open evangelical system, and thus from the sectarian to the Christian spirit.

Methodism followed Puritanism, as an earnest religion, some sixty or seventy years after the noble-minded Puritans had quitted the Establishment on St. Bartholomew's Day. But before this time a great change had manifested itself in the theology of all religious parties, as well as in the thinkings and manners of the people in general. Calvinism sank to a discount in public estimation, and men in general seemed disposed to adopt a more expanded and charitable system. This process led gradually to the abandonment of evangelical doctrine itself, with the peculiarities which had served as its foundation. Methodism was the re-assertion of these doctrines dislodged, in the case of the Wesleys, from the narrow foundations on which it had previously rested—an event which not only inaugurated a revived religious life and feeling, put in motion new agencies to accomplish its purpose, and formed societies to preserve the piety of the disciples thus gained, but introduced what seemed at the time a new theology. This theology was planted on the principle of universality—a universal love, a universal redemption, a universal visitation of grace to man; in fine, on the principle that the gospel wears a catholic aspect, and invites to its privileges all the human race.

Mr Isaac Taylor remarks, that "*Wesleyan* Methodism, so far as it was the product of its founder's mind, and the representation of his individual experience, and the symbolical record of his personal religious history, came forth —A CRAMPED Christianity." Again, "We must think that he less clearly than many apprehended the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the Christian

scheme. If he had been less argumentative, and less categorical, and more meditative, he would have set Wesleyan Methodism upon a broader theological basis." We cannot help thinking that Mr Taylor in this latter passage confounds theology with religion—that is, with the religious spirit and religious observances. No doubt, with his views, Mr Taylor would consider the latter as "*narrow;*" and in a certain sense this may be admitted, without any disparagement to Wesley and his opinions. What is distinctive in religion must always be limited; and as primitive Methodism had this characteristic, aimed but at one object, the salvation of mankind, and neither the establishment of a church system nor the promulgation of a theology, in the proper sense of the term, its oneness of purpose would give it the aspect of a "*cramped*" religion.

Be this as it may, we are at a loss to conceive how "a theological basis" can be "broader" than universal. The principle involved in this, it is well known, led to a long and somewhat fierce controversy, the Calvinistic party in Methodism desiring to place it on the old foundation, whilst Wesley and those who thought with him as strenuously laboured to free it from the bonds and "cramped" action of the dogmas of Geneva. But he did not attempt to establish a theological system scientifically worked out. His theology is found only in his religious teaching, which, as it was designed to be popular and for the benefit of the common people, did not admit of an elaborate and systematic classification. But the elements of a theology on the broadest basis possible were introduced by the teaching of Mr Wesley and his coadjutors.

The process is the same with every system of science, and even of social and moral principle. Nations remain

in a normal state often for many generations, during which period one truth after another is brought to light and established; and it is not till these have been long tested that the political philosopher can find a sphere for the exercise of his skill in bringing the undigested mass into form and harmony. This was very much the case with early Methodism. It elicited great truths—it threw these truths upon the surface of the world—it employed them in its mission to mankind—it effected its work of conversion by their faithful enunciation—and it saw the fruit of the whole in the union and fellowship of a people who heartily embraced them.

The time came, however, when these disjointed and fragmentary elements admitted of a cohesive, expanded, systematic, and scientific arrangement, and Mr Watson's Institutes sprang into existence. Will Mr Taylor say that the Methodist theology, as here expounded, rests on a "narrow basis," or that it stands out as a "cramped Christianity?" We observe that this gentleman limits his remarks to the theology of Wesley himself, and does not extend his censure to others; but it must be recollected that the rudimental principles of whatever has followed belonged to Wesley's own theology. Mr Watson did not strike out any new path—did not originate any unrecognised doctrine—did not pretend to found his system on a basis of his own. The simple fact is, that Methodism from the beginning freed itself from the trammels of the old limitations of prescriptive churchism, both in doctrine and ecclesiastics, and sought for itself the open spaces of the entire Christian religion, making the Bible alone its foundation.

We are perfectly aware that Mr Watson's Institutes are not the *legal* standard of Methodist doctrine, and never

can be; yet it may be unhesitatingly asserted that they constitute the *moral and scientific* standard of that doctrine, and that they are worthy of the position which they occupy.

In the meantime, every period will have its type in living men—the predominant opinions, doctrines, and spirit of the age, embodying themselves in persons who, by their faith, talents, and susceptibility, become the representatives of the times in which they live. Mr Watson was one of these men. When found, however, they are not limited to party, to professions, to sects. Each division will have its own chief, who, though not elected to the function, will be supported by the spontaneous suffrages of all who concede to him the acknowledgment of a mental superiority, and consider him the type of their class. Throughout all nature we find that feeble creations are supported by strong, and in the world of mind we witness the same. Some are too idle to think for themselves, and require others to do their thinking work for them; some are too feeble to exercise their faculties with anything like energy, and demand the support of stronger minds than their own; some are devoid of all volition in this polemic state, and look out for others to lead them to safe conclusions; some are placed in circumstances in which scholarship is impossible, and they need the help of those more learned than themselves; and, even in religion, the priest is sought as an essential personage to settle the faith, the scruples, and the embarrassing doubts which hang upon the minds of the half-enlightened.

There could be no great men without little men—the greatness of the one class arising out of the diminutive stature of their fellows, as the altitude of the mountain is measured from the plain below. The approximation of

the many to the standard of the leading minds of the day would have the effect of lessening the distance and bringing about a state of equality. Great men never reckon their equals to be great: there must be some distinction, some elevation above themselves, or this honour is sure to be refused. Men who feel themselves to be on a level with others—whether in mental power or scientific attainment, or taste and literature, or reason and eloquence, or force and energy—will, of course, never concede the palm to their equals.

The contest of mind with mind never takes place, but between persons who are on a par, or think themselves to be so,—the masses always doing reverence to those above them in mental qualities, so as to limit the strife for superiority finally within a very narrow compass. What occasioned the long gladiatorship betwixt Pitt and Fox in the political arena of the House of Commons?—Merely their equality. Neither could be subdued, because each felt himself equal to the renewal of the combat; after each intellectual struggle, in which the eager listeners on both sides felt it difficult to award the prize of victory, the heroes of debate were constantly prepared to meet each other again, and nothing could decide the question of superiority, or ungrasp the hold of one of these *athletæ* upon the other, but that Power which unlooses all bonds and puts an end to all rivalries.

But in our analysis of the character of Mr Watson, it is necessary to go into particulars. In mind, as in other things, the universal must be made up from the particulars. The body is one, but consists of many parts; and as to the mind, the perfection of the unit which we call by that name takes place by the harmonious operation of its several powers. In our attempt to arrive at something

like a true notion of the mind of Mr Watson, we may mention the *perceptive or intuitive faculty.* Only, in order to the better understanding of our subject, we may institute a previous inquiry into the nature of the faculty itself, and its relation to the other parts of our intellectual organisation. Perhaps the *retina* of the eye, in its connection with the brain, may present an analogy that may assist us. Light, form, colour, will necessarily produce an effect upon the soul, in agreement with the delicacy, acuteness, and truthfulness with which they strike the eye. An obliquity, an obtuseness, a distortion of the medium, must have the effect of causing exaggerated or defective impressions; so that this estimate of the judgment will necessarily be influenced by the colouring given to objects by sensation.

This analogy may serve to illustrate the nature of intuition, which stands intimately connected with perception, the latter being defined as the knowledge of outer things gained through the senses. If we add to the *sensorium* the faculty of fancy, from which the *nebulæ* of mental creations are continuously arising, it will be seen that the intuitive is an underlying power, connected with all the other faculties, and that all difference or degree of mind must primarily depend upon the comparative perfection in which this is enjoyed.

But in forming an estimate of the ultimate conception of the mind, we must by no means forget the influence of the moral part of our nature, from which our ideas receive a tinge, as surely as from perception itself. If we adopt the division of our nature,—referred to by St Paul, —of body, soul, and spirit, may we not imagine that the spirit is peculiarly the centre or determinator of the intuitions which are presented by the soul;—and then,

again, that the body in its entire constitution is the organ of the soul? The order, then, of these faculties and sensations on this scheme will stand thus:—The phenomena of the visible universe, in all its forms, have relations to the senses of the body, the one being formed for the other: the senses have a relation to the faculties of the soul: and these, again, stand in the position of communicating *media* with the spirit. Now, the spirit, according to a late eminent philosopher, consists of the understanding and the will; the latter, of course, being accessible to such moral motives as we have mentioned. Thus, then, we have the moral nature as joint arbiter with the understanding over the conceptions of the soul,—or, that part of our organisation which lies most directly open to the appeal of the spiritual, the supernatural, the Divine.

If, then, our principle be right, it follows that intuition can hardly be considered the function of a faculty, but the consequence and effect of all the faculties of body, soul, and spirit. In case our intuitions relate to the mind itself, or to the ideal world, or to the spiritual and Divine, or to the moral system, or to the hidden agency at work in nature and in religion; even then they must be greatly modified by the organisation of the entire man. In our present state, we see that the spirit is not alone, it is the companion of the soul: the soul is not alone, but is indissolubly united to the body: the body is not alone; for every breath of heaven, every rising and setting sun, every agent at work in the universe, every object in nature, is constantly pressing upon its nerves, and sending their thrill of pleasure or pain through the whole manhood, to the depths within, where the spirit sits enthroned in intellectual majesty.

In the actual exercise of the intuitive faculty, the *sub-*

jective and the *objective* necessarily meet. Even in the case of those perceptions which the mind exercises upon itself, this must be the case: the mind then becoming the object of its own reflections; in meditating upon its own powers, analysing its own operations, examining its own motives, judgments, and passions, it is itself objective—the subject-object, as the metaphysicians call it. There may be action and reaction in this, as, in fact, there is; but the principle mentioned cannot but be in operation. The invisible, the spiritual, the Divine, the ideal, is subject to the same law. God is an objective Being, to the mind exercising itself to comprehend His nature, to form an idea of His perfections, to trace His ways and will, to apprehend His grace and love. The acts of trust and adoration are of the same nature, inasmuch as faith must always have an object. The several elements implied in the notion of religion, so subtle, so ethereal, so impalpable to the senses, are all objective truths and agencies which the mind has to apprehend as it best can. The eternal and immortal—so important to us—is also in the distance: we may have affinities of feeling and of nature with these glorious perspectives, but still they belong to the objective. The independent action of the intuitive power is a pure impossibility; we might as well think of sensation without the objects of sense, as imagine that intuition can exist at all without the influence of objective nature and truth to put it in motion.

Whatever intuition may be in itself, it is generally thought to be the element of the philosophical character. Was Mr Watson a philosopher? We hardly know how to answer this question, because of its indefinite nature. There are so many philosophies in the world, that when a person is said to be a philosopher, it is necessary to

inquire what kind of philosophy is meant. A general philosopher is usually a muddy, dreamy gentleman, who lives in a murky, unreal region; and, filling this region with the *genii* of his own fancy, considers these as the creations of his philosophy, whereas they are merely the indistinct conceptions of a diseased imagination.

There is, however, a real philosophy, and, consequently, such a thing as a philosophic mind. Theology has its philosophy, as well as other departments; and no one can be a great theologian, who is not a great philosopher. But theology is a mixed science, embracing many elements; so that the conceptions of the Divine may not be presented in separate analysis, as is the case with the professors of particular branches of knowledge; and, consequently, his philosophy can only be found in his general teaching. A writer on natural religion, if competent to his task, as Howe, Butler, Paley, will, we presume, be ranked among philosophers. Men who have composed treatises on the philosophical method, as Locke, Stewart, Reid, Hamilton, Morell, and hosts of German authors, will have this honour accorded them. Others who have dealt with the question of ethics, as Plato, Aristotle, and the Christian writers, will also be considered philosophers. Why, then, should not the theologian, who teaches all this in his constant ministrations,—or, if he embody his opinions in a general system of theology,—why, we ask, should he not be ranked among the fraternity?

Now it so happens that Mr Watson is the author of "Theological Institutes" of great value and importance; and although he has not written separate treatises on the subjects enumerated, they all have a place therein. Do we find on these points a vein of philosophy running through this work? or is it a production of dry detail and

common-place? The answer is easy. The mind of the writer grapples with them all, with a masterly power; a vast amount of original matter is introduced on every question; new thoughts, new arguments, new deductions are found; and the whole is given to the world in a style of perspicuity, beauty, and freshness, such as is rarely met with. It is true that this work follows in the track of our best divines; but will it be said that novelty is essential to philosophy? And is there no philosophy in the productions of the elder writers? Are questionable theories the test of the intuitive power? Must some new deity be found, some new law of mind, some novel code of morals be propounded, some unrevealed spiritual world laid open, some region discovered, peopled with creations of spiritual essences, unthought of before? Must these things attest the claim of a writer to the intuitive faculty, and to the philosophy which is supposed to spring therefrom? We are sure that Mr Watson would have repudiated any claim to intuition on such conditions as these; and we now repudiate it for him, for ourselves, and for all our friends.

But, in truth, the old landmarks are far enough apart to allow the soul of the most gifted free scope; the field of revelation is sufficiently ample for the range of the most elevated genius; the realms of nature are deep and wide enough to find occupation for the studies of the most learned and industrious; and the spiritual and moral system, as opened to us by inspiration, is equal to the loftiest aspirings and conceptions of the human intellect. If the modern notion of intuition means an independent power of the mind by which things sacred, true, and effective, can be apprehended, without the teaching of the Bible, and the influence of the Holy Spirit; a central power from which a true religion, a true morality, a true

social state, can be woven as the silk-worm weaves its web from itself,—then we entirely repudiate this notion, and deny its sufficiency: but if the range of the intuitive power is admitted to be the *"things which are freely given to us of God,"* then we adopt the theory, and believe that Mr Watson possessed this intuitive and philosophical power in a very eminent degree.

He was distinguished, indeed, in nothing more than an entire deference to the teachings of the Word of God. The Bible constituted the basis of all his theological opinions. He would have been afraid of any sentiment not in entire harmony with the sacred oracles. He was decidedly a man of one book, in all that related to "the faith." Did he not find scope for his intuitions here? Were his notions of sacred things jejune, little, and unphilosophical? If we rightly apprehend him, his mind was kept in constant contact with revelation; his eye ranged in its ample fields of light; his soul delighted to expatiate in these regions of unsullied truth and beauty; his moral sense was constantly refreshed and invigorated at this fountain; and all his powers were preserved in intense activity by the genial influences of the great and holy subjects thus brought before his attention.

And why may not the intuitive power employ itself in fathoming the depths of things revealed, as well as in attempting to fathom the depths of things unrevealed! Why may not this faculty work from itself upwards towards God by the light and grace of the Christian dispensation, as well as attempt this task without it? Why may not intuition become the centre of a faith which shall collect round itself the elements, the blessings, and the holiness of true religion, as well as involve itself in a web of unreal sophisms? What authority, even to itself, can

there be in the intuitions of the mind, unsupported by revelation? Is it to be understood that we have in this a new infallibility,—that intuition is a Pope,—that man is a God to himself?

We cannot in this place forget an old-fashioned doctrine, —that of the fall of man, and its result, original sin. Has original sin corrupted everything in man, save his intuitive power? This is unintelligible. In point of fact, this —we believe—German dogma is only a new phase of a very old opinion. In all periods of Christianity there have been men who failed to apprehend and acknowledge the teaching of the Holy Scripture, on the subject of the fallen state of our nature. The Gnostic and Pelagian sects of ancient times were of this class; many of the Roman theologians and schoolmen, and the extreme Arminians of this country, adopted similar sentiments; the object all along being to discover a power in human nature, unassisted by grace, to recover itself from the degradation of ignorance and sin.

In some of these theories, natural religion, as a whole, has been relied upon; in others, the will has been considered as the unfallen power, and by its exertions every thing was to be set right; in others, the conscience has been the demi-god of the soul, with the power of independent action; and now, intuition is the substitute of all the rest; and man, by its means, is supposed to be capable of rectifying his moral course when wrong, and working out for himself a sort of human salvation, embracing the knowledge of God, the line of his own being, the spiritual world, and all the great interests of religion. The theory seems to be, that all this is from within; that the Holy Spirit has nothing to do with the process, but that the mind does everything for itself; that *objective* truth has

the smallest share possible in forming the character to piety and virtue, the intuitive faculty supplying the place of God's revelation; that, in fine, this central power of the soul, like the chrysalis, throws off the incrustations of error, darkness, and vice, one after another, till the open firmament is gained, and the perfectly fledged soul wings her way through the spaces of light and wisdom, as the eagle cuts the air.

In the meantime, may we ask,—Is intuition a power or faculty in the soul? If so, then how comes it to pass that this intuitive faculty, or whatever it may be considered to be, does not share in the catastrophe of the fall,—that in the midst of the general ruin it continues in unimpaired perfection? Or, if it is said that the intuitive power does not belong to the individualism of the man, but is an element, an atmosphere, a halo, distinct from this individualism,—a sort of oil supplying the lamp with light,—then we ask, What is meant by this? Here we get back again to our starting-point; we have been moving in a circle; and, after all, on this principle, intuition is, in effect, the super-sensual, that is, as we should say, the Spirit of God, giving instruction and power to the spirit of man.

It is thought that the intuitive and philosophic mind is creative; and that those who fail to create, have no claim to this distinction. But, properly speaking, there can be no such thing as human creations. The poetic art is generally considered as such; this is a mistake,—the inspiration of the poet is an intuition, but cannot be said to be creative, in any other way than mechanical genius. The man who made the steam-engine was a poet in his way: he gave life, embodiment, motion, to dead masses of material, on the ideal of his intuitions. The poet does the same. The "Paradise Lost" is an epic castle,—if the

reader will,—an epic world; but the material was prepared by God,—some on earth, some in heaven, and some in hell. It turns out, in reality, that all fictitious things presented in the works of the most imaginative writers, consist of things that are known,—just as the strange figures found by Layard, in his interesting researches at Nineveh, are nothing but monsters made out of the union of several animals, so as to form one fanciful nondescript. In like manner, a close analysis of the imagery of Milton will be found to partake of this character; his most sublime, beautiful, or frightful pictures, are made up of a skilful grouping of nature, or a horrible combination of elements and agents, all of which are known, but thrown by his masterly hand into new positions.

Things sacred do not admit of this fanciful distortion. The religious mind feels itself impelled to keep within the limits of the truth, as taught in Holy Scripture; so that, in reality, all that is left for intuition to do, is to follow out this radiant path as far as it can be followed. Is not this sufficient? In fact, does not this path lead infinitely farther than any one can go by his unaided intuitions? But let us not be mistaken in this. We do not refer merely to the letter of the Word of God, but to those things which stand out in these wonderful discoveries.

The Divine revelations do not terminate in themselves; they are not the *objective* of the Christian faith, but the *media*, the light, through which objects are seen. The truth taught us respecting man himself, as a starting-point, leads us to an interminable destiny. Is there nothing in man's spiritual and moral life, as revealed in the Word of God, to engage intuition, as well as faith? Again, there is God himself,—God in His being,—in His providence, or relation to man,—in His kingdom,—in His inscrutable

decrees and will,—and in the whole unfolding of His perfections. Can the full powers of the mind fail to be called forth in grappling with this sublime idea,—or could any unassisted exertion of the intuition have attained to it? And the light of revelation places the world itself in a peculiar aspect; so that it appears not merely as a natural, nor yet as a moral, but as a Divine system; inasmuch as it is made the theatre of the greatest and most glorious interposition of which we can have any conception.

Now let us look at the difference between things considered through the medium of philosophy alone, and of philosophy assisted by revelation. In the one case, human nature is a riddle; the nations of the earth appear the slaves of despotism, of cruel laws, of economical schemes, —as if made for tariffs—as rushing without guidance upon some fearful destiny: in the other, it appears the subject of God, directed by laws equally wise and good, and as approaching the goal of a happy emancipation and redemption. In the one case, a great system is seen to be at work without meaning, without any adequate result—the world seems an ocean, affording no landing-place for the millions embarked upon it: in the other, by the simple connection of eternity with time, of heaven with earth, a bright shore is seen in the distance, satisfying desire and producing content. The darkness thrown over all things is, without Redemption, impervious to philosophy; the light imparted by this great fact penetrates everywhere.

Nothing can be more alien to the truth, than the notion that the spiritual mind is incapacitated to form an enlightened and philosophical opinion of things around. The fact is, that all that is beautiful, true, great, moral, in the human systems of our day, has been borrowed from Christianity; and the puerile, the confused, the abortive, is to

be placed to the account of unaided intuition. In the separation of the one from the other, the pure gold would be found to belong to Christian, the refuse to infidel, philosophy. Let the latter take what is its own; we grudge not the treasure, but claim for ourselves and our cause all that is true and Divine.

Mr Watson, then, was a *Christian* philosopher. His taste, and, doubtless, his inclinations, led him to go over the whole ground of Christianity. We read the productions of his profound and sanctified genius with the consciousness that we are following a great mind through all the regions open to human observation. There is a difference, as we have seen, between theology and religion. Theology is a science; religion, a spirit. The mere theologian may prosecute his task in a logical and exact manner, but the system he erects may be as dry and lifeless as a statue or a skeleton. Not so with the religious theologian. His science may be as complete and elaborate as that of the other, but it will be kindled with the warmth and animation of his better feelings.

Mr Watson is a theologian of the latter class. Though exact and scientific, argumentative and profound, yet everywhere you meet with his spirit, and are conscious that his is not a mere professional performance, but that he is unveiling the whole with his spiritual perceptions. These invariably carry him as far as revelation leads, and there he stops. But he saw more in revelation than the mere theologian can do; and this is invariably the case with the religious mind. His practice is to follow every doctrine to the utmost verge of demonstration, and to clothe it in the clearest language; never seeking to establish one position to the neglect of another. Hence the admirable harmony of his system. Truth, in his hands, is a beautiful

whole—a stately and exquisitely-proportionate temple. He is equally distinguished for the breadth of his views, the profundity of his thoughts, the strength and clearness of his reasoning, the calm but vigorous spirit of his conceptions, the brilliance of his imagination, and the piety of his aim.

There has been much discussion as to the relation of religion to science in general, to nature, and to politics. In the midst of the corruptions of Christianity by science, "falsely so-called," caution has been commendable. In the presence of a catastrophe so fearful as a fallen church, —a catastrophe originally owing to the influence of heathen philosophy and idolatry, which introduced the sublimations of Gnosticism, sullied the lustre of Christian faith, bedizened the Church in meretricious finery, and made the priesthood the officials of unmeaning and idolatrous ceremonies—it behoves Protestant Christianity to be on its guard.

But there surely must be a right use of the philosophy of the world, the laws of nature, and the political developments of nations. So, we presume, Mr. Watson thought; for his productions are enriched from all these quarters. It may, perhaps, be thought that one who wrote so much on one subject, must have spent his life in the study of it alone. This is a very erroneous conclusion. He was conversant with every thing. Politics, the social state of nations, the doctrines of economists, the progress of trade, the balance of interests, alike engaged his attention. On some of these subjects he wrote copiously and ardently, at the very time that he was preparing his most recondite theological works. His opinions quadrated with those of his country; he felt as a true patriot during the eventful struggles of the nation and the world for existence and

freedom; and he contributed his *quota* of support to the cause of enslaved and suffering humanity.

Besides this, he was occupied with general literature, the arts, the advancement of science, and cognate subjects. And what is there in the cross of our Lord to prevent converse with the beautiful and sublime in nature? Must not the vast realms of God presented to our view, seem more lovely, more nearly perfect, from this point? Must not the religious sentiment throw its own light and fragrance over all things, making the believing soul to join in every melody, and to rejoice in every form of beauty? What, again, is there in art and metaphysical philosophy to injure the work of revealed grace, while the Bible is pressed to the bosom, and a firm hold maintained by faith on its leading truths? And what of political and economical truth? So long as the kingdom of God is possessed, and the higher interests of the spiritual world preserve their supremacy, it seems that these questions can do no harm. The only danger is in the desertion of evangelical ground.

The theology of Mr Watson, so far from being weakened or diluted, is rendered firmer and stronger, by the rich infusion of all kinds of knowledge, which he brings to bear upon its doctrines. Every thing in nature and science must, rightly considered, be the exponent of theological truth. The book is the same through all ages, but its illustrative evidence is always increasing; the text remains, but the commentary accumulates; fundamental principles remain, but their development is constantly going on.

It is somewhat singular that the sceptical tribe, and some of the most sincere friends of Christianity, have laboured together to exclude religion from every depart-

ment of science, and to limit it to a conventional and narrow system. We can account for this proceeding in the infidel; in the Christian it seems a strange oversight. Do not all things emanate from the same Being? Are not all events and circumstances under the control of the same Providence? Is not the will and sovereignty of God a living power? Is not the equity of Deity an eternal equilibrium, a balancing influence over the discordant elements of the universe? Do not the doctrines of revelation relate to God, on the one part, and to the world, on the other? Are not these doctrines designed to produce certain moral results, to be tested by facts? Is not the prophetic volume always evolving its truths, and becoming manifest by events? Is not the kingdom of God on earth, though spiritual in its nature, yet visible and palpable in its growth?

The answer to each of these questions will show that religion embraces all things, and must be increasingly illustrated and confirmed by the progress of events. We would speak in particular of the connection of Christianity with politics. Political societies may pass by the religious element, and strive to build their fabrics without it,—but this course of action soon fails. All history is a faithful, but sad, comment on the miserable consequences of banishing religion from the government of the world. How often do we hear, in our House of Commons, the assertion that *that* is not a proper arena for the introduction of religious questions! But there is a religion above party spirit and sectarian level; a religion of truth, equity, honour, wisdom, love, which constitute the peculiarities of Christianity. The history of nations is a progressive illustration of the truth of the Bible, not only in its predictions and narrations, but in its imperishable moral sentiment

and teaching. In these respects it is the law of society, never to be transgressed with impunity. Pride, ambition, hypocrisy, cunning, states'-craft,—the idea that man is made for government, and not government for man, leading to the practical deification of the heads of states,—war, devastation, pomp, idleness, luxury, and the unbounded gratification of the passions, at the expense of the blood and labour of the millions; and then the entire demoralisation of the people in the midst of its splendour and crimes; —these are among the lessons of history; these have, again and again, majestically illustrated the moral truth of the Word of God.

But in a direct manner, as well as incidentally, is history the expositor of Scripture. It is Christianity that is the peculiar subject of prophecy,—Christianity in its corruptions as well as its triumphs. The rise of the former, their progress, the dominance of the "Man of Sin," the cruelties of this anti-Christian power, under the guise of religion itself, the slavery of the nations, the overthrow of this system, and, finally, the triumph of the gospel—these things are specially the subjects of Divine prediction. The great truths of Christianity come out in the history of these events.

Violation of the moral system, established by the Deity, in the name of the Church, is seen to have the same result as in secular states. Wrong can no more be sanctified by religious ceremonies than by temporal power. Iniquity, chicanery, hypocrisy, profligacy, is as hollow in the Church state as in the political state. The fabric built by fraud has no more foundation to rest upon, because spiritual, than if it were secular. In the presence of God, and the immutability of His greatness and equity, the daring outrages committed against His holy laws, and the prin-

ciples of His kingdom, in the name of religion, are no more safe from retribution, than similar crimes committed in the name of Atheism. The injuries inflicted upon bleeding humanity, the fetters placed upon the limbs and faculties of mankind by priestly despotism, the imposition of a burdensome and costly yoke, the drain upon the property and resources of nations to pamper a luxurious and sensual caste,—all the wrongs done to the human race are done to God, inasmuch as the rights violated are rights bestowed by Him; and the vengeance of mankind on their oppressors is the vengeance of God, asserted in His offspring by the exercise of those instincts of right which He has planted in their hearts.

Now, for the theologian to neglect all that may be gathered from these sources, is to shut out the most impressive, if not the most fundamental, knowledge belonging to his task. We distinguish between fundamental and illustrative truth. The former is always the same; and it is impossible to construct a theological system, but from fundamental doctrines. But it is clear that a body of divinity, formed upon the principle of a mere statement of doctrines, would be as dry as a book of law; whereas, if enriched with the illustrations belonging to its several departments, whether from nature, from science, from history, from the social state, or from the developments of Churchism, it will be a body instinct with life. This is the excellency of Mr Watson's "Institutes." The advanced knowledge of the age has been blended with the work, and few men have known better how to avail themselves of these stores. The breadth of his own views, and the strength of his genius, not only gave him a very sufficient ideal to serve as a basis, but led him to see how the superstructure should be built; whilst his accumulations of

knowledge, skilfully adapted, and his untiring activity, enabled him to finish what he undertook.

It is not our intention to examine all the teaching of this work. The question for our consideration is, whether the work is true to the primary idea of the author, namely, Evangelical Arminianism. It is easy to see that this idea, if consistently ramified through an entire system of theology, must not only place that theology on a basis of its own, but present it, under peculiar aspects, in its more elaborate and finished details. The argument must affect everything. The Divine Nature itself,—in purpose, in counsel, in predestination, in grace, and love;—the redemption, if not in the person of the Redeemer, yet in the extent and objects of His atonement;—the spiritual kingdom, together with the functions and influences of the Holy Ghost;—all these questions, as well as the modes of interpretation of the Sacred Oracles, must necessarily be profoundly affected by the first idea. We do not stop to settle the moot point, whether this idea itself is true or false; but we ask, whether Mr Watson has succeeded in building a massive and finished fabric on the foundation chosen? We are making no novel statement, nor do we desert the province of the critic for that of the panegyrist, in expressing our conviction, that, in harmony, in coherence and unity of facts, this book is complete; and proves demonstratively that an Evangelical Arminianism is not only a possible system, but also a true theory.

We have much doubt, indeed, whether the Christian economy, considered as a whole, can be reduced to the conditions of a science, properly so called; it seems to us that the kingdom of God is too ethereal, too complicated, too sublime, too sovereign,—to allow of all its elements and agencies being so defined. But the stand-point of

Mr Watson is UNIVERSALITY, which seems to be the only principle of interpretation that admits of every species, form, and mode of truth.

In avoiding the shoals and rocks of one extreme, there can be no necessity to rush into another. The rejection of the Supralapsarian scheme can surely be no good reason for adopting the Pelagian or the Socinian heresy. This has often been done to the detriment of religion, and the pestiferous extention of fatal error. We believe, however, that in these "Institutes" this was perfectly avoided. The universal love and grace of God is seen to be consistent with all we know of His perfections, with the language of Scripture respecting the redemption of Christ, and with the doctrines and promises of the gospel, as well as with the phenomena of human nature.

But it must be seen that none but a mind of peculiar intellectual power could bring into harmony all the elements of universal truth, so as to present to the student a consistent and luminous system. Can the Word of God be rightly studied or properly understood, unless this catholic principle be adopted? As it strikes us, the great bane of religion, even amongst its true disciples, has been a partial and sectarian belief of the truth. By the process of textuary isolation, we find that, in all ages, classes of men have held to a hot-house Christianity, and have grown up sickly plants; whereas, had they placed themselves under the teaching and influence of the entire Bible, their mental and spiritual growth would have been very different.

The mind of Mr Watson sought the open spaces of the kingdom of God; yet not as a vagrant, rambling at hazard, but to meditate upon the beauties and glories of the entire scene, to imbibe the spirit of the universal gospel, to

embody all its truths, hopes, and joys; and the productions of his pen are the result of the faith wrought in his own mind. We only know of one Christian divine who seems to us to be in any way like, or equal to, Mr Watson, in grasp of mind, in the power of apprehending and bringing to a focus the greatest truths of Christianity, in penetrating into the hidden and Divine, in his lofty flight into the purest heaven, sunshine, and glory of the kingdom of God, so as to be able to reflect in his teaching the great things he had seen and heard; we say, we only know one spirit like, or equal to, Mr Watson,—John Howe. The "Institutes" are imbued with all this. As the palace or the temple is the architect;—that is, his mind, his ideal, his science, in material shape;—so these works are Mr Watson;—his faith, his spirit, his conceptions, thrown into the form of a theological system.

These "Institutes" are not dogmatic in their spirit. We presume that the Protestant principle which lay at the foundation of the Reformation, namely, the right of private judgment and free inquiry, had its weight with Mr Watson; for we find, he reverts in every statement of truth to the obligation of furnishing proof. Nothing is assumed or made to rest on the authority of the Church, or of "catholic truth." Creeds and Confessions, if appealed to at all, are appealed to only as human productions; and every doctrine is supported by evidence, the Word of God being always the test.

In offering this evidence in support of the Christian system, Mr Watson found much prepared to his hands. In the nature of things, the demonstrations of truth are constantly increasing; the assaults of its enemies themselves, by their refutation and defeat on the part of its supporters, tending to this result. The arguments in

support of Christianity may be considered, in some of their aspects, as exhausted; and all that remains to be done is the selection of the most conclusive, the condensation of the vast stores of learning found on the subject, and then a luminous arrangement. In all this Mr Watson was eminently successful.

The difference betwixt the technical and commonplace mind and that of the philosopher, is as much perceived in the use made of the labours of others, as in the production of original matter. In the one case these productions stand alone as disjointed fragments; in the other they cohere with the entire argument and design: in the hands of the mere compiler, quotations are without life, as branches separated from the tree; in the hands of a master, they are brought into the sphere of his own mind, and blend with his thinkings and feelings. With ordinary writers, employing the learning and reasonings of others, it is seen that the level is lost; the citation being in ridiculous contrast to the lucubrations of the author himself, as if he were ambitious to exhibit the meanness of his own performance by flashes of dazzling splendour from a foreign source.

These contrasts are never seen in Mr Watson; and though he quotes largely from the highest authorities, it is never perceived that his book is less his own on that account—that his own reasonings fall short of others'—that he moves on lower ground, or is only able to pace the field of universal truth as he is led by a borrowed lamp. In expressing his opinion of these "Institutes," an eminent clergyman once remarked to the present writer, that they "contained all the learning in the world." Without subscribing to this observation in all its breadth, we may venture upon the opinion, that they contain all the research, argument, criticism, evidence, essential to the undertaking, and stand,

and will long stand, a luminous proof of the vastness of the genius of the author.

The key to the principle adopted by Mr Watson, as the basis of his theology, is found in a series of arguments to show the insufficiency of reason in matters of revelation. We shall refer to this subject again; and it is rather as a specimen of the manner in which he treats his subject, than as a full elucidation of his principle, that we give the following extracts:—

"The opinion that sufficient notices of the will and purposes of God, with respect to man, may be collected by rational induction from His works and government, attributes too much to the power of human reason, and the circumstances under which, in that case, it must necessarily commence its exercises. Human reason must be taken, as it is, in fact, a weak and erring faculty, and as subject to have its operations suspended or disturbed by the influence of vicious principles and attachment to earthly things; neither of which can be denied, however differently they may be accounted for.

"It is another consideration of importance, that the exercise of reason is limited by our knowledge; in other words, that it must be furnished with subjects which it may arrange, compare, and judge; for, beyond what it clearly conceives, its power does not extend.

"This (the descent of all religious truth from God) is rendered the more probable, inasmuch as the great principles of all religion,—the existence of God, the immortality of the human soul, the accountableness of man, the good or evil quality of the most important moral actions,—have, by none who have written upon them, by no legislator, poet, or sage of antiquity, however ancient, been represented as discoveries made by them in the cause of

rational investigation; but they are spoken of as things commonly known among men, which they propose to defend, explain, demonstrate, or deny, according to their respective opinions.

"If such facts prove the weakness and insufficiency of human reason, those just thoughts respecting God—His providence, His will, and a future state—which sometimes appear in the writings of the wisest heathens are not, however, on the contrary, to be attributed to its strength. Even if they were, the argument for the sufficiency of reason would not be much advanced by them; for the case would then be, that the reason, which occasionally reached the truth, had not firmness to hold it fast; and the pinion which sometimes bore the mind into fields of light could not maintain it in its elevation. But it cannot even be admitted that the truth, which occasionally breaks forth in their works, was the discovery of their own powers.

"The subject to be examined is, the truth of a religious and moral system professing to be from God..... We are not, in the first instance, to examine the doctrine, in order to determine, from our own opinion of its excellence, whether it be from God (for to this, if we need a revelation, we are incompetent); but we are to inquire into the credentials of the messengers, in quest of sufficient proof that God hath spoken to mankind by them..... If that be satisfactory, the case is determined, whether the doctrine be pleasing or displeasing to us. If sufficient evidence be not afforded, we are at liberty to receive or reject the whole or any part of it, as it may appear to us to be worthy of our regard; for it then stands on the same ground as any other merely human opinion. We are, however, to be aware that this is done upon a very solemn responsibility.

"The proof of the Divine authority of a system of doctrine, communicated under such circumstances, is addressed to our reason; or, in other words, it must be reasonable proof that in this revelation there has been a direct and special interposition of God.

"On the principles, therefore, already laid down, that, though the rational evidence of a doctrine lies in the doctrine itself, the rational proof of the Divine authority of the doctrine must be external to the doctrine; and that miracles and prophecy are appropriate and satisfactory attestations of such an authority whenever they occur; the use of human reason in this inquiry is apparent.

"Another distinction necessary to be made, in order to the right application of this rule, is, that a doctrine which cannot be proved by our reason is not, on that account, contrary to the nature of things, or even to reason itself. This is sometimes lost sight of, and that which has no evidence from our reason is hastily presumed to be against it. Now, rational investigation is a process by which we inquire into the truth or falsehood of anything, by comparing it with what we intuitively or by experience know to be true, or with that which we have formerly demonstrated to be so. 'By reason,' says Cicero, 'we are led from things apprehended and understood to things not apprehended.' Rational proof, therefore, consists in the agreement of that which is compared with truths already supposed to be established.

"But there may be truths, the evidence of which can only be fully known to the Divine mind, and on which the reasoning or comparing faculty of an inferior nature cannot, from their vastness or obscurity, be employed; and such truths there must be in any revelation which treats of the nature and perfections of God, His will as to us, and

the relations we stand in to Him and to another state of being.....If our natural faculties could have reached the truths thus exhibited to us, there would have been no need of supernatural instruction; and if it has been vouchsafed, the degree depends upon the Divine will, and He may give a doctrine with its reasons or without them; for surely the ground of our obligation to believe His word does not rest upon our perception of the *rationale* of the truths He requires us to believe..... This, surely, is conceivable; for what is similar occurs among men themselves. The conclusions of Sir Isaac Newton have been understood and admitted by thousands whose minds were utterly incapable of pursuing the processes of calculation and reasoning by which they were reached, and who have never, in fact, become acquainted with them. They have been received upon the authority of a superior mind; and, if he were right, his followers are right, though their reason, properly speaking, has had no share in illuminating them. In like manner, there are truths in the revelations, the evidence of which is withheld; but they are received under His authority: and as the eternal reason of God is absolutely perfect, the doctrines we thus receive are true, though neither in this nor in another world should we be able, for want of evidence, to make them subjects of rational investigation, and ourselves work out the proof."

The reasoning powers of Mr Watson came out in their greatest strength in his polemic writings. These are pretty numerous, consisting of his "Letter to Roscoe," his "Letter on the Eternal Sonship," his "Defence of the Methodist Missions," his "Observations on Southey's Life of Wesley," his "Letters on the Witness of the Spirit," and of many reviews. They present an almost endless

variety of topics, requiring a corresponding extent of information and intelligence. And in this mood Mr Watson appears to great advantage. His philosophical and penetrating genius enabled him to see all sides of every subject, whilst, at the same time, his general knowledge threw a beautiful light upon the questions discussed. As a polemic, he is fair, but sometimes severe; his mode of warfare is hardly ever defensive, and usually his artillery is sufficiently heavy. Not content with beating an enemy, he seems to consider his work as incomplete, unless he crush man and argument together.

We have sometimes shuddered at some of these thunderclaps, these bursts of withering flame, this rolling lava, carrying destruction before it; and have involuntarily wished that arguments so consummate had been left to their own bright demonstration, without these finishing strokes of devouring rebuke. But even in this we have a noble trait developed. Mr Watson never attempted to crush a little man. To persons of simple mind, unpretending bearing, and honesty of purpose, he always manifested kindness, both in personal intercourse and in his writings. But when what he considered grave and serious error was maintained by those whose position seemed likely to give currency to their opinions, against them he bent all his power, and, it must be confessed, showed them but slight mercy. Milton was a polemic as well as a poet, and of all the writing in the English language, the polemics of Milton are perhaps the most eloquent, and, at the same time, the most sarcastic, biting, and abusive; the splendours of his vituperation being equal in their way to the splendours of "Paradise Lost."

But with or without severity, the reasoning powers of Mr Watson, as seen in his writings, must be acknowledged

to be of the first order. There is, indeed, little or nothing of the technicality of logic in these productions. That fine art had, no doubt, been cultivated by him; but the reasoning faculty is, in the noblest natures, independent of the art. This, too, seems to be intuitive; with perfect ease these natural logicians reduce everything brought before them to the test of reason. But here again we encounter a difficulty,—except as relieved by Mr Watson's principles in the above extracts. What are the true *data* of reasoning? Are they the innate power of this faculty itself? Is reason the ultimate judge of truth and error, good and evil? or is it under an obligation of deferring to a law beyond itself,—in fine, to the Word of God? This, we conceive, is a primary question in all such considerations as this.

We confess that we cannot perceive that a logic, working on merely human conceptions, can possibly be either true or adequate, as respects the Divine. Reason can go no further than the intuitions of the mind; but the mind cannot apprehend the infinite, the spiritual, the Divine, by its own unaided powers. Conclusions argued from human nature must be in agreement with this nature; they cannot rise above it, they cannot go beyond it. Hence a ratiocination constructed upon this principle must, it seems, exclude the Divine. Reason may judge of the evidences of the supernatural, but the supernatural itself cannot be apprehended by reason. Reason may analyse its own powers as an instrument, may scrutinise the phenomena of nature, may, moreover, judge of morals, determine many of the questions of right and wrong, justice and injustice, truth and falsehood; but can it pass into the invisible state, and judge God? All the things enumerated above may belong to a natural logic, and,

passing though this crucible, their truth may be eliminated; but the being of God, the manner of the Divine Existence as in a Trinity of Persons; the agencies at work in the Divine government; the conditions of religion, and religion itself; the future destinies of man, and the invisible state,—cannot be conceived by reason alone: they belong to the supernatural, and the idea of the supernatural excludes them from this sphere. It is only on the hypothesis that these things are adopted as absolute, that what lies beyond them has been considered as untrue.

It is undeniable that reason can work only on the material of its own conceptions;—that is, on that collected from experience, or from the visible phenomena around. But as all that we have mentioned belongs to things natural, does it not follow that things supernatural must lie beyond its sphere? Human nature is uniform; the same essentially in all ages and amongst all people: the savage is a man, and the most civilised is only a man: the faculties are the same; the material for these faculties to work upon the same: and yet we find that instead of this reason operating with anything like the same results, the differences amongst men are infinite. What can occasion this, when in their nature all are alike? It is certain the cause lies in the difference of the position of the parties as to supernatural assistance. Historically it is found that the peoples living nearest the primitive stock of the human family, as to time and location, were the most intelligent.

It is equally found that when peoples have lost their intelligence, whether through the lapse of ages, or the wearing away of their divine traditions, science, laws, and religious beliefs, they have sunk into barbarism; and that —what is material in this case—they have never, as far as we know, recovered their lost standing-point. How is this?

Reason, it is thought by some, is self-existent in the soul; its basis so deep and broad as to be beyond the accidents of time and events; its underlying power indestructible and immutable; its conceptions certain, and sufficient for all the purposes of knowledge and faith. In the estimation of philosophers holding these sentiments, faith must pervert reason, as all alien elements destroy health. Well, in the great majority of cases, this perversion has not taken place. Reason exists in all its unsophisticated purity amongst vast tribes of men,—it is alone, it is free to do its best: neither priests nor Bible are found amongst them, to mutilate reason.

How is it, then, that these people do not rise from their prostrate state, assert their dignity, clothe themselves in the bright robes of intelligence, work themselves up into the open and spacious fields of knowledge and virtue; and, as there is a God, apprehend Him; as there is such a reality as religion, attain it; as there is a bright immortality, prepare for it? Facts are the best test of theories; induction is the best form of demonstration on these questions, as well as on those of physics; "the tree is known by its fruits," in the region of mind, as well as in the region of faith; and the long-continued and unbroken barbarism of tribes and nations, who, having sunk into mental imbecility, never rise again by any reason of their own, fully shows the insufficiency of this faculty when left to itself.

Looking, then, at the question of reason in any light, we arrive at the same conclusions. No doubt this faculty is found differently both among various peoples, and in individuals of the same race. But since all men are endowed with understanding, we are warranted in our conclusion, that unassisted reason cannot "find out God"

in any manner which can be sufficient for his worship; find out religion, so as to attain its knowledge and enjoyment; find out the true moral system, so as to embody it in real life; or find out immortality, so as to be impressed with its grandeur, and be prepared for its bliss. If reason could, working from its own centre, raise the individual to the elevation of intelligence and goodness, why, we may ask, is not this process constantly going on? Reason in all ages has busied itself with things sacred; religion has engaged its attention as intensely as philosophy; its resources have been tasked to the full; and all the aids of external nature have been brought into requisition; and yet the whole has issued invariably in the adoption of a grovelling system of idolatry.

The sages of Greece have confessed that they received the principles and elements of whatever was true in their philosophy from foreign sources; so that, although their systems possessed some radiations of light, yet, according to their own confessions, this was derived, not from their own reason, but from the traditions they had picked up. Do we decry reason by these remarks? Because we refuse to make reason God, shall we be accused of undervaluing it? Inasmuch as we believe it incompetent to the task of producing mental miracles, does it follow that it can produce nothing? Reason is the great distinction of man; the lamp of the soul; the centre of mental power; the faculty recipient of truth; the organ of intelligent volition; the eye by which our race ponder the path of life; and the instrument of all just conceptions of religion itself.

To deify reason has been the fault of what are considered philosophical Christians. In this process a distinction has been made betwixt reason and faith,—the

one being represented as inimical to the other. Fairly examined, it will appear that faith is the highest reason,—reason ennobled by the sublimest truth. Faith is perception, persuasion, consciousness, or assurance, all combined. In case religion had no better evidence to rest upon than any other system, it must be more exalting and purifying, inasmuch as it is in itself more influential and sublime. The mind is affected by the objects with which it is brought into contact; and since Christianity is the greatest, as well as the most holy and benevolent, objective truth, of which we can have any knowledge, its effects upon the mind must harmonise with its own nature.

The Deity of Christianity is not only revealed as Almighty; He is also revealed as the God of love, as the Father of the human race, as the Fountain of grace, as the Hearer of prayer, as pardoning sin, and as admitting to His own communion. In the midst of the mysteries of redemption, we are made acquainted with the person of Christ,—the embodiment of all virtue, goodness, and mercy; with His life of humility, patience, and magnanimity; with the sacrifice He made for our sins by His death; and with His ascension to heaven in our nature, and as our forerunner.

The Christian religion teaches us the purest morals, as it propounds to us the holiest duties; it invites us, nay, incites us, by the highest considerations, to the exercise of charity and mercy to all men; it places before us the race of immortality, and presents before us a crown that "*fadeth not away;*" it opens to us the dazzling future, the visions of God,—the world of unsullied purity and glory; and it assures us of the certainty of the prize. The faith of the gospel is the admission of all this into the moral consciousness. Must not reason be made

divine by the process of transformation? Must not the intellect be lifted to the highest point by receiving these truths? Can a man's faith embrace all these noble and magnificent objects, and his mental *status* remain the same? Even allowing for a moment the truth of human theories, yet, inasmuch as faith so much transcends these theories, it follows that faith is the perfection of reason.

It is curious to observe the identity of many of the errors of men, *in principle*, though modified by the progress of time. This is seen in the old notions of the *à priori* theory on the Being of God, and the immortality of the soul,—as well as the *universal sense* of God, supposed to exist, entertained by many persons a hundred years ago,—and the new theory of intuition. The only difference is, in the objects to which the principle is applied. The first class contented themselves very much with limiting the *à priori* principle to the Divine Nature alone; whereas the German philosophers, and their followers in this country, apply the intuitive theory to the whole spiritual life. And, if the *à priori* principle was admissible and valid in the first-named case, we see no ground, in reason, why it should not be equally so in the latter: for, after all, intuition and the old mode of reasoning are exactly the same; the *formulæ* only of the two methods are different.

Where is the difference betwixt Dr Samuel Clarke attempting the demonstration of the Being and Perfections of God, without any reference to the phenomena of nature or the teaching of revelation, and the German Neologist constructing an entire religious system on the principles of intuition?—between the idea of a universal sense being found in man, leading him to the knowledge and belief of God, and a similar sense existing in all men,

leading to the knowledge and belief of religious truth in general? — betwixt a proof of the soul's immortality founded on the *à priori* argument, and the discovery of the soul's path to this state of highest being by the process of intuitive inspiration and guidance? We confess that we can see none. If man can do without teaching in the highest points of religion, he can also do without it in the lowest; if he can see the end, he can see the means to the end.

Mr Watson deliberately, as we have seen, renounced the one system of reasoning, and adopted the *à posteriori* principle as the basis of his theological opinions. Indeed, he argues as strongly against the one as he does in favour of the other. This placed him entirely on the ground of revelation,—of nature,—of fact,—and gave to his logic its legitimate range; inasmuch as logic can have nothing to do with principles, but must be limited to phenomena, whether found in the Word of God or in the universe. Hence, the premises of his reasoning being thus recognised, the processes and conclusions are fairly established. The strength, compactness, coherence, and unity of his ratiocinations, are as remarkable as the brilliance of his diction and imagery. The basis of all his conclusions being laid in the truths of Scripture and of nature, the structure built upon it is seen to be most majestic. His deference to, and jealousy for, the integrity and truth of the Word of God caused him to assail every opponent who had the temerity to adopt the other principle. Criticism is another matter; and he used his best endeavours, and made it his constant study, to understand the sacred text. *

* We might adduce examples from various parts of his writings, especially the Reviews, in which the science of logic, though not its technicalities, is finely exhibited. We refer to Erskine on Faith,

Many of the subjects discussed by Mr Watson had a national and general importance; others had a more limited bearing, and referred as well to certain principles of reasoning, and doctrinal sentiments arising out of those principles, which in his day began to tell upon the state of the Methodist community. Without any designed disparagement of the talents, the learning, or the virtues of any one, we may say that bases of opinion,—rules of criticism and interpretation, claims of mental independence, irrespective of Divine authority and guidance,—somewhat after the manner of the German Rationalism, had begun to disturb the quiet faith of the Methodist body. All this turned upon one point,—the principles of reasoning; and these it was Mr Watson's aim to place in their true light, and employ in their legitimate use.

No. iii.; the three Reviews of Dr Chalmers, Nos. vii., viii., x. of the Series; An Inquiry into the Doctrines of Necessity and Predestination, by Dr Copleston; *Vindiciæ Analogicæ*, by Grenfield, etc., No. xi.; Mahometanism Unveiled, by Forster, No. xvi.; Works on Popery, No. xx.; The Works of Arminius, No. xxiii. Here we have calm, lucid, and majestic reasoning on many of the most vital questions; showing Mr Watson's intimate acquaintance with the most abstruse subjects of religion and philosophy, as well as of political economy, the science of government, and the principles of society. At the same time, these Reviews, compared with discussions in the "Institutes," of all the great questions designated by the terms, "Atheistic," "Deistic," "Socinian," and "Calvinistic Controversies," all of which he has most ably elucidated, will give some idea of the extent of his inquiries, and the profundity of his mind.

We do not adduce these examples to show that Mr Watson was right in all his conclusions; but to indicate the characteristics of his intellect; the extent of his information; the sort of questions which occupied his attention; and to prove that his mind was so constituted as to have a face to look upon all quarters of truth and knowledge.

At the time he began his literary labours, a sort of Eclectic school in theology was beginning to exercise some influence in the body. Arguments, *à priori*, on the Being and Perfections of God were put forth; the person of Christ was judged of by these rules of reasoning, and his Eternal Sonship denied; the Divine Prescience was subjected to a similar process, and similarly repudiated; many of the miracles of Scripture were resolved into natural causes; the immortality of man was held to be demonstrable from mental phenomena; and the whole series of Scriptural truth, in some degree, made to pass through the crucible of a rationalistic examination. Allowing the legitimacy of the starting-point in this process, the *à priori* principle, in respect to the Being of God, it must follow that the revelations of God must be subjected to the same process. If reason is competent to judge of God, then reason must be competent to judge of what God does and teaches; His counsels, working, and revelations must, as a matter of course, be subjected to the same scrutiny.

We cannot see how it is possible to stop in this career at any half-way house. Hence Reason is made, in this theory, first, and God second; she becomes the primary authority, and judge of all things; instead of submitting herself to faith, she schools faith to her own standard; and, in place of keeping steadfastly to things revealed, she holds things revealed as subject to herself. Mysteries must be discarded; miracles must be reduced to the level of things natural; the influences of grace on the mind must be stripped of all inexplicable elements; the spiritual world and the agencies at work must lie within the ken and compass of the intellect, and all Divine operations must be in exact agreement with the laws of nature. In

this sphere there can be no room for a personal and particular providence of God, which does not harmonise with man's conceptions; nothing can be given, nothing done, nothing interposed, by the favour and grace of God, which does not square with an intellectual ideal. If reason cannot reach the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Intercession, then all these must be fables; if the Holy Ghost exercises an agency, produces a regeneration, and confers gifts, which reason cannot fathom, then all such agency, together with the existence of the Agent, must be repudiated; if sin is the growth of elements essentially human, then it is fallacious to conclude that there can be any future punishment; and in case man's reason is his all-sufficient guide, then the idea of anything imputed, whether the sin of the first Adam, or the righteousness of the Second, must be a dream of fanaticism. We cannot imagine that the *à priori* principle of reasoning can possibly admit anything miraculous. It must, to be consistent, reduce everything to one dead level:—nothing can rise higher than itself.

The thin end of the wedge had entered the religious system of Methodism at the time in question. The matter had not gone very far, or gained many converts; but it had proceeded far enough to produce alarm. The time had come for some one to replace the theological edifice upon its old foundations; and, by singular providence, Mr Watson had been prepared for this service. It seems pretty clear that the loose opinions of the period had engaged much of his attention, and were the *occasion* of his entering upon this controversial path, and, in fact, of his becoming a systematic writer of theology. It has often been said that circumstances make men; and there is some truth in this, though, if men were destitute of the

requisite qualities, they could not perform the services demanded by great exigencies. We have no doubt but that the "Theological Institutes," and the Controversial Papers, together with many of the Reviews, sprang from the circumstances alluded to: the design being to place, or keep, the theology of Methodism on its only legitimate ground,—the Holy Scriptures.

The events here referred to will explain the reason of the caution and decision with which Mr Watson propounds his principles; the controversial form into which many portions of his works are thrown; and the elaborate argumentation employed to refute the opposite notions. The times were critical, the task delicate, the errors to be refuted portentous. The form adopted for the embodiment of his refutations gave him the means of establishing the great truths of Christianity without entering upon personal controversy, except in one or two instances. The Methodist body is very much indebted to these writings for deliverance from a danger which began to be imminent, — from a leaven which was gaining influence, especially amongst the younger Ministers,—from a corruption of doctrine, which, though entirely alien from the purpose of the upholders of the Germanising principle, must have led, at no distant period, to serious consequences, in the hands of less skilful and more adventurous parties. Let a false principle be once admitted, let an inclined plane be once entered upon, let a human dogma take the place of Divine truth; and then a descent from the elevation of the pure gospel into the quagmire of a bewildering heterodoxy is certain.

Mr Watson had the double merit of providing the Methodists with a body of divinity ably and lucidly arranged,—a *desideratum* to them of vast importance,—

and then, of rescuing their religious system from an impending danger. His efforts were entirely successful. His writings became a healing element; and, demonstrating the consistency, coherence, and extent of the Scriptures as the only foundation of theology, he settled the opinions of those who had been shaken, and gave proof to all of the invulnerability of the Christian system.

It follows that these writings have an historical importance as respects the Methodist body. Crises will arise in all religious communities; but a doctrinal crisis is most to be dreaded. This was approaching, if it had not actually arrived; old men were alarmed, and young men were on the *qui vive;* orthodoxy trembled, and free-thinking exulted; the lovers of the *"old ways"* stood aghast, and the men of progress and development were looking forward to some grand consummation. Mr Watson stepped in to the rescue, and, though a philosopher himself, and a man of vivid intuitions, yet he renounced philosophy for the gospel, and bowed his own intuitions before the revelations of God. We see in his case that reason is a noble faculty, when legitimately applied; is capable of lofty flights in the clear and bright sky of God's revelation; is competent to build a noble structure when lawful materials are selected; and, in the panoply of sacred truth, is able to meet any enemy, and surmount any difficulty. Mr Watson's intellectual capacity was great; but it was the evangelical system itself, which he so tenaciously held, that gave him his power.

The greater number of Mr Watson's published sermons were collected from the manuscripts of friends who had taken them in short-hand. The few written by himself are on special occasions, but they are sufficient to give a clue to his peculiar power in this department. Here that

lofty imagination, which was one of the chief characteristics of his genius, found free scope. He never devoted serious attention to the art poetic, but in all its essentials his beautiful and sublime conceptions are poetry; without effort or design, he was in the habit of thinking in its language. But he never allowed himself to run riot. The theme of his lofty musings being religion, he gave himself no licence to revel in regions unillumined by the sacred oracles. Taking his stand on God's own truth, he sometimes suffered his fancy to adorn and beautify that truth by gorgeous imagery, but never to hide it or endanger its sense; he found ample range for his perceptions of the beautiful and sublime in the gospel.

The imagination can never rightly perform its functions without taste, without the power which directs it to its proper sphere,—the beautiful. The latter faculty is, doubtless, connected with the physical organisation, the ear; but the inner soul must be its real seat, though reached only through the organs of sense. On this principle there will be an original power of taste, just as of judgment and understanding; and this power may be as susceptible of education and training as the others. This being the case, there can be no training and education equal to religion,—the influence of Divine grace purifying the soul from the grossness of corruption and sin. It should never be forgotten that the spiritual and Divine present an ideal of beauty as well as of holiness. But with the majority of true Christians, it must be acknowledged, and without blame, that no disposition exists to separate the two,—to look at the "beauties of holiness" æsthetically, and compare them with the beauties of the world of sense.

This course has produced many most estimable men,—

men who have been the ornaments of religion and the benefactors of their age. Let us not mistake them. They are not devoid of taste, but the range of their taste is the spiritual alone. Many in the lower conditions of life possess this gift, and, amidst their daily toils and privations, their cares and sorrows, are in possession of a delicate sense of the excellencies of religion. Still it by no means follows that the study of nature is to be excluded, or that Christianity is irreconcileable with art. In the ears of the Christian, music is the voice of God; and to his vision, the different forms of life, the orders of created things, the hues and colours flung in rich profusion around, the infinite diversities of beauty, are the embodiment of His glorious perfections. Neither is religion an enemy to art. Indeed, she has contributed more to it than anything else. Take away the *religious* from art, and little of value would be left. The æsthetic principle, through all the languages it has uttered,—poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture, and music,—has striven after a spiritual ideal. It is rooted in religion; without this it could find no adequate development.

But have not the arts been prostituted to superstitious and idolatrous purposes? Have they not been given up to the world, and by common consent excluded from the evangelical system? An affirmative answer must be returned. Whether this state of things should be, is another question. We are of opinion that the evangelical canon admits of the appropriation of all belonging to taste and imagination; and that the kingdom of God embraces all that is beautiful, as well as what is "lovely and of good report." Nay, we go further, and say that the Holy Scriptures contain the elements of true science, the models of the most exquisite art, and the most perfect examples of

poetic beauty and sublimity to be found in human language.

To give up the regions of taste and art to the world, is to abandon much of all that interests and engages the human mind to the enemies of religion. It is perfectly Utopian to imagine that men, as at present constituted, will ever resign these things. It would require a new formation of human nature to detach it from the sphere of the beautiful; its innate taste, its passions and sensations, its imaginative faculties, must necessarily attach it to the region of art. Then, as nature cannot be changed, would it not be judicious in the lovers of sacred things to carry the purity and truth of the Divine into these departments? If religion is to progress in the world, must it not bring everything into its own element? Will the world be less scientific when it is more enlightened! Can it be supposed that taste, imagination, and art will be barbarised by the advance of knowledge and the elevation of our race? Will the souls of men be less poetic by becoming more pure, believing, and replete with love? Is it possible for the echoes of melody to be less impassioned, and the world less jubilant, by its increased enjoyment of God and the blessings of salvation? To suppose an affirmative reply to these queries, is to suppose that science and art are not laid in the depths of nature, but are merely an accident.

The solution awaiting the social and political world is the acceptance of the gospel as the basis of society; and the solution awaiting the sensuous world is the acceptance of Christianised art in the place of its corrupt rival. Does the social state admit of the *morale* of the gospel passing into its domains? of modifying all legislation, all law, all government, all international transactions, all commercial

affairs, and all domestic arrangements? Does it admit of human life becoming the embodiment of Christian faith, wisdom, holiness, instead of being the embodiment of selfishness, pride, passion, avarice, and chicanery? If not, then the world must go on in its old track of war, anarchy, tyranny, and misery; if it is, then we have the prospect of a regenerate earth,—of peace, justice, good-will, love, and brotherhood. Again we ask, Is the gospel competent to refine and purify the souls of men? because, if so, taste and imagination—the parent of all that we have referred to—must partake the purifying process. We do not say, "destroy taste and imagination;" for, in reality, religion does not destroy the faculties, but refines them. Time must solve this problem; but, in truth, if religion cannot enter this region, if it cannot take hold of the sentient in man,—if it cannot sing as sweetly, paint as vividly, model as truly, and poetise as tenderly and sublimely, as the old artists,—then, infallibly, the human race must remain under the dominion of its old masters.

We entertain no such notion. There is scope enough in religion for the full and eternal development of whatever is true in taste. We do not desire to see Christianity adopt the practice of the sensuous world, as the Jesuits put on the dress and imitated the manners of the Brahmins; but what we do wish to see is, the establishment of a Christian system of art, of so elevated a nature as to have the effect of rescuing the minds of men of taste and refinement from the purlieus of vice. But the ancient and only true models remain. Yes, these models remain, and must remain. Who would destroy them? Let them stand in all their glory. But their real beauty does not consist in their objectionable appendages. The ideal is always true to nature; and this is the secret of their

immortality. This ideal belongs to all times, all people, all systems,—because the true and the Divine does so.

The progress of Christian art could, consequently, destroy nothing essentially belonging to ancient art. Even a new æsthetic development on the purest principles of Christianity might, as we conceive, embrace all the excellencies of former times, without at all destroying any intrinsic quality belonging to the past. Our principle is a very simple one; it is, that all nature belongs to the domain of God,—that all that is true and beautiful belongs to nature, — and that, consequently, all this is admissible in Christian art. But we attach an important alternative to this; namely, that if this department is not occupied by what is Christian, it will be occupied by that which is unchristian,—just on the principle that art is nothing else than the expression of the tastes and feelings of mankind in visible or oral form.

The writings of Mr Watson show that he was a man of refined and exquisite taste. Purity and clearness, connected with strength and majesty, are the ordinary characteristics of his thoughts. A confused perception is as impossible to a man of taste as an inelegant expression. In the sense of perspicacity he is simple; and simplicity is an attribute of taste. Great thoughts may be simple as well as little ones; but then it requires a great mind to make them so. A common mind grappling with great ideas is sure to produce confusion, and the very effort itself is a violation of good taste. We never see Mr Watson attempting anything beyond his powers; he never falters, never bends beneath the pressure of an unmanageable subject, never falls to the ground like an eagle wounded in the wing. Every mental labour must have its aim and purpose; and it belongs to good taste

not to overload the instrument employed to effect this purpose, just as it is wise not to attach to a machine appliances unnecessary to its proper design.

The admission of extraneous material into a process of thought, is like the rush of the land-flood into the river,—it swells the volume of water, but it muddies the stream at the same time. For a productive mind to know how much to leave out, is a difficulty,—perhaps greater than the process of production. It must have cost an author so voluminous as Mr Watson some pruning, that is, some exercise of taste, to leave in the mind of his readers the thought that they know not where to put their finger and say, "This had better not have been written." We believe few of the readers of Mr Watson have expressed this desire. But its absence is proof of the taste of the writer. His keen sense of what was proper to his theme preserved him from all superfluous and exaggerated detail; and voluminous as the productions of his pen are, we do not recollect to have met with an inconclusive argument or a vapid passage in the whole series.

But the taste and imagination of Mr Watson went much further than clearness and perspicuity. His mind travelled through all nature, all art, all literature; not, however, as an empiric or a plagiarist: he entered into the philosophy of the one, and the elements of the other, to enrich his own stores, and polish and enlarge his mental powers. All nature lay at his command, and he collected from this inexhaustible storehouse of thought and imagery a rich profusion of illustrative material. His writings are full of elegant tints and beauties, drawn from every thing on earth and in heaven. The rich and glowing, often gorgeous and sublime decorations which adorn his most eloquent and poetic effusions, are truly enchanting. We

cannot help referring to a passage or two illustrative of this felicity of elucidation.

The following passage from a sermon preached on occasion of the Peace of 1814, has real interest.

"But it may be asked, Will the Peace, as we expected, quicken our commerce and increase our wealth? Are there not both fears and indications to the contrary? There may; but they are founded on partial facts and narrow views. The affairs of the world, for so long a time diverted from their proper channel, will not at once revert to it. In the meantime, temporary and partial inconveniences are to be expected. But, if no moral causes prevent it, peace must be favourable, not only to our commerce, but to that of the world. It evidently enters into the plans of Providence to foster commerce in all nations. By this the Almighty brings them together to improve and moralise them. It is an important instrument in His hands of civil and religious improvement. As long as the sun shines obliquely upon the Poles, and directly on the Tropics; as long as his unequal effusions of light and heat shall create a variety of climate and productions; so long will one country remain dependent upon another, either for its necessaries or its comforts.

"This mutual dependence is the basis of commerce; and as long as the earth can be rendered more productive, and human ingenuity still find room for its exhibition in impressing upon its productions new and improved forms (and no limit has hitherto been assigned to either), so long, if peace be used to promote Christianity among mankind, the wealth and refinement of every nation under heaven may be indefinitely increased, till civil refinement and happiness, and religious light and influence, shall become the equal portion of all the inhabitants of the

globe. We trust in God to continue prosperity to this land; and that portion of our wealth which is offered in acts of benevolence will consecrate the rest. We rejoice in peace, as it will give us better opportunities to prosecute the glorious idea of Christianising the world."—*Sermons*, vol. i., p. 32.

In the Sermon on "Religion a Part of Education," we have the following passage:—

"We undervalue neither useful nor elegant acquirements; but if education comprise not instruction in the 'things' which, before all others, 'belong to our peace,' it is a venerable name unfitly and deceptiously applied. From a process so partial and defective, no moral influence can spring; it gives no virtue to the individual; it corrects no evil in society. To this the refined nations of antiquity bear mournful but instructive testimony; and why, on a subject so solemnly important to our children and to our land, is not the voice of history regarded? She has written them refined, learned, and mighty; but she has recorded their vices, and points to their desolations. If learning could have preserved them, why has their science survived their political existence, and why does it live only in other climes? Were they without that knowledge, the attainment of which we have too often considered to be the chief or the exclusive end of education? Were they destitute of genius, and taste, and arts, and philosophy? In all they are the confessed models of modern nations; and that state has the highest fame which most successfully, though still distantly, approaches them. These they wanted not, but they wanted a true religion, and a people instructed in it. The politics they erected and adorned were built like Babylon, the capital of a still older state, with clay hardened only in the sun, and which

has long become a mass of ruin undistinguished from its parent earth. They were without perpetuity, because they were without the elements of it. The fabric of their grandeur has tumbled down, because it was not combined with the imperishable principles of virtue; and their want of virtue resulted from their want of religion.

"Shall examples, so frequently suggested to our recollection by the books of our boyhood, the studies of our riper years, and the very terms and allusions of our language, admonish us in vain? Yet, if reflection fail to teach us the absolute inadequacy of knowledge, however perfected, to sustain, without the basis of religion, either the virtues of private life or the weight of national interests, let us suffer ourselves to be roused into conviction by evidences which are ocular and palpable. Go into your public libraries, enriched by the literature of the classical states of ancient times, and see them crowded also with their mutilated marbles, brought from the fallen monuments of their greatness, and saved from the final wastes of time and barbarism, to be placed in monitory collocation with the 'wisdom of this world,' mocking its imbecility; as though Providence had thereby designed to teach us, that length of days is the sole gift of that wisdom whose beginning is 'the fear of the Lord,' and whose great lesson is 'to depart from evil.' Athens mourning along the galleries of our public Museums, over the frail ægis of her Minerva, admonishes us to put our trust within the shadow of the impenetrable shield of the truth of the living God."—*Ibid.*, p. 49.

On the Divine Love, we have the following passage in the Sermon, "Man magnified by God:"—

"The philosopher of this world leads us to nature, its benevolent final causes, and kind contrivances to increase

the sum of animal happiness; and there he stops, with half his demonstration! But the Apostle leads us to the gift bestowed by the Father for the sake of the recovery of man's intellectual and moral nature, and to the cross endured by the Son on this high behalf. Go to the heavens, which canopy man with grandeur, cheer his steps with successive light, and mark his festivals by their chronology; go to the atmosphere, which invigorates his spirits, and is to him the breath of life; go to the smiling fields, decked with verdure for his eye, and covered with fruits for his sustenance; go to every scene which spreads beauty before his gaze, which is made harmoniously vocal to his ear, which fills and delights the imagination by its glow or by its greatness: we travel with you, we admire with you, we feel and enjoy with you, we adore with you, but we stay not with you. We hasten onward in search of a demonstration more convincing, that 'God is love;' and we rest not till we press into the strange, the mournful, the joyful scenes of Calvary, and amidst the throng of invisible and astonished angels, weeping disciples, and the mocking multitude, under the arch of the darkened heaven, and with earth trembling beneath our feet, we gaze upon the meek, the resigned, but fainting Sufferer, and exclaim, 'Herein is love'—herein, and nowhere else, is it so affectingly, so unequivocally demonstrated—'not that we loved God; but that God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.'"—*Ibid*, pp. 74, 75.

We give one other passage from the Sermon on the "Religious Instruction of Slaves:"—

"In the second class are our minute philosophers, who take the gauge of intellectual capacity from the disposition of the bones of the head, and link morality with the con-

tour of the countenance; men who measure mind by the rule and compasses, and estimate capacity for knowledge and salvation by a scale of inches and the acuteness of angles.

"And yet will it be believed that this contemned race can, as to intellect and genius, exhibit a brighter ancestry than our own? that they are the offshoots—wild and untrained, it is true, but still the offshoots—of a stem which was once proudly luxuriant in the fruits of learning and taste; whilst that from which the Goths, their calumniators, have sprung, remained hard, and knotted, and barren. For is Africa without her heraldry of science and of fame? The only probable account which can be given of the negro tribes is, that as Africa was peopled, through Egypt, by three of the descendants of Ham, they are the offspring of Cush, Misraim, and Put. They found Egypt a morass, and converted it into the most fertile country of the world; they reared its Pyramids, invented its hieroglyphics, gave letters to Greece and Rome, and through them to us. The everlasting architecture of Africa still exists, the wonder of the world, though in ruins. Her mighty kingdoms have yet their record in history. She has poured forth her heroes on the field, given Bishops to the Church, and martyrs to the fires; and for negro physiognomy, as though that should shut out the light of intellect, go to your National Museum; contemplate the features of the colossal head of Memnon, and the statues of the divinities on which the ancient Africans impressed their own forms, and there see, in close resemblance to the negro feature, the mould of those countenances which once beheld, as the creations of their own immortal genius, the noblest and most stupendous monuments of human skill, and taste, and grandeur. In

the imperishable porphyry and granite is the unfounded and pitiful slander publicly and before all the world refuted.

"There we see the negro under cultivation. If he now presents a different aspect, cultivation is wanting. That solves the whole case; for even now, when education has been expended upon the pure and undoubted negro, it has never been bestowed in vain. Modern times have witnessed, in the persons of African negroes, generals, physicians, philosophers, linguists, poets, mathematicians, and merchants, all eminent in their attainments, energetic in enterprise, and honourable in character; and even the mission schools in the West Indies exhibit a quickness of intellect and a thirst for learning to which the schools of this country do not always afford a parallel."—*Ibid*, pp. 94, 95.

This was Mr Watson's manner in his more elaborate orations; but his less polished productions are full of images of a similar character. It would indeed be difficult to select a single page without the discovery of some vein of gold. These riches were indigenous; they existed in his own mind; his intuitive sense of the beautiful drew them to his mental consciousness, and deposited in his soul all that lay within his reach; and then, as from a centre of light, these rays were reflected upon others. It has been thought by some that Mr Watson's least elaborate sermons were his best; and, judging of the matter by the outlines given in his works, we are not surprised at this opinion. Some of them are certainly exquisite gems of thought; and, supposing the filling up to have been equal to the outline—and no doubt it would exceed even this—we cannot help believing that his ordinary ministry must have been at any rate equal to his greatest

efforts in the matters of taste, of beauty, and of tenderness of feeling.

We wish we could present to our readers a real sketch of a religious service conducted by this eminent minister. This we feel is prodigiously difficult. Thirty-two years have passed away since his voice has been heard in the Church below. A new generation has sprung up who knew him not, or only recollect him as children. Time and change unite to throw the past into a distance which is ever increasing. Impressions, perceptions, and opinions, existing vividly at the time, become less and less vivid; and the dead are often like the last cliffs of fatherland to the voyager as he passes away to another clime—for a while seen distinctly, then in the midst of haze, then as a speck, and then not at all.

Let us, then, endeavour to recall Mr Watson to those who knew him, and convey some idea of a religious service conducted by him, to those who never enjoyed this privilege. Let City Road Chapel be the scene,—the occasion, a Missionary Sermon,—and the text, "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for He is raised up out of His holy habitation." The spacious chapel is full long before the time announced for the commencement of the sermon.

Many strangers are present, evidently of an intellectual cast; they have not much the appearance of Methodists in dress and manner; the Hymn-book is absent,—that never failing symbol of the Methodist, when in the house of God; the audience is still and thoughtful, but apparently anxious, as if eager to witness something in which they have a deep interest. At length the clock strikes six, and out of the side door leading to the pulpit a tall figure walks forth; his step is deliberate and easy; he throws no furtive glance around, but goes straight to his

place of prayer and of prophesying, as if only thoughts of God and his message filled his mind; his countenance is serene, but somewhat flushed, and not devoid of anxiety; as he ascends the pulpit steps, every eye is fixed upon him; the home part of the congregation have smiles of delight depicted on their countenances, whilst the strangers look with intense curiosity, outstretched necks, and dilated eyes, to obtain a fair view,—then whisper to one another, —then fall back into their seats, as if saying, "Well, report is true." This majestic figure prostrates himself in prayer when he has reached the pulpit, and is lost to the gaze of the congregation for some minutes.

This does not seem unmeaning,—a form,—a shadow: he appears to be really engaged with God, to be penetrated with a sense of the responsibility of his position, and to be seeking Divine aid. This ended, the preacher stands up, and presents himself fairly to his audience. No gown hides the symmetry of his person: his figure is fully seen. Thoughtfulness is impressed on every feature, but there is no agitation, no nervous contortion. The whole body is at ease; every limb moves naturally; grace is in every action; and there is not the shadow of affectation:—surely this man understands his vocation, and is the master of his work. The Hymn-book is opened, and worship proceeds. But what is this? We never understood these Hymns before. They are living; they speak; they have meaning; they reveal things sacred; a fire, a spirit, a sincerity is in them; they are poetry; they strike our imagination; they come home to our faith; they thrill through our souls; they are like sunshine upon our affections; they enrapture and excite our devotions. Surely this is worship. The secret of this is seen. The soul of the preacher passes into the hymn; touches the sense;

gives inspiration to the sentiment; impresses with emphasis the meaning of every syllable; and infuses its own feeling through the whole. The voice aids the effect: it is clear, full, deep, sonorous, finely modulated,—its softer tones relieved by a deep bass.

The prayer begins,—begins with great deliberation. Reverence is manifest, and this inspires reverence in the whole congregation. Not a movement is heard, all is still and motionless. Words are *few*, and slowly uttered, at first; but every word contains a thought; these thoughts accumulate in the exercise, and, as they increase, seem to expand the views and elevate the feelings; devotion gathers volume in the exercise. Gradually the world seems to be left behind; sensible things disappear; even the idea of the presence of the congregation is lost in the idea of the presence of God. Pleading is heard; the Divine Majesty seems near; the blood of the covenant is appealed to, and the "Man at the right hand of God" sought. Confession of sin, deprecation of the Divine wrath and anger, the blessings of grace, the joys of salvation, are themes of importunate supplication. Then passing on to the state of the world, the spread of the gospel, the overthrow of idolatry and superstition, become the subjects of intercession of the prophet upon his knees before God. This is not eloquence—it is more than eloquence—it is compassion, it is love, it is faith. The preacher is subdued—the people are subdued—all hearts are stirred: the preacher looks different—the people look different: the serene air of mental power which sat upon the countenance of the one is gone; and the curiosity and sense of delight, a little while ago manifested by the others, are also gone. A new element has evidently entered the mind of both. Deep emotions have taken the place of pleasurable and

tranquil feelings; something profoundly agitating is going on in the soul of the preacher, and the contagion has extended to the people. He is still calm and self-possessed; but look at that eye, see the quiver of those lips, listen to that voice. What is this? He has obtained a glimpse of Calvary, of the spiritual world, of eternity, and now his mental conceptions are fused with the new element of a living faith.

The sermon comes at length. The exordium is clear; the subject is opened; the basis of the discourse is plainly laid down; the divisions are announced, so that the audience may follow the preacher in his arguments and illustrations. "The Lord is raised up out of His holy habitation," this is the theme: "Be silent before Him," this is the duty. The manner of the "rising up of the Lord" is discussed. A wide range is sketched; the operations of God in nations, in the Church, in the Christian field, are elucidated; the signs of this are given, and the proofs and evidence exhibited. He is now rising up; events indicate this; the world is in a transition state; all are looking for the coming of the Lord. Silence is observed, and this silence is the duty of all. The argument is clear but cumulative; thought follows thought; all appropriate; and the last always strengthening the one preceding. But there is more than thought. Genius begins to kindle; coruscation after coruscation flashes forth; figures, symbols—not in a series, not as an elaborate and prepared performance, but as jets of sparkling sentiment thrown as diamonds into the body of the sermon, which would have been complete without them; or as stars in the pure ether, which is yet perfect in its own wondrous simplicity. These beauties grow out of emotion, they are the effect of deep feeling; impassioned

reason becomes poetic; and though the discourse began in prose, it ends in poetry. Reason retains her place all through, as the pathway of the soul in her progress: but the road is not the only object looked at; the heavens above, and the earth beneath, are all brought in to complete the picture. Pathos is intermingled with beauty and sublimity; and of all the peculiarities belonging to Mr Watson, pathos was the finest. It did not on this occasion, or on any other, manifest itself in tears—he never wept; it did not display itself in sighs, groans, or exclamations—he never vociferated; it did not show itself by any extravagant gesture or violent action—he never became the actor. No; it was simply a pathos of the heart—tender, delicate, deep; it mingled itself in his words, which became gentle as the dying breezes of evening; the fire became spent; the glow of genius subsided; the lofty flights of imagination ended; the orator ceased his entrancing fascinations; the heart seemed subdued into the affectionate palpitations of the child; he spoke of love, and felt all its tenderness.

In this sermon some peculiarities of manner were observable. The action was never great, and in the beginning rather slow and measured, but a perfect model of its kind. As the difficulties of a beginning, however, were cleared, and the depths reached, the right hand began to move; then it was stretched out, but never raised higher than the breast; it was never clenched, but the forefinger of a most delicate and beautiful hand stretched out, as in a pointing attitude. Only one deviation from this gesture was observable: when greatly excited, when profoundly feeling the weight of some great truth, before giving utterance to it, and as if pausing for a moment, to find for it a more perfect form, he thrust his right hand into

his bosom, and then announced the thought in that peculiar posture.

One other singularity may be noticed: when he had finished one of his most beautiful climaxes of reasoning or fancy, he gave his head a majestic nod, with a sort of backward movement, as if he intended to signify to his hearers that they were then, at that point, to consider the matter finished; and, moreover, this nod, it must be confessed, had somewhat of a defiant air about it, as if to intimate to the sceptic that he had no fear of his criticism. In this service there was that mixture of goodness and greatness which constitutes the perfection of such hallowed exercises. The devotional part was as exalted as the intellectual: a solemnity and a sweetness combined characterised the prayers; whilst the sermon conveyed to the mind the most exalted truths of the gospel.

Silence followed. The congregation appeared profoundly moved. They seemed in no haste to go away. None smiled or exchanged greetings with each other. They retired with gravity; and, as they passed along, no one heard a word of criticism. The impression seemed too deep for garrulity; the doctrine of the discourse had passed from the imagination to the heart and conscience, and conscience is always more silent than fancy.

Our idea is, that Mr Watson was greater as a preacher than anything else; and this, we imagine, must be the case with all men who excel in the art of pulpit oratory. The living soul can alone do justice to the fine sentiments of a man of genius. What would the best music be, unless sung or played? What would the drama be, if not acted? Hence it often comes to pass that a good speaker is a bad writer, and, *vice versâ*, a bad speaker is a good writer. Many of the little elegances which

beautify style in a written performance would ruin a sermon.

So far as impressiveness is concerned, we imagine, concentration is essential; thoughts charged with as much meaning, force, and beauty as language can heap upon them to be intelligible, must be necessary in a living speaker, or he must become vapid. The very effort to bring in nice distinctions in reason, recondite allusions or quotations, prettinesses and elegances, or to join and adjust sentences as ornaments in a saloon—all this is destructive of true eloquence. Freedom from mannerism seems to be the only rule that can be applied to this art. Eloquence in a true man is the man himself speaking the conceptions of his own mind—pouring forth the torrents of his own genius, the blaze of his own passions, the tenderness of his own heart. Nature needs no rules but the negative ones of not speaking blunderingly; all the rest must be supplied from her own resources; and an orator must be as much born an orator, as a poet must be born a poet. Pitt and Fox were orators; Burke was a magnificent writer of speeches: when the first two rose in the House, stillness like that of death followed; when Burke rose, the members rushed out, with the exclamation, that, "the dinner-bell was ringing!"

We believe Mr Watson never read a sermon but once, and in that attempt he failed; nor did he ever commit his sermons to memory. We have heard but one reader of sermons succeed, and that was Dr Chalmers; but if his compositions are carefully analysed, it will be found that, though written, they are constructed upon the principles —if the contradiction can be allowed—of a *vivâ voce* eloquence. They are not crowded with thoughts; but the few thoughts found in each discourse are laden with

majestic imagery, and carried home to the mind by an overwhelming torrent of vehement declamation. The manner of Dr Chalmers, in reading his sermons, exactly resembled the sermons themselves. His body was in a state of complete agitation, his voice was elevated to the highest key of its capacity, from beginning to end; and, whilst his right hand kept hold of his manuscript, his left incessantly went up and down like a hammer. The motion of his hand, and the agitation of his mind, agreed exactly to each other. The whole discourse consisted of a repetition of strokes aimed at the mental fortress before him. With this exception, and with this peculiarity—so far as our observation has gone—the practice of reading sermons has failed; and with no fitness can a reader be considered an orator.

The habit of repeating a discourse from memory is sometimes, though very seldom, successful. Its puerile stiffness is one usual consequence, but by no means the worst. The best feelings of the heart are the impulses of the moment, but these are suppressed; there can be no gush of sentiment allowed, because this would lead the mind away from the stereotyped manuscript transferred to the memory, and the road, once lost, might not be found again. But passion is necessary to true eloquence: eloquence can no more exist without deep and genuine feeling, than poetry without genius. Passion is kindled by the agitation of the soul, by the presence of an audience, by strong conceptions springing up at the instant. To reduce this feeling to written *formulæ*, would cause it to evaporate: the conceptions of strong passion cannot be written, any more than the fire of the sun can be corked up in a jar. Extemporaneous oratory, which is always the most effective, never destroys reason

in strong and well-furnished minds, but perfects it. A real orator never reasons so well as when the fountains of the great deep within are broken up. Vivid perception, logical coherence, rapid combination of thought, the rich and exuberant creation of metaphor and imagery—all follow this impulse.

The finest orators are sometimes dull in their ordinary moods, and stammer and haggle till the fire begins to kindle. This was the case with Charles Fox. The uninformed listener would have thought, for the first half hour of his speech, that he was going to break down. But as passion rose, the powers of the soul, which seemed to hang flapping about like the sails of a vessel in a calm, gradually filled, expanded, and then, like a gallant ship in full sail, ploughed the sea in mighty majesty. Passion kindles passion; and there can neither be true preachers nor true hearers without it. Then, as this emotion cannot be put upon paper, and become a matter of memory, those who rehearse their sermons must be destitute of it. They, indeed, sometimes rant, lift up their eyes, throw out their arms, stamp the foot, and affect the tones of deep emotion; but it is all sham; and, if we could examine the manuscript or the cranium, we should find it all jotted down; as is related of a good parson of this school, who had written on the margin of a manuscript climax, "*Weep here!*"

There is, moreover, a close connection between the passions and the imagination; but imagination is essential to eloquence. We have, indeed, heard men of great power with but little fancy; but, though powerful speakers, they can hardly be considered eloquent. Hence, unless the soul can be brought into a state of great excitement in the study—which is said to have been the case

with Dr Chalmers, who, with his coat off, his vest unbuttoned, and his neck bare, was accustomed to write himself into a bath of perspiration—unless this can be accomplished, there can be but little force in the performances of *memoriter* or sermon-reading preachers; and we believe this class of pulpit orators do not find their studies a very creative region. We limit these remarks to the *art* of eloquence; there are other and higher considerations which we purposely omit.

To say, as we have done, that Mr Watson was a better preacher than anything else, is to place him in a very high position as a pulpit orator. It was our good fortune to hear all the *celebrities* of the pulpit of the period in which he lived; but we certainly never heard his equal. Some of his written sermons are beautiful specimens of composition; but they bear but an imperfect resemblance to his spoken discourses. This resulted from the circumstance that they were *really* extemporaneous. His preparations were of the most meagre kind, that is, so far as they were written; and many of them were not written at all. We are not, however, from this to presume that he had not reflected deeply and profoundly on the subjects to be discussed. But the *matériel* being in his mind, and not in manuscript, he had the power of fusing this *matériel* with the glow of his genius in the progress of its delivery. This gave life, freshness, and power, which never can be secured by other modes.

His language was as accurate from his lips as from his pen, as appropriate to the theme, as chaste, as forcible, as elegant, and, as must be the case in all similar instances, had much more force than written words. Even the argumentative part partook of this animation; but the declamation, the creations of imagination, the poetry, were

overwhelming. One of his sermons was as different from a *memoriter* sermon, as a man is different from a statue; in the one we have the form without the life; in the other we have the entire man, body and soul. But he never lost his chart, never plunged into chaos. The reasoning of one of his oral efforts was like a chain of gold running through from end to end; and it cost no great trouble to perceive the linking; but the luminous flashes of genius brought to illustrate and impress this reasoning on the minds of his auditory were just like the sun, who, never losing his central position, throws around him the effulgence of day.

Every man is made for his work: Mr Watson was made for his. God had been most bountiful to him. His person was remarkable, like his mind. His *physique* was exquisitely formed, as if to be the fitting casket of the brilliant jewel lodged within. Nobody could meet him without stopping to look back, asking, "Who is that?" But that head! The face was elongated, and somewhat pale, with an appearance of constant suffering, and often overshadowed with a tinge of melancholy. The mouth was expressive of everything but obstinacy. The sense of the ridiculous, satire, scorn, contempt, defiance, imaginings, love, joy, all found expression in those wonderful lips. The nose was prominent, not exactly Grecian, not exactly Roman, but beautifully English, and expressive of both genius and generosity. The eyes were dark, oval, deep, brilliant, piercing, and, if we may say so, inexpressibly expressive. His look of scrutiny pierced to the bottom of the soul; his look of complacency inspired instant confidence; his look of affection kindled the feelings into a hearty glow; his look of devotion was calmly meditative; his look of inspiration was like a blaze of sacred fire. No

one could possibly mistake the meaning of his eyes; they spoke as intelligibly as his tongue. But that brow! We know not what to say; we are afraid of failure on the one hand, and of being accused, by those who did not live in his day, of exaggeration. But we believe that in this case exaggeration is impossible.

Our only means of judging of the human head is by comparison. This principle necessarily comes in, and our estimate must be formed thereupon. We have seen heads of greater breadth than that of Mr Watson, indicating greater power in some of its forms. We have seen men possessing much more brain in the mass, but its distribution was perfectly different. In him the brain appeared to be mainly given to assist mental exercise, the great mass being found in the frontal portion of the head. Indeed, those posterior developments which are supposed to indicate the animal passions were nearly absent. But the brow was prodigiously developed, as if by some extraordinary process the whole substance of the brain had been forced to this point—as if the intellect had demanded and engrossed every particle. The forehead did not taper inward from the sides, but was square; neither was it retiring, as we often see in heads otherwise fine, but was as nearly perpendicular from the eyebrows as possible, and of great height. Taken in connection with the face, there was real sublimity in the loftiness of this brow, as there is sublimity in the Alps and the Andes. We certainly never saw such a head; it was unlike that of any other person. If placed in the midst of those of an entire nation, it would be found different from them all; if measured by the ordinary standard, it would as far transcend them as the giant transcends the man of common stature.

This, then, was the instrument by which the soul had

to work; and we cannot be surprised that, with such an instrument, achievements in mental superiority and excellency were attained. But there is a connection betwixt the brain and the whole nervous system; the seat of sensation may be local, but sensation itself is universal. Mr Watson was acutely sensitive. We remember, on an occasion when he had been preaching one of his masterly sermons, a distinguished Dissenting Minister present made use of the words, "That wonderful mental machine!" Such would be the estimate of distant observers in general. Passion, sensation, acute feeling, would be the last things they would think of as belonging to so philosophical a mind. But this would be a perfectly false estimate.

His sentient nature was equal to his intellectual; and they probably acted reciprocally upon each other. There never can be great intellect without great sensibility. The mind may control the passions, as the rudder steadies the vessel in a storm; but the passions move the mind in its turn, giving the intellect its wholesome stimulus, and much of its colouring. Intellect without passion would be like the soul without the body: it might, for aught we know, be as pure and elevated as an angelic nature, but it would be useless to us, as being intangible to our mixed state of body and soul. In great natures the feelings generally take a melancholy hue, and, strange to say, very often from the sense of imperfection. Mr Watson was always behind his ideal, always striving to attain a perfection he never, in his own apprehension, reached; always climbing, without ever reaching the top of the hill. But the visions of intellect are such as to foster melancholy emotions. A shipwrecked world, a ruined race, a dead past, a dying present, a dark future, are

things to produce miserable sensations in those who see them in their vivid reality. Nobody needs envy great ability. The happiest men are they who sit at home, and lisp their little joys, with the imagination that there is nothing either better or worse than themselves, and their own bright fireside.

It is said of some intellectual men, that they have fits of energy and fits of idleness in alternation. Dr Johnson either worked like a horse, or not at all. Mr Watson was free from this peculiarity. His intellectual activity was incessant; it knew no intermission; like time, his mind was constantly in motion. Some persons can only pursue their mental processes in one place; they must be in their study surrounded by their books, with papers, chairs, pictures, and everything in exact order, or otherwise the machine stands still. Not so with Mr Watson. External circumstances made very little difference to him. His portfolio was always at hand, and in constant requisition. We have reason to know that a great amount of the most elaborate and finished productions of his pen were written out of his own study, and some of them in the midst of public business, journeys, and in the presence of persons in incessant motion and conversation. His energy may, in some degree, be understood by the amount of letter-press contained in the "Works;" but this is a very insufficient index. We have no doubt that the uncollected material of his pen would equal, if not far exceed, in quantity, that which is called his "Works." Activity, indeed, was the element of his mental existence; and he could not live a day without the creation of something important.

Besides study and authorship, several departments of work engaged Mr Watson's unceasing efforts. He was a

constant preacher. When in the regular work of the ministry, he invariably attended to his duties with great punctuality; and he has been heard to say of some of his congregations in small places, that he had as many people as candles, or just the number that he had walked miles. When he had no particular charge, as Secretary of the Missionary Society, he was indefatigable in this duty; and in addition to the extra sermons which he was in the regular habit of preaching for the Society, he took services every Sabbath in some of the London pulpits. The Missions, it is well known, occupied his daily attention; and his sermon on "Ezekiel's vision of the Dry Bones" was one of the first ever preached for the Society. During the period of twenty years, he gave himself up to this work,—the evangelisation of the world being his chief desire. He lived to see these labours crowned with great results; and, it is hoped, assisted to lay a foundation for those enterprises in all time to come, which may lead to still greater success.

His exertions against Slavery in the British Colonies were equally arduous and untiring. His sermon on "The Instruction of the Negroes" is one of the most masterly and eloquent of the whole series. He took part with the Anti-Slavery Society in its exertions, attending the Committee, and employing his pen and his influence to further its objects; and he died just as the chains of the poor slave fell off. Mr Watson was a political philosopher, and may be said to have worked in this line, as well as in those which bear a more philanthropic character. During the long struggle of the country for existence and freedom, against the aggressive violence of Napoleon, he placed himself on the side of the nation, and constantly exerted his talents in support of British interests. He kept pace,

however, with the progress of society; and, though holding steadfastly to the old English system of policy till the storm was over, he entertained the idea that a new adjustment of the national machine had become necessary, and gave his adherence to many of the reformatory measures which sprang up after the war had ceased. But he never appeared as the political partizan, nor entered into any public movements, believing that the position and duties of a minister did not allow of party strife. Hence the part he took in politics was to throw into the boiling caldron some philosophical views, some cooling ingredient. With an intellect so intense, mental labour so abundant and untiring, activity so incessant, and feelings so deep, we are not surprised that Mr Watson fell a martyr to his exertions in the midst of his years. *Arcum intensio fregit.*

SERMONS AND OUTLINES.

CHRIST'S DEATH AND ITS GLORIOUS ISSUES.

"Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."—John xii. 23, 24.

THESE important, but at that time deeply mysterious words, were addressed to certain Greeks who were "among them that came to worship at the feast." By the "Greeks," we are not to understand the Jews living in Greece, who are generally in the New Testament called "Grecians," not "Greeks," but Gentile proselytes—men who had been brought, through the zeal of pious Jews living in various parts of the world, to the knowledge and worship of the true God—a class of persons to whom the Gospel was at first preached in various cities in Asia with great effect, and who laid the foundations of the early Christian churches, being generally more disposed to receive the Gospel than the Jews themselves, who had been the instruments of proselyting them.

These persons came to Philip, and desired him, saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus; Philip cometh and telleth Andrew; and again, Andrew and Philip tell Jesus." It seems to have been a matter of consultation. These men

were Gentiles, and the disciples had once heard their Master say, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" however, they were graciously received, and words were laid up in their minds which could not, indeed, be possibly understood by them at the time, but which, from their mysterious import, would doubtless be deeply impressed on their memories—words which contain an epitome of the whole Christian system, the meaning of which, when the Gospel was afterwards fully preached to them by the apostles, and when the light of the revelations of the day of Pentecost had been thrown upon them, would be clearly unfolded, and would serve, no doubt, as the foundation of their faith, and the strength and joy of their hearts. "Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

These words, you perceive, are figurative, highly figurative; yet no metaphor could perhaps have been selected which so clearly and so impressively illustrates the truth which our Saviour meant to convey, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die"—undergo the dissolution of those parts which surround the vital germ, a change analogous to death, and therefore in most writers expressed by death—except this process takes place, the corn of wheat "abideth alone;" it is fruitless, and withers in the earth; "but if it die, if it undergo this process, then the root strikes into the earth, and the stem shoots upwards, and it comes to maturity, and bringeth forth much fruit—thirty, sixty, or an hundred-fold.

Now, certainly our Lord did not mean merely to indicate by this striking metaphor that he himself

should die, and rise again, and ascend to glory and honour. All these were events, we shall see, which were absolutely connected with the great result of his coming into the world to save man, and to purify them a peculiar people to himself; but the simple death, the simple resurrection, the simple ascension, and the simple glorification of our Saviour, have no direct connection with human salvation—they are only connected with it through something else. He therefore intends to explain to us this doctrine—that his death, his sacrificial death, was as necessary to the salvation of man as is the death of the corn of wheat to its final vegetation. Had it not been for his death, in this point of view, and for this end, he too would have remained alone; but having thus died, and purged away our sins, our life springs from his death; all our life hangs upon this great truth, and is sustained by the doctrine of a crucified Saviour.

Perhaps the best use that those churches can make of the observance of fasts and festivals, that are in the habit of regarding them, is to investigate the doctrines on which they are founded. The facts of the Christian history are all connected with doctrines—it is this which gives them their importance; and the fact of the crucifixion of our Saviour is essentially connected with the most vital doctrine of his atonement. We ask not your attention to this subject, merely for the purpose of exciting a mournful and sentimental feeling, which passes off and leaves no impression behind it, and which superstitious churches, in fact, have the means of heightening to its utmost intensity, making men thrill at the contemplation of the sufferings of the Saviour, without implanting a single principle of holiness in their minds. We want to know the truth which lies at the bottom of all these things; it is on the

truth that our faith is to be placed, and it is by the energy of that truth that we are to be sanctified. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."

I shall therefore avail myself of this passage of Scripture to show the doctrine of the atonement made for sin by the death of Christ, and the offices and glory of Christ as founded upon it; for in the text I perceive two instances of connection—the connection of human salvation with the death of Christ, and the connection of the circumstances and sufferings of that hour with the glory of Christ. "And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it remaineth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."

I. We have it laid down, that there is a connection, A NECESSARY CONNECTION, BETWIXT THE DEATH OF CHRIST AND HUMAN SALVATION. Now, this necessary connection is founded, in the first place, upon the fulfilment of the types and prophecies. In this respect it was necessary that Christ should die; for it is written,—"And thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead." All the ancient sacrifices under the patriarchal law were sacrifices for sin—they were founded on the principle, that "without shedding of blood is no remission;" and that they all looked forward to the Great Sacrifice, we learn from the very manner in which St Paul speaks of the first sacrifice—that of Abel; for when it is said that he offered his sacrifice in faith, the apostle could not mean that he offered it in the full belief that God would accept it; for Cain brought his sacrifice, and had as firm a belief that God would accept it as his brother Abel had. What the apostle

means by faith, in this place, is precisely what he means by saving faith throughout his epistles—the trust of an humble, helpless, penitent spirit, in the sacrifice for sin which God himself has appointed; it was in that faith,—and not with reference to his lamb,—but with reference to what the firstlings of his flock prefigured, that Abel presented his sacrifice, and was accepted of God.

Thus it was, also, with the rite of the passover—there was a necessity that it should be accomplished. It was the grand standing yearly sacrifice, which reminded the Jews that it was only by the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, that they could escape the stroke of the destroying angel, be delivered out of their spiritual captivity, and be led, through the wilderness of this world, to the heavenly Canaan. And it is very remarkable, that care was taken to show the connection between the death of Christ as our passover, and the ancient passover, by a very singular circumstance which occurred at his crucifixion. The ceremonial regulation with respect to the paschal lamb was, that not a bone of it should be broken; and when the soldiers came, according to the customary practice, in order to terminate the sufferings of those who were crucified, they broke the legs of the two malefactors, but as Jesus had given up the ghost, as he had dismissed his spirit, they brake not his legs—and, says the Evangelist, "this was done that it might be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken." So that this very circumstance was overruled for the purpose of impressing us with this view of the death of Christ —that he is a true passover, that in consequence of his death, and the sprinkling of his blood, the wrath of God passes over us, and we obtain redemption from sin and the world, and become heirs of the heavenly kingdom.

Then there were the transactions of the great day of expiation, the annual reconciliation of the people to God. When the blood was shed, the high priest went into the holiest place, and sprinkled it on the mercy-seat, and made reconciliation for the people, and came again without the veil, and pronounced the blessing upon the people—all illustrative of the offerings of the Saviour for our sins, his intercession for us before God, and of that effectual blessing which he obtains for us, by which we are reconciled to him, and kept, through the exercise of the same simple dependence upon him, in a state of continual reconciliation, and are enabled to rejoice in him as our Lord.

But if any person were to say that these resemblances, after all, may be merely fanciful, though the contrary might be established against such an objection, it must be remembered that there are literal predictions. Thus it is written, that "thus it behoved Christ to suffer." What, for instance, can any man say of the fifty-third chapter of the book of Isaiah, but that it predicts the grand design and manner of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ? The Jews never could exhibit any one in their history in whom these words bore any shadow of having been accomplished; and the Ethiopian eunuch, who was well acquainted with the writings of the Old Testament and the details of Jewish history, was at a loss to interpret "of whom the prophet spake—of himself or of some other man;" but when Philip came, and from that Scripture preached unto him Jesus, he saw immediately the wondrous correspondence and the exact accomplishment. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath

borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed,"—committing no sin himself, and therefore dying vicariously, in the room of others. Indeed, so exact is the prophecy, that the circumstances of his death, his being laid in the tomb of the rich man, and his rising again, his raising up a spiritual seed and justifying many, are all predicted; and to all these the death of Christ answers. It being a vicarious, sacrificial death that the prophet speaks of,—and with which he connects all these great consequences,—the death of Christ, as answering to it and fulfilling it, is to be regarded as a sacrificial and vicarious death. "He died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

But though it was necessary that our Lord's death should thus fulfil the types and prophecies, that is not the necessity which is intimated in the text. It is one of a deeper and more comprehensive nature. There are persons who tell us that it is great presumption in any to say, that there were no other means left, even to God himself, to reconcile the guilty, but the gift of his Son. They fancy that this, however excellent, however well adapted, was only one, among the other resources of the Divine wisdom, by which the great end could have been accomplished. The whole representations of the Bible, however, go to prove that man's case was desperate; that it could only be reached in this extraordinary way—God's giving his own Son:—if less could have sufficed, then this act would have been unnecessary—so great an expenditure of dignity and glory would have been unnecessary; but a

greater gift, a more worthy or costly sacrifice, could not be offered.

I believe, indeed, it would be generally found, that people who talk in this manner have but very imperfect, and even very low views of the dignity of Christ; and let us always keep this in view, because it shows the exceeding sinfulness of sin—it shows, too, the rigidness of the righteous character of the government of God—it shows the desperateness of our condition—it keeps alive all those great and necessary truths in our mind,—when we know, indeed, that there were no other means by which we could be reconciled to God, than, not merely the incarnation, but the sacrificial propitiatory death of him who was "God with God," and became "Immanuel, God with us." The connection is so necessary, that if Christ thus had not died, he would have remained alone, and would have carried no product of saved souls to his glory. That is the doctrine.

Look to the foundations on which this great doctrine of the atonement, to which I wish particularly to direct attention, rests; and, in order to enter into this, consider, first of all, the parties. There is, on one hand, man, the sinner; on the other, God, the offended governor—God, the righteous governor. Now, I ask, can it be denied by any that man is a sinner? If there be moral law—if it be a fact that we have a moral law, the sanction of which is death, can it be pretended that man is not a sinner, and that in this condition he is not under the sentence of condemnation—the wrath of God abiding on him?

I ask again, can it be denied that God is a righteous governor? Now, you may deny it if you please, and you may talk about his mercy and goodness, but that alters

not the facts of the case. We, too, grant that he is merciful and good, and rejoice in it thankfully and adoringly; but is it not true that God's government is, at the same time, a righteous government? Is it not true that it is awfully a righteous government? I grant that, in this present world, you do not see sin punished to its utmost extent, nor men dealt with, ordinarily, according to the tenor and threatenings of the law; but we can easily explain this.

If man were beyond the reach of all hope—if man were not in a probationary state, then indeed we should see the full extent of the accomplishment of the threatenings, and the full manifestation of the rigour of the righteous government under which he is placed; but he is a being now under wrath, and yet the subject of compassion and kindness, and placed in a state of discipline to bring him back to his God; and, therefore, we are to expect everything, in the case of man, to answer these views. We are to see kindness on the one hand, but so much justice on the other as to assure us that God's government is a righteous government. Now, can any one deny it? What do you say to the fact that every man dies?—that every creature that can suffer pain suffers it, and then we must all die?

The universality of death, and all the awful circumstances connected with it, is a standing proof that we are under a righteous government. God is just. Do you not see that sin is in every case connected with misery and great evil in society? Nay, so much so, that if all those miseries which are the result of man's voluntary offences were removed out of the world, the *quantum* of misery in it would be greatly reduced, and, in comparison almost, sorrow and sighing would flee away. And with these

facts before you—God having doomed all men, as sinners, to pain, and suffering, and death—having connected misery with sin, either external or internal, and if by a union which man cannot break, all offences against His law, of every kind, break out into innumerable miseries in families and society at large—with all this before us, can it be said that the government under which we are placed is not a righteous government—a government which takes strictest cognisance of offence?

Very well, then; if we are thus liable to the penalty as sinners, and if the character of the Divine government be a righteous one, I ask, how are we to escape? Now, there are but two ways in which, in the circumstances, we can conceive the Governor of the world to act, independent of that great method which his wisdom and grace have adopted. The first is, that he should execute his penalty on all offenders without mercy; and if so, what becomes of man the sinner? Then "the spirits would fail before him, and the souls that he has made." On the other hand, we might conceive, as many do, in fact, that from his own prerogative and merciful disposition, he would remit the offences of all offending creatures; but then that stands in opposition to the very sensible evidence—the evidence of experience—which we have, that his is a righteous government, a just government; that he does not overlook offence; that he does hold the sinner to the penalty: and therefore this second hypothesis cannot be.

Mark, then, that every other besides the Christian scheme of an atonement runs into one or other of these difficulties: it either cuts off hope from man, and that is the case with those who themselves attempt, and set others to attempt, to secure justification by perfect obedience; and this is hopeless, because all these attempts at last

only prove that still the sense of sin and defect remains with them, and that their past transgressions have no atonement at all; or, if the other scheme is adopted, it will lead men to conceive of God as exercising no government at all, dropping the sceptre out of his hands, granting immunity to offence, and thus encouraging its commission.

But mark how the Scriptures of the New Testament place this doctrine before us, and how at once they solve the difficulties of the case. It is not enough to refer us to the Divine mercy; because, if we were referred only to the Divine mercy, we should be met with so many evidences of the Divine severity and justice, that our trust in mere mercy could never be a firm one; but the New Testament refers us to a satisfied justice—God "declares his righteousness," his justice, "in the remission of sins that are past;" and "he is just whilst he justifies the ungodly that believe in Jesus;" "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." How? The corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies—the Saviour, who had no sins of his own to account for, and therefore was liable to no penalty, took upon himself excessive suffering; he took upon himself that suffering in our room and place; he died, the just for the unjust, whilst the dignity of the offering—as it was the offering of the Son of God incarnate—at once secured the righteous character of the Divine administration, and opened the gates of mercy to every penitent man! "Sing, O heavens, for the Lord hath done it!" Let us lift up our hearts with humble gratitude to God, that the way into the holiest has now been made manifest. There is not a moral difficulty remaining in the way of the forgiveness of any one of us; the justice of God will assent to it as readily as His mercy,

when forgiveness is sued in the name and in reliance on the merits of the Saviour.

But, then, to impress this more forcibly upon us, and to illustrate a remark which I made before, *consider now what it is, in Christ and the work of Christ, which immediately connects itself with human salvation.* If you examine this subject, you will find that you must come to this; his sacrificial death—his death in the way of offering a full, perfect satisfaction and oblation, for the sins of the world. Do we look at him as he is God—"God of God, very God of very God, Light of Light?" We would look on his infinite attributes with adoring gratitude; but simply considered as God, we must consider him as invested with the same attributes as the Father—justice, holiness, and truth. But he might have remained alone amidst the glories of his own Godhead, without bringing from amongst sinners many sons unto his glory.

You may consider him, also, as the Creator of the world, because in some mysterious way or other, God the Father, created all things by Jesus Christ, and all things were made by the Son and for him—an eminence in the work of creation was given to the Second Person in the Trinity; and hence we may behold, in this visible world, manifestations of the glory and grandeur of our Saviour. But it is not under his character of Creator that, as sinners, we can have hope in him. He, as the Creator, must also be the righteous moral governor; and had he not assumed another character through the anticipated atonement, sinners would have been consumed out of the earth, and he would have dwelt alone amidst the glory of his own creation, and there had not been the voice of a redeemed human spirit ever heard in it to proclaim his praise. It is very true that we find him incarnate,

assuming our nature; but it is not the incarnation, simply considered, that connects itself with our salvation. We may conceive it possible that he should have assumed the nature of man, passed through life exhibiting all the virtues he did, and dying without making atonement for sin; and his human spirit would have passed into a state of glory inconceivable; but he would have remained alone —he would have taken none of the sons of earth with him, to have shared, in that same nature, the felicities of heaven.

And do we look to his teaching? The teaching of Christ is the grand subject of admiration with those persons who deny the doctrine of his atonement; but yet there is no hope to man from the teaching of Christ, if you take away all reference it has to his own atoning death. Remove from it such declarations as these:— "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many;" and, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life"—and other passages of a similar description—take all these out of the preaching of Jesus Christ, and what have you left? Why, you have left law more bright, and piercing, and convincing, than was ever administered by Moses and the Prophets. You may go to his sermon on the mount, and there find all the principles of God's law explained and carried in all their convincing energy and reproving light into your heart; but, separate from such views as those we have touched on, never did Mount Sinai itself gleam with so much fire as did that mount from which he spake, provided you keep to the principle, that his words are not connected with pardon and deliverance from sin. But then bring

in the particular character of his death—as sacrificial—as making atonement for sin—as illustrating God's justice—asharmonising the apparently contending attributes of mercy and justice, and making it honourable for God to forgive the sins of His creatures on their repentance and faith—and then see how this very circumstance interests you in everything else that is in Christ.

Then, indeed, may you rejoice in his Godhead: He is "Immanuel, God with us." Our Saviour is not a human but a Divine Being; strong is that arm, and mighty that right arm, that bears us through the temptations and conflicts of life, and will bear us safe through the floods of death!

Then you may rejoice in him as the Creator of all things, and consequently, as the Regulator and Governor of all things. The very Being that so loved you as to die for you, rules in the heaven above and in the earth beneath; and there is not a ray of glory or of beauty in this fair and goodly world, but is an illustration of the glory and greatness of Him of whose infinite love you have this pledge—that he laid down his life for you.

Then, indeed, you feel how great and lively an interest you have in his incarnation—that he took upon him your nature—that he impersonated himself with humanity. "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same," that having in that nature represented us to God and endured suffering, he might in that nature make intercession for us; and in what spirit? The Apostle tells us: "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." And this gives us the most exalted views we can have of the

future glory and the amazing capacity of human nature—that the Son of God, himself Divine, is eternally united with humanity; and finds that humanity glorified is rendered a fit medium through which He can carry on the operations of Deity itself.

And now as to his teaching. We have a deep and lively interest in it—it is the rule of holiness. Then as to his intercession. In honour of his death, and in order to conform our hearts and characters to this rule, and to bring us into a state in which we can practically exemplify all the holiness of his doctrine and image, he has obtained for us by his death the regenerating Spirit—the source of spiritual life—whose work it is to conform man to the image of Jesus Christ, and to sanctify human nature and prepare it for its high destination. Thus, then, we see the necessary connection that exists betwixt the death of Christ—the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ—and human happiness and salvation.

On the other point of connection, I can only offer a few general observations; but it is exceedingly interesting to notice—

II. THAT OUR LORD ESTABLISHES A CONNECTION BETWIXT THAT HOUR OF DARKNESS AND OF SHAME ON WHICH HE WAS GOING TO ENTER, AND THAT GLORIFICATION OF HIMSELF WHICH WAS TO ENSUE. And I connect this with the doctrine I have laid down—that, in point of fact, the true official glory of Jesus Christ does all result and spring from the sacrificial character of his death. "The hour is come when the Son of man should be glorified." Yet that hour was to be an hour of darkness; the powers of darkness were to appear to acquire dominion; it was to be the hour in which he was to feel all the pangs which

ingratitude inflicts on a generous spirit, and in which he was to be ignominiously crucified by the murderous hands of a people whose land he had filled with the light of his instructions, and to whose families he had carried by his healing miracles, health, and peace, and consolation—it was the hour in which he was to be exhibited, so weak as to become the object of cruel mockery, in which he was not to put forth his power, but be led as a lamb to the slaughter, and by the hiding of his power to provoke the taunt—"He saved others; himself he cannot save!" It was the hour in which he was to know himself what it is for God to desert a spirit—what it is for the Father of spirits to have a human being without any ray of his presence, which none of us ever felt. God grant we never may! Jesus Christ underwent it in order that we never might feel it—it was the hour when he was to exclaim, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—when he was to feel, in other words, the penalty of sin in the soul, as well as in the external torments inflicted—when he was to be obliged to confess it, too, before his enemies, that God had forsaken him—that was his hour; and he who had given life was himself to die! Yet he himself says, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified;" and from that hour the true glory of Christ arose.

What is that glory? Now, it is not at all the Socinian idea of glory—that is not at all intended; it is a thing of a different nature and principle from that poor honour, which those who deny the Divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ would ascribe to him, by his being raised, somehow or other, to some kind of eminence, and rule, and authority over the world, which he had illustrated by his virtues, and filled with the light of his heavenly doctrines. All such systems deprive us of the sublimities of our

religion; they make it a little and contemptible thing, and what is worse, they take away from us the ground of our hope. Now, what is that glory of Christ which springs out of the darkness of that hour? I said I should only advert to a few general particulars.

His, then, was *the glory of offering the universal sacrifice, which was to abrogate and render all others of no avail.* The signs which accompanied his crucifixion declared that the Father had accepted the sacrifice which had been offered, and as long as there is a sinner remaining on the earth, that needs to come to God in the way of sacrifice and atonement, let him "behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;" and, believing in him, he shall thus, and thus only, be admitted to the family of God, and into a state of reconciliation with him.

Then, let it be observed, *He conquered death*—that was his glory. But for whom did he conquer it? He conquered death for his people—not only that he might take away death's sting, but that he might assure them that, as he lay but a short period under its power, and then rose triumphant from the tomb, they shall remain under it but for a season, and like him, be raised from the dead to glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life.

He was thus declared to be the Resurrection and the Life; and his is the glory of being the object of that blessed hope which has been fixed on him in all ages. "Though I die, I shall live;" though death breaks in upon our families and connexions, suffuses our eyes with tears, and tortures our feelings, yet still death is conquered, and the family of God shall be reunited with the Saviour at the last.

Then, His is the glory of opening the holy place by the sprinkling of his blood. The veil was rent, typically, to

show that the way to the holiest was made perfect, and that the High Priest was to enter into the courts above, and open the way to the throne of the heavenly grace—a subject on which the Apostle Paul so often and so delightfully dwells. And have we not the deepest interest in this—that we can go to God—that our spirits can ascend to communion—that we can become familiar with spiritual intercourse with God and holy things—that we can thus acquire a spiritual and heavenly character, and be fitted to enter, personally, into those courts into which Christ has entered in the character of our forerunner? This glory was put on his sacrifice—having opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

And then, from hence arises *the great glory of his actually saving men*—actually reconciling men to God—establishing the ministry of reconciliation, which is nothing more, in fact, than propounding its terms in the name of the Saviour, calling the attention of men to their consideration, and urging them, by the terrors of the Lord, and by the mercies of the Lord, to accept these terms. But this word of reconciliation has been the instrument of leading men to God through Jesus Christ. And his is the glory of having actually redeemed, actually reconciled, actually guided through the difficulties, contests, and pollutions of this present life, myriads of sinners to his everlasting kingdom. And still the glorious work goes on—the work which brings to him his true glory, as the knowledge of the Saviour is spreading through the world; it will not, it cannot be countervailed until, by the mercy of God, all nations be filled with its heavenly light, and the souls redeemed by Christ be gathered out of every kindred, and people, and tongue, to give him glory for ever and ever.

Now, in conclusion, there are two points on which our attention ought to be fixed. Has this great provision of Divine mercy and wisdom been made for me, and have I availed myself of it, or am I still guilty of slighting this great salvation? For it comes to this: so long as you do not avail yourself of this mercy, you are under a righteous government—that is, you are under wrath; that wrath may be suspended, there is great long-suffering, because God is not willing that men should perish; but you are living under a government of justice, while God calls you to a state of reconciliation, and you might be living under the paternal government of God, your heavenly Father. I call upon you to reflect upon the difference there is betwixt your present state and that into which you might pass, through faith in Jesus Christ. I beseech you to resolve, by the grace of God, to turn to Christ, that you may find peace. Why will ye die? Why will ye put your greatest interests to hazard?

And then we are instructed in this, too—that as all our blessings come from the death of Christ, and as the first blessings of our spiritual life come through the instrumentality of faith flowing in earnest prayer, so indeed are we to obtain possession of all the blessings purchased for us by Christ in the same manner. Let no man deceive himself: it will not be by restraining prayer, and by suffering our faith to become a mere form; there must be an effort and motion of the soul continually towards God; there must be decision of character; there must be a cleaving to God with purpose of heart, that we may obtain the blessings of a full salvation. Let us, then, honour God with large prayers and by simple acts of trust, that abundance of grace may be ours here, and that we may be crowned finally with glory, honour, and immortality. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN'S VIEWS OF LIFE, DEATH, AND THE FUTURE.

"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."—2 Cor. v. 1–4.

"WE are brought," says St Peter, by Christianity, "out of darkness into marvellous light." Marvellous indeed is that light—not merely because of that which it reveals, and of which we had otherwise been ignorant—but because of those new aspects and relations in which it places things before known and familiar. For with what subjects were men more familiar, for instance, than the frailty and mortality of the human frame, the uncertainty of life, and the certainty of death?

All these have furnished subjects for the meditation of men in all ages—they have given pathos to their poetry, point to their morals, sentiment to their sepulchral inscriptions. And yet, surely words like these in the text, relative to the subjects I have mentioned—the frailty, the mortality of man, the uncertainty of life, and the certainty of death—were never before written by any human pen; and the thoughts which they embody were never conceived by a human spirit, until Christianity "brought life and immortality to light."

It were a common thing for the Apostle to have said, "We know that the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved;" but it was Christianity alone that enabled him to say, "We know, that if it is dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And thus though, for the present, Christianity leaves us as it finds us—frail, mortal, dying—it opens to us the path of life, and teaches us to regard these subjects in new, sanctifying, and most elevating views.

This is the subject I shall bring before you—the peculiar views which Christianity gives us, firstly, of life; secondly, of death; and thirdly, of the permanent and future state of those who cordially receive it. With respect to all these particulars, we shall find not only great truths, but peculiar truths—truths peculiar to Christianity; and the peculiarity of which constitutes, indeed, its highest excellence, its superior glory.

I. WE HAVE THE VIEWS WHICH CHRISTIANITY TEACHES US TO TAKE OF LIFE.

1. The first view which it gives us, suggested by the text, is, that *life is a pilgrimage.* The text speaks of "tabernacles," tents; we are dwelling in tents. The idea is taken from Eastern travellers, who, when they had to perform any long journey, had to provide themselves with tents, which became their residence until their journey was closed. But there is nothing peculiar in this representation of life as a pilgrimage; we find it in heathen sages and heathen poets; and no figure of speech can be more familiar to man than this. But the Christian view is peculiar; we are on a pilgrimage to another world; there are but two roads through life; the one leads to death,

and the other to eternal felicity. That is the doctrine of Scripture. And every man is travelling through one of these roads or the other; with the lapse of every moment he is getting nearer to a permanent state of inconceivable wretchedness, or of inconceivable glory.

It is, therefore, not merely sentimental to represent life as a pilgrimage, and man as dwelling in a tent; but there is the most important moral connected with this. Your great business is to examine the road you are taking—to "stand and ask for the old path, where is the good way," the way of safety, the way that leads to God, the way which the prophets and apostles, and all good men have taken; that, after the pilgrimage of life, you may be at home with God.

2. A second view of life, in the text, is, that it is *uncertain.* Nor is there anything peculiar in this; it is one of the familiar and obvious subjects which Christianity places under new and more impressive aspects. What is more frail than a tent? Subject to earthly decay, liable to be overturned by accident, or to be wrecked by the storm, it stands as a fit emblem of frailty—of the frailty of our bodies, speedily worn out, liable to be suddenly and fatally injured by accident, or overthrown by some visitation of sickness. All this is common and familiar; but when we view this subject in the light which Christianity throws around it, we must take in another consideration—that the uncertainty of life is the uncertain continuance of a state of probation. If the tent of the traveller were blown down, or if, through some casualty, it had sustained some injury, he might, perchance, repair it, or provide himself with another, and continue the same journey; but the moment our tabernacle, this bodily frame, falls, our journey is at an end; we are at home at

once; we are, in one moment, in that permanent condition which can never change. "There is a great gulf," says the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, "between you and us, so that we can neither go to you nor you come to us." It is gloriously impossible for the righteous to fall into misery, and it is awfully and judicially impossible for the miserable to rise into a state of happiness. So that we enter, in that moment, upon a permanent and changeless state.

What is the moral, then, of this view? That the uncertain duration of life is the uncertain duration of moral probation. The moral of it is enforced by our Lord, where he says, "Watch ye, and pray always, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." So that no man is living rightly who is not living in a state in which he is prepared for an exchange of worlds. I would impress that upon you. If you are not this moment prepared to die, you have need to call mightily upon God to raise you to a much higher state than you have yet attained: your Christianity hitherto is imperfect, too low, too inefficient. O betake yourselves to prayer; flee to the refuge of the atonement; take hold on the strength of God, and rest not until you are made children of God and heirs of his glory. You know not how soon the earthly house of your tabernacle may be dissolved!

3. The third view which the Apostle takes of life is, that, *even as to believers, it is a life of trouble and affliction.* "We in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened"—burdened with the weight of affliction; and here, indeed, the mere sentimentalist might coincide with the Apostle. Many a sentimentalist, both ancient and modern, would delight to dwell on the dark shades of life, and draw, even in many respects, a more gloomy picture

than the Apostle has drawn, though his colouring is strong enough—"groaning, being burdened." But let us observe that the views which the Apostle gives us of the troubles of life are Christian views: they are to be taken in connection with those doctrines on which he had been already dwelling, and then we shall see that, although the Apostle allows that there are afflictions and sorrows sufficient in number and in weight to make even a true believer "groan, being burdened," in the present state he allows of no depression but what is consistent with solid, and substantial, and habitual rejoicing in God. Surely this is peculiar to Christianity.

One cannot but feel that such language as the Apostle uses in the preceding chapter would have appeared exceedingly strange to a reflecting heathen man, the first time he read it; so very much would it appear out of the order and course of his usual thinking, and of the thinking of any person with whom he had been connected. For the Apostle has some singular paradoxies in the preceding chapter—"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed;" "groaning, being burdened," yet "always rejoicing."

But this is not a mere singularity—it is not an inexplicable singularity. Everything in Christian experience is rational—it has rational evidence about it. I grant that there are doctrines of Holy Scripture which are resolvable into mysteries, and that their evidence, in this state of existence, is not rational evidence, by means of the weakness of our powers; but there is nothing in Christian experience but has the highest and strongest rationality. Well might the Apostle say, when he exhorted us to give up ourselves fully and unreservedly to

God, "it is your reasonable service;" and we may say with respect to this rejoicing in tribulation, this triumphing in Christ, even amidst the depressions that make us groan —the burdens of the present state that extort this groaning—there is reason in it all.

The Apostle, in this very chapter, assigns the true reason. This is our state, says he. Why? "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed," in vigour, in hope, in joy, in charity, "day by day." For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Mark, then, that there is this difference betwixt the afflictions of worldly men and the afflictions of true believers—that the latter are connected with eternal life, and are the instruments by which they are prepared for it; whilst the other are the corrections of God, which are not turned to any moral use, through the perverted feelings and principles of men. Their very afflictions serve, in many instances, to separate them further from God, and increasingly to harden their wicked hearts.

4. But there is a fourth view of life which the Apostle takes, at least in the verses which immediately succeed the text, affording another illustration of the peculiar views which Christianity teaches us to take, even of subjects familiar and common: he teaches us, then, that life is to be subordinated to one great end—*so to please God as to have the testimony that we are accepted of him.* If this were considered only as a conception, it would be a noble one—one which no uninspired man

ever had. But it is more than a fine conception; it is a great and glorious reality, that every believer may regard every thing in life, whether it be pleasing or painful—whatever may occur during its chequered scenes—as subordinated to the great end of obtaining the Divine approbation, and being accepted of God. For observe what the Apostle says: "Therefore we are always confident"—always assured; for so the word means: always in an assured state of mind, "knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." We are, it is true, absent from the Lord, and walk by faith, not by sight, and willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with him; "but we labour that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted."

The highest heaven of a good man is to be accepted of God; and if it be the heaven of saints at last, and through eternity, to have the Divine approbation—if it indeed constitute the very essence of their blessedness; and if it be that from which, in truth, all other blessedness proceeds, then must it be one of our greatest attainments on earth. And it is only when we have the blessed assurance, that through Christ we are accepted of God—that our services, and our endeavours to act according to the will of God, however imperfect, have a sincerity in them which, through Christ, renders them acceptable to God, though they have no worthiness in themselves—that we have the testimony of a good conscience, as the only ground of believing, that in all things we are acceptable unto God our Saviour. It is only then that we enter into the spirit of true Christianity; and it is then that we are living in a state of true and solid happiness, which none of the changes of the present life can possibly destroy or even affect.

Such are the views which Christianity teaches us to take of life. Remember that you are on your pilgrimage to heaven or hell—remember that this period of your probation is uncertain: it may terminate the next moment, and beyond that there is no change. Remember, too, that you are called into that state in which the sufferings of this present life shall be ameliorated and sustained by the communicated joys of the salvation of God, and the hopes which Christianity inspires; and that it is the great end for which you ought to live—the great end of the life to which God calls you—that which turns a vain life into a substantial and glorious life—that you may have the testimony that you are accepted of God; and that, whilst you are at home in the body, and absent from him, still you stand accepted of God your Saviour. Oh,

> Who would not live for ends like these—
> So noble, so immortal!

II. WE HAVE THE VIEWS WHICH CHRISTIANITY TEACHES US TO FORM OF DEATH.

Here I perceive a peculiarity quite as strong as in the former instance. Nothing is more common, no subject is more familiar than this; but it was never placed under such aspects as it is placed by our text. The Apostle does not dwell on the affecting circumstances of dying—he does not dwell upon the pains and struggles of nature—he does not dwell upon the languor of the spirit, and the sorrows of separation, the humiliation of the grave, the deep dark vault, the darkness, and the worm; but he leaves all these as mere circumstances, things of little importance, though they so often occupy the attention of men when this subject is before them; and he tells us in one word what it is to die. By that one wonderful word

—a word which inspiration only could have taught—he opens to us views of death, which were never opened to the heathen world. He tells us in this one word, that to die is to be "unclothed;" for when he says, afterwards, that we, believers, would not remain in an unclothed state —"not that we would be unclothed,"—he represents death as the unclothing of the soul.

Meditate on that word—"unclothed!" Death, then, is not the termination of our being. As, when the tent falls, the traveller lives, so, when the tabernacle of the body is dissolved, the traveller within, the spirit, still lives, and is but "unclothed."

"Unclothed!"—Then there is no cessation of consciousness. There is no more connection betwixt the destruction of our consciousness and death, than there is a connection betwixt the destruction of the tent in which the traveller has lived, and the alteration or destruction of his consciousness, or the interruption of his rational faculties. So far is it from being the scriptural doctrine, that our rational and intellectual powers and affections sustain any injury by dying, that, immediately after death—this is the scriptural doctrine—they all become more perfect and intense in their operations. Philosophy may not comprehend it; very likely not; but God, who knows what man is, has declared it. So our Lord promised to the penitent thief that he should be with him in paradise that day. It was to be paradise—a state of blessedness, a state of high and intense enjoyment. And in the parable before adverted to, of the rich man and Lazarus, you see the disembodied spirit exhibited to you immediately after death; "for the rich man died and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment." You see no cessation of consciousness, no weaken-

ing of the powers, but everything more intense. How fearfully faithful the memory; setting the secret things in the light of the countenance! How terrible—terrible the pressure and the weight of the wrath of ALMIGHTY GOD!—"Sore tormented in these flames!" So that, if we turn to scriptural testimony, we find that unclothing of the spirit introduces it only into a state in which its powers become more active and complete.

"Unclothed!" Then, of course, everything in the body which obstructs the operation of the mind must necessarily be removed; which is a further illustration of the idea just stated. This immortal mind will be no longer allied to the imbecility of infancy, nor subjected to the necessity of sleep, nor to the infirmities of age; all these obstructions are removed. Doomed now to operate through the instrumentality of the body, its operations are necessarily impeded by the weakness and frailty of the instruments it is forced to use; but at death it is then unclothed.

"Unclothed!" Then there is a change of place as well as condition. The connection of our spirits with the body renders us inhabitants of the earth. From the moment that connection is formed, we become inhabitants of earth, the moment that connection is broken, we are no longer inhabitants of earth, but of some other place. Hence we speak of another world, though sometimes too familiarly, and with too little impression on our spirits. Where is that change of place? We know not. This we know, however, that the place which now knows us shall know us no more; we break through the circle in which we move, and form other companionships; man is no longer an inhabitant of earth; he has gone to some other world, which the telescope has not revealed to mortal eye.

"Unclothed!" Then must we become conscious, by

virtue of this unclothing, of the presence of those spirits who have undergone the same process before us, and have been unclothed like ourselves. What a thought is this! We are not now at all conscious of the presence of disembodied spirits; they are, for the while, lost to us. Notwithstanding their former intimacies, we, as yet, have no notice given to tell us how or where they live.

> As if shut up by solemn fate,
> To keep the secrets of their state,
> They tell their joys and griefs to none;
> That man may live by faith alone.

When we are "unclothed," we must become conscious of the presence of all the dead. If we die without a preparation for a better world, we can never be gathered among the righteous, and therefore shall become, in one moment, conscious of the presence of the innumerable wicked: we must join that wretched company held in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day—despairing, shuddering, malignant, wicked, blaspheming spirits; for there is no grace in their repentance, there is no principle in their remorse. We must join that wretched company, of whom it may be said, "Their harvest is past, their summer is ended, and they are not saved"—men who are waiting with the same sentiments as evil spirits for the second coming of the Son of man. What a horrible declaration was that of the devils in our Lord's time, when they said to him, "Art thou come to torment us before the time?" Don't you perceive by that, that their eye was fixed upon a time when he should come to torment them—that they were anticipating its arrival—that the thought was hanging over them, so that

they could not forget it, as a dark cloud upon all their prospects? So it shall be with the wicked.

But, on the other hand, how delightful is the thought, that, if we die in the Lord, this unclothing makes us at once conscious of the presence of all the righteous gathered into the family above, the general assembly and church of the first-born, the spirits of just men made perfect—all that have died in the Lord—all who have obtained mercy—all whose spirits have been gathered unto Christ, delightfully anticipating his second advent to have their joys completed, joined to the first of those who have departed from this life, who have died in the Lord, and are now waiting for us on the shores of the celestial world!

"Unclothed!" but the import of this word is not yet exhausted: it suggests to us yet one other thought, more impressive, in fact, than any one which has yet been brought before you—then must we become conscious at once, in a manner we cannot be on earth, of the presence of God. The body hides God from us, and prevents the immediate recognition of God by the spirit. But it is the uniform doctrine of Scripture that, when man is "unclothed," and the spirit goes into the invisible world, then must it be more immediately and intensely than we can now conceive on earth, conscious of the presence of God. What a thought this to a wicked man! Conscious of the immediate searching presence of God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known; from whom no secrets can be hid, to whom everything that is evil in the heart stands exposed, and must meet his reproving eye! What a thought, that he shall feel that he is searched by perfect holiness, and loathed by perfect holiness, and would, shrinking into nothing if he could, hide himself from the

presence of God! God grant that none of us may ever so meet him!

But, on the other hand, if we die in peace with him, and accepted of him through Christ, we shall be delightfully conscious of his presence, of his smile—have access to the fountain of life, see him in his glory, have that intimate fellowship with him, which shall be our happiness until the time when he comes to complete his designs, and give up the kingdom to God his Father. Such are the views which the Apostle teaches us to form of death. Now, I beseech you, write them on your hearts. Never forget that to die is to be "unclothed." Never forget how many serious, how many influential, how many stirring thoughts, this being "unclothed" implies. Flee to God that you may obtain his mercy and live in his smile, that whenever the tent, the tabernacle of this body, is dissolved, you may then find yourself in the presence of God and of the saints, who shall congratulate you on your safe arrival on the shores of eternal blessedness.

III. WE HAVE HERE THE VIEWS WHICH CHRISTIANITY TEACHES US TO FORM OF THE FUTURE PERMANENT STATE OF BELIEVERS.

The Apostle has spoken of two great changes—one change from life to death; another change, as to the soul, from the inferior life which it has in the present state to the higher life which it must have in another. But there is a third change,—and the third change takes place at the resurrection of the body, but not till then; so that here there is everything peculiar. The wise men of antiquity seem to have given up the doctrine of the resurrection of the body at an earlier period than almost any other doctrine of the ancient patriarchal religion. It

was always a stumbling-block to reason; and therefore it was, at a very early period, that the wisdom of this world concluded that it was impossible God should raise the dead. But another doctrine came in—which seems to have been the great reason, next to this of supposed impossibility—which spread through the philosophic world of antiquity in almost all its sects, and that was, that the union of the soul with matter was so great an evil and so necessary, that the human spirit could never acquire its true perfection until it was eternally disengaged and separated from matter.

They saw, indeed, what was very obvious—that the body, in its present fallen, and weak, and disordered state, clogs the operations of the human soul; and not only clogs its operations, but is, in many respects, a great incitement to its evils. They planted evil in the body—there they mistook it; the seeds of evil are in the soul, though the appetites of the body become the exciting cause and the means of temptation. To them, therefore, it became a very undesirable thing that the body should be raised again; and this doctrine of the resurrection was therefore scoffed at, particularly by the wise men of the world—scoffed at, however, because they did not understand it, and refused for a long time to understand it. The Christian view is, not that there is any evil in connecting the soul with matter, but a great good, when that matter is refined—when that change passes upon it which is promised at the resurrection of the dead—which shall be glorious.

And this was, indeed, the hope of the saints in all ages; and perhaps we are so much in the habit of speaking, at once, of the glorification of the human soul with God, that we are apt to overlook the great importance of the doc-

trine of the resurrection from the dead. And yet you see it was the hope of ancient saints. Job, when he sat on the dunghill scraping himself with the potsherd, and saying, "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O ye, my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me," drew his consolation from this source—"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." It was the hope which enabled the Jewish martyrs, previously to the time of Christ, to go through their persecutions; they would not accept of deliverance on condition of defiling their consciences by offering to idols, "because they expected a better resurrection."

This was the doctrine which our Lord took particular pains to teach. How often does he advert to it! How often does he declare himself to be the resurrection and the life! How often does he declare that he that believeth in him shall never die; that of all the Father giveth him he shall lose nothing, but shall raise it up at the last day! —evidently meaning that he shall lose neither the body nor the soul, but raise it up at the last day the complete man. And one of his most stupendous miracles, you recollect, was the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead—at once an affecting and stupendous miracle, as tender as grand; and which was designed, no doubt, to teach us, not merely that Christ has power to raise the dead, and that he will raise the dead, calling with a voice which they shall hear, but likewise—as in the instance of Lazarus being raised from the dead and restored to his weeping relatives, a painful breach in the family was healed, and the tears were wiped from their eyes—to give, in that delightful picture, this other feature of the resurrection

from the dead: the healing of all the breaches which death has made, and the restoration, to one another, of all weeping friends in the presence of God.

St Paul attaches so much to the resurrection of the dead, that he tells us that he accounted all things, all his sufferings, nothing in comparison, if by any means, even by crucifixion itself, he might attain the resurrection of the dead. "I count all things but loss," says he, "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ—that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death"—even if I am to be crucified with him—"if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead." And here, in the text, the Apostle has two expressions which show the importance he attaches to this great work. In the first place, he tells us that he would not be unclothed. "In this tabernacle we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven;" by which he means the body of the resurrection, and which he calls a house, in contrast with a tent or tabernacle—a frail and earthly tent—because it is to be durable, and more perfect in its structure. That is the reason why it is called "a house." "If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked"—that is, not in a disembodied state—"for we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not that we would be unclothed"—not that we would continue in an unclothed state—"but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

And you see the great reason—the Apostle aims at the most perfect state of man. Now, the most perfect state of man is not a disembodied state. Adam was not made

in this state when, in his glory, he came from his Creator's hand: he had a human body, and a reasonable soul co-existing. Our Lord took upon him our nature, both in body and in spirit, and retains that nature glorified. There is a glorified spirit and a glorified body impersonated with the Second Person in the glorious Trinity; and he will wear that nature for ever gloriously. Therefore it must be the most perfect condition of man. And though it may be, and indeed is, true that the body obstructs the fine operations of the mind very frequently, and that, in consequence of the spirit having to work by the instruments of the body, it is greatly hindered in the intensity and in the continuance of its operations; yet, nevertheless, even in this present state, there are indications how the body may subserve the human soul—how the body may become the instrument of exciting activity in the mental powers, which they have not ordinarily, by circumstances of mere bodily excitement. This activity and power of the imagination is often produced by bodily excitement, and carried sometimes to so great an extent as to be painful, and even sometimes fatal. A wonderful breaking forth this of the great truth, that the bodily faculties, when glorified, may be assistants to the operations of the human mind!

Doubtless, it will be so; but now we cannot conceive of it. A body, so finely tempered as to need neither food nor sleep, will be a fit companion to a glorified spirit, to assist in its operations, and in no way to obstruct them; and thus is the whole man to be glorified, and mortality to be swallowed up of life. What that means I shall not attempt to say. You would think me very presumptuous if I attempted to offer any explanation of that clause, "Mortality shall be swallowed up of life!" Who can tell

what that means? Eternity must be the comment upon it. Where all is life—where death shall be no more—where everything shall be living—ourselves living—every thing around us living—where the blight shall never pass over any scene with which we are surrounded—when all shall live in God, and to God, and with God for ever—what all this is we cannot tell.

Such, then, are the views which the Apostle directs us to take of this subject. Surely we shall not have been reminded of subjects of this sort without deriving some lasting benefit. O let us learn how to connect time and eternity, this life with another—that it is our great concern to acquaint ourselves with God, that we may be at peace with him. There is a verse which immediately follows the text, which I commend to your meditation: "Now," says the Apostle, "he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit." How many thoughts does that text suggest to you! First, that you must be "wrought to that self-same thing." There must be a work of God in you, preparing you for this glory—a work of regeneration, a work of renewal: you are to be created again in righteousness and true holiness. Grace you must seek in earnest prayer, and never rest till you obtain it, that God might work this grace in you; and then, if indeed you have a preparation, one on which you can depend, for another life, you have the earnest of the Spirit in your heart—you are led by the Spirit of God, and under his gracious influence. For the man who is not under this gracious influence here, has no scriptural title to this eternal rest. By this, then, let us try ourselves, and let us know that "it is our Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom." Remember that God has brought us to

hear the word of this salvation, that we may become personally interested in it; and that, finally, we may be removed from the infirmities and sorrows of this present state into the changeless joys and felicities of the eternal world. God grant this may be the end of us all! Amen.

JUSTIFICATION.

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."—ROMANS v. 1.

THERE is no question so momentous as this—How shall man, guilty man, be just before God? How shall he escape the consequences of his sin in time and in eternity? Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift, the gift of his Son, the gift of his holy gospel, the question is now fully answered; and the way in which man may come into a state of grace and acceptance with God is brought before him, so that he may clearly comprehend it. This is the case in the text.

Let us consider—

I. THE MEANING OF THE TERMS USED IN THE TEXT, AND IN OTHER PARTS OF SCRIPTURE, IN REFERENCE TO THE JUSTIFICATION OF SINFUL MAN BEFORE GOD.

1. The term does not signify to be acquitted of all blame and fault. Justification is not a declaration of man's innocence. We are justified as *ungodly*, and must confess that we are sinners. Justification admits the charge of sin, and yet provides exemption from its consequences.

2. Neither is justification regeneration. The two acts are distinct. Justification has respect to taking away the consequences, the penalty, the punishment of sin; regeneration respects the renewal of the heart in righteous-

ness and true holiness. The one is a work done for us, the other is a work done in us. The first places us in a new relation; the second makes us new creatures.

3. Justification is, in fact, pardon. The justified man is a pardoned man—a man whose sins are blotted out, whose iniquity is forgiven, so that God has no longer any charge against him.

There is good reason for the pardon of sin being expressed by the term justification. Not only because it is an act that takes place under a merciful constitution, but because it takes place through an atonement which has satisfied Divine justice. See, on this point, the third chapter, especially the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses. And, still further, because every pardoned man is placed in the condition of a righteous man. He cannot be punished for sin, because his sin is blotted out. He is as much exempted from punishment as if he had never sinned. God treats him as a just man, takes him back into his family, and remembers his sins and iniquities against him no more.

But there are several other things which go along with this justification.

Our adoption. When we are justified, we are at once adopted into the family of God. See this beautifully illustrated in the case of the prodigal son.

Heirship. "If children, then heirs." A glorious inheritance becomes ours: the favour and blessing of God here, and eternal life hereafter.

Regeneration. For in the very moment that a man is justified, he becomes a new creature. No condemnation is his. The bond of sin is broken, and he walks at liberty; he walks not after the flesh, but after the spirit. (Compare Romans vii. 24 with viii. 1, 2.)

II. THE MEANS BY WHICH WE ENTER INTO THIS JUSTIFICATION.

We are justified *by faith.* And what is faith? Faith is here *opposed to the works of the law.* Paul is arguing against the Jews, who sought to be justified by the works of the law. He proves that all have sinned; that by the law is the knowledge of sin; that by the law we are convinced of the fact, and have our eyes opened to the danger; but that by the law we cannot possibly be justified. If, from the first dawn of reason to the very close of life, you had loved God with all your heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, you might be justified by the law; but your consciences testify that your sins are more in number than the hairs of your head, and that they have been repeated under many aggravations. Then there is no justification for you by the deeds of the law.

Others speak of being justified by *repentance.* No man can be justified without it, but none by it. It is not the sorrow of a criminal that will avert his punishment. There is sorrow in hell—deep, pungent sorrow: just as much repentance as any natural man can have; but that sorrow, deep, pungent, continued as it is, does not quench the flames of hell. You may weep your very lives away; but, if you have nothing else, that will not satisfy God.

Then comes in the great plan of the Gospel—*faith.* Faith *in what?* Why, in the atonement. Christ came that he might suffer—suffer in our room. Of him the penalty was exacted. He paid

"The rigid satisfaction—death for death."

Now faith is the instrument which lays hold on this atonement, which rests on this propitiation. Not a mere belief that he died, and that he satisfied justice; but a

resting on that hope, a pleading it before God, till, according to his own blessed promise, that faith is counted to us for righteousness. Then he who cannot turn away the prayer of faith, cannot turn away his pleading Son, pardons and accepts.

This is the faith you are to exercise; to acknowledge that you have no other refuge; to rely on the naked atonement of Christ, and to rest there till you obtain the salvation you seek.

III. THE BLESSED AND GLORIOUS CONSEQUENCES OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

"We have peace with God." This expression means—

1. *That God, as the righteous Governor of the world, is at peace with us.* The anger of God is as a consuming fire against those who do evil. All his attributes, especially his truth, his justice, his holiness, are against those who are out of Christ. But when we become interested in him by faith, we behold him, the Governor of the world, the just, the holy, and the true, merciful and kind to us, having nothing in his mind against us. His anger is turned away, and he comforts us. This peace includes

2. *The communication of the peace of God to the soul.* A manifestation of God to the soul, in mercy and in grace, takes place through the communication of the Holy Spirit. No man can tell when he is pardoned—how should he? It is an act in the mind of God. I go to God—I confess my sins—I shut out every other hope—I cast my sole dependence upon Christ, determining if I perish to perish here. And God has promised to forgive all such; but how shall I know he has forgiven *me?* Some say, I must look into myself, and if I find in my character certain

marks, I may conclude that it is so. But this is to make me a judge in my own case, to make my condition rest on my own authority. And have I no better ground of hope than this? Yes; it is the office of the Spirit himself to bear witness to my soul. (See Rom. viii. 16, also Gal. iv. 6.) From this comes peace into the soul—a peace that passes all understanding—a peace connected with joy unspeakable. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels."

3. Peace with God produces also *peace with all the dispensations of his providence.* And this, because they are all at peace with us. Though children, we are not to expect exemption from suffering, Rom. viii. 17, etc. But, amidst all the trials of life, and the final struggles of mortality, we have peace. If we have blessings, they come to us with the assurance of God's favour; and if we have afflictions, so far from stirring up the evils of our hearts, as is their common tendency, they work together for our good, and we can glory even in tribulation. (See this chapter, verses 3–5.) Thus all things have a friendly aspect, and every dark cloud bursts in blessings.

4. 'Tis to be *at peace with the heavenly world.* Christ came "to reconcile all things to himself, both things in heaven and things on earth." Angels become our friends. They no longer prevent our access to the tree of life by flaming swords, but gaze on the mysteries of redeeming love, and feel an interest in us as heirs of salvation. They now rejoice over us, however low and despised by men,

and will one day gather us and all the redeemed to our inheritance in heaven.

These are the *present* consequences of justification, and then follows, at the last great day, the open pronouncing of the sentence of justification. Then indeed shall we use the words of the Apostle, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."

APPLICATION.

1. If any of you are *not in this state of justification,* O consider seriously the consequences! Awake from your awful condition. Come to Christ, that you may have light and life.

2. You that are *penitent,* dwell on this Scripture doctrine. Rely solely on the atonement made by Christ.

3. You *that are justified,* the same faith which brought you into this state must be exercised continually. You must go on unto perfection, that when the Saviour comes he may find you without spot or wrinkle, and cause you to enter into his joy.

THE SPIRITUAL TRANSFIGURATION.

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord."—2 Cor. iii. 18.

THE Apostle does not, as some have done, speak irreverently or contemptuously of the law; he says that it had unspeakable glory. But the gospel, while it rests on the same authority, has a glory which excels. The text alludes to the appearance of Moses when he came down from the mount. The veil which he put on was symbolical of the veil of ceremonies, which obscured the glory of God under the law of Moses, but which was removed by Jesus Christ. There was also a veil on the heart of the Jews. Let us notice—

I. THE GLORY OF GOD AS MANIFESTED IN THE LAW.

1. The law was of God, and its glory was derived from God. It had the glory of *truth.*

Truth is the correspondence between the emblem or representation of things and their reality. The law is a revelation of the relation subsisting between God as the Creator, and man as his creature; and this characteristic of the law renders it eternal.

2. It had the glory of *holiness.* It required an entire separation *from* everything, to the supreme love and exclusive service of God. This principle characterises every part of the law—not only in the separation from

idols, and from every impure passion, but also from every kind of ceremonial uncleanness.

3. It had also the glory of *perfection.* There was nothing wanting in the law of God to answer the *end* of a moral law—the happiness of its subject. The law of God, embodied as a principle in the mind of any being, must be productive of perfect holiness and perfect happiness. The happiness of the highest and purest created intelligence consists in a perfect obedience to the law of God.

4. It had the glory of *majesty.* This consisted in the fact of its being a direct revelation from God; in its awful sanctions; in its being the standard of final judgment; and in the manner of its revelation.

5. Considered as a whole, it had in it the glory of *mercy.* Not, indeed, immediately or essentially in itself; but it was shadowed forth—it was something added to it. It was veiled under types, and typical acts, and typical things; but, though it was veiled, many bright rays reached the eye of faith, and often was the veil lifted up by the hand of the humble believer. This constituted the difference between the carnal and spiritual Jew; the carnal Jew never went within the veil. There were, however, very few spiritual Jews remaining at the time of Christ's coming: the veil was on their hearts.

II. THE STATE OF CHRISTIANS IN OPPOSITION TO THIS.

"We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord." Whatever there was of glory in the law, is in the gospel in a higher degree; but with respect to the manifestation of mercy, that of the gospel far exceeds that of the law. The glory of the law is not destroyed, but absorbed in that of the gospel.

1. It has the glory of *forgiveness.* The law had no such power; it could only condemn its transgressors; but the gospel *pardons*—freely and fully. Nevertheless, the ministration of death was glorious; it had the awful glory of unspotted holiness and inflexible justice. But the gospel pardons without violating any part of the law; it *retains all* the glory of the ministration of death still, for it furnishes a victim. The death of this substituted victim reflects more glory on the law, than if all its transgressors had actually suffered.

2. It has the glory of *the ministration of the Spirit*—leading man ardently to desire that holiness which the law of God requires, but which man before hated; and, by a healing, sanctifying process, actually producing it. The ministry of the Spirit will be continued in heaven, and will render this law of universal love to be eternally triumphant.

3. Thus all the glory is unveiled.

All the *types* are unveiled.

Moses was a type of Christ as a prophet; but the Christian miracles are more glorious and conclusive than those of Moses.

Aaron was a type of Christ as a priest; but the glory of Christ's priesthood is unveiled by the gospel.

David was a type of Christ as a king; but the nature of Christ's kingdom and its glory is now unveiled—a kingdom of peace, which sinks into the lowest depths of the troubled heart—a kingdom which shall finally be universally extended.

All *typical acts* are unveiled.

The water and blood of the law have had their meaning unveiled in the sacrifice of Christ; in the supernatural water and blood which issued from his side; in the

efficacy of his atonement; and in the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit.

The *things typified* are now no longer under the veil. The theocracy of the Jews typified the church of Christ, and its supreme universal Head, which is now fully revealed; and heaven, which before was typified, is now fully revealed, Christ having entered there.

III. THIS GLORY IS TO BE SO BEHELD THAT WE MAY BE "CHANGED INTO THE SAME IMAGE FROM GLORY TO GLORY."

This allusion, as has been before mentioned, is to Moses. The transformation takes place on the true Christian; the glory of the gospel is seen on him and in him. This takes place when there is that in our character which bears an exact resemblance to that glory.

1. There is a glory in the *system* which we may *admire,* without being "changed into the same image from glory to glory."

The glory of forgiveness belongs to the system. When reconciliation to God is experienced, that glory becomes ours as partakers.

The ministration of the Spirit is a glory of the system; it becomes ours by our being made the subjects of his sanctifying and renovating influences.

The revelation of Christ in his offices is another glory of the system; it becomes ours by our subjection to him in those offices. When we are taught by him, we have access to the Father through him, and are the subjects of his spiritual kingdom.

It is also a glory of the system that the future state is revealed without a type. The glory is ours, and is on us when there is a crucifixion to the world—the soul

aspiring to heaven — a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

There is a correspondence between the revelations of our future state and our present character. This is to be changed into the same image—it must enter into all our experience.

2. Our views of the glory of God are obscured by our various vices; by the veil of a *carnal heart,* which is incapable of a relish for spiritual things; by the veil of a *worldly spirit,* which is so engrossed with earthly things that it never thinks of looking upward to the boundless heaven of glory spread above it; by the veil of *Pharisaism;* and by *unbelief* of every kind.

3. When we turn and speak to the Lord the veil shall be removed: as in the case of Moses, the veil was removed every time he turned and spoke to God.

It becomes ministers to use "great plainness of speech" in setting forth this glory—this glory of Divine mercy.

There should be a glory of experience corresponding with this glory of revelation. The gospel is *hid* to those who are lost; they never have the veil removed.

Is the veil removed from our souls? If not, it is the mark, the present sign, of a lost soul.

Finally, a progressive advance in glory is implied— "Changed *from* glory to glory."

THE CLAIMS AND REWARDS OF GOD'S SERVICE.

"What is the Almighty that we should serve him?"—Job xxi. 15.

SUCH is the language of profane and worldly men—at least, the language of their hearts, or the tacit language of their conduct.

Providence hath smiled upon their labours, and they have become mighty in power. They are strangers to adversity. "Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them." They give themselves up to pleasure. "They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ." Therefore they spurn the Divine dominion, and regard themselves as independent. They neither know nor desire any other good than that which their own wealth will afford them. Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve him? And what profit should we have if we pray unto him?

This is a frightful, but certainly a correct representation of almost every description of sinful men. Do they not all disregard God? Do they not all dislike the knowledge of his ways, and endeavour to make him to depart from them? Do they not all aspire at independence? Do they not walk according to their own desires, and not according to his will? They do therefore all say, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him?"

This question is not difficult to answer. It is one of those pleas for continuing in sin that is easily refuted: a reason for impurity, which proves everything but what it was intended to prove.

I. Consider those motives which ought to induce us to serve God, drawn from his character and relations.

II. Improve the subject.

I. CONSIDER THOSE MOTIVES WHICH OUGHT TO INDUCE US TO SERVE GOD, DRAWN FROM HIS CHARACTER AND RELATIONS.

Service supposes superiority; for the greater is served by the lesser: also a *right* to our services, and an ability to *reward* them.

We therefore assert as motives to the service of God—the justice of his claims, and the extent of his rewards.

1. The justice of the Divine claims to our service.

Consider the justice of his claims, grounded on his sovereign greatness. We do not attempt to prove the superiority of God to man (for it would be blasphemy to doubt it); but to call your attention to this, that we may repress all the pride and petulance which breaks forth from the hearts of presumptuous sinners. Do you ask, What is the Almighty? Consult nature—ask thy reason—search the records of revelation: they will all answer you.

He is not such an one as yourselves, though you would fain have it so; but a Being so great as not to be comprehended by the greatest stretch of thought, or the most extended imagination; a Being who, after all that has been said or revealed of him, is still unknown. "Who can by searching find out God; who can find out the Almighty to perfection?"

Look upon thyself—thou art fearfully and wonderfully made. On every part of thy frame thou showest marks of exquisite skill and power.

Look upon thy extensive habitation, the earth. Mark its lands and waters; its continents and oceans. Regard its diversified products; its changing seasons; its various climes; its myriads of inhabitants; and on all these thou wilt see the footsteps of God—the eternal power and Godhead of the Creator.

But go still further. Launch into the oceans of space; rise to the firmament, and count the stars; there thousands of worlds speak his power; there countless beings sing his goodness. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge" (Psal. xix. 1, 2). Yet these are but parts of his ways; and though we should spend millions of years in these contemplations, how little a portion would be known of him!

Think of a Being who existed eternal ages before yon little sparks of being were struck by his fiat out of nothing; and shall continue for eternal ages to come, though *you* shall die—though the earth shall be dissolved —though the heavens themselves shall grow old, and pass away for ever—a Being to whom the lapse and distinctions of time are nothing, though to you so important.

With you I will not say a year, but a day, comprises a great share of your present existence; but to him one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. Contemplate a Being so exalted as he is, wholly out of the reach of every accident, and unaffected by every change; one of whose awful characters is—"The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

You are ever changing—you lie at the mercy of a thousand accidents that may make a change in your condition. Time changes, and finally destroys all things sublunary. Empires, cities, palaces, the strongest works of art, and the highest objects of nature, they shall all perish, but he remains without variableness or shadow of turning.

You are present in a mere point of space, and your knowledge is almost as limited as your presence. God is everywhere. In the uttermost parts of the earth—in the depths of hell—in the heights of heaven—filling all things with a presence everywhere extended, and everywhere conscious. He knows all things, even the secrets of your hearts—the closest of your designs, for hell and destruction themselves are without a covering before him.

To these awful properties of his nature he joins universal dominion over heaven, earth, and hell. Infinite power, goodness, and wisdom gloriously appear.

Does not this faint glimpse of Deity overwhelm you? Is it too wonderful for you? How abasing it ought to be to your pride! How striking an answer is this to the question, "What is the Almighty that we should serve him?"

Instead of asking why we should serve him, ought we not to be overwhelmed with astonishment that a Being of infinite power and majestic greatness should condescend to invite us into his service? Instead of hesitating for a moment, should we not all press into his presence, and be ambitious to be favoured with the least of his commands?

Shall angels esteem it their highest honour to do his will, and be quick and operative as flames of fire in his service, and shall man be proud to refuse?

Shall even dead, inactive matter be subservient to his will? shall the stars roll on at his command? shall returning seasons revisit the earth at his appointment? shall ocean ebb and flow in submission to him? shall even beasts, and birds, and insects harmoniously combine in answering their respective purposes, and amidst an obedient universe shall man, more highly favoured—more tenderly cared for and made wiser than the rest, because the inspiration of the Almighty hath given him understanding—shall he alone rebel amidst all this harmony? shall he be the only discordant, jarring string? God forbid! O let our hearts, our tongues, our lives be his! Let us henceforth serve him with a perfect heart, and a willing mind.

Consider the justice of his claims, or his right to our services, grounded on the end of our creation.

He hath made us, and not we ourselves,—and as the infinitely wise and good God must have an end in all he does, and *that* end worthy of himself to accomplish, it concerns us to inquire, whether, when you take religious service away as a duty and obligation, there can any end remain to be accomplished worthy of God. All that those live for, who refuse to serve God, is the gratification of their sensual appetites;—for almost all of their engagements may be reduced to this; nay, this is the very reason why they will not serve God.

Now, is this an end important enough to be the end of man's creation? There is a spirit in man; he is capable of eternal improvement; he is made to know more than the fowls of heaven; but all this was unnecessary if such was the end. He might have been a mere animal, endowed only with a superior instinct, to accomplish such an end as this.

The glory of God and the happiness of man must have been the chief ends of creation, but neither of these is answered by those who refuse to serve God. Do they promote his glory? No! they dishonour him. Do they serve their own happiness? No! they make themselves miserable both here and hereafter.

Piety on the other hand fully secures these purposes. It honours God; brings a revenue of glory to his eternal name. It renders man happy, unspeakably happy.

Do any then still say what is the Almighty that we should serve him? when to neglect to do so is to frustrate the very purpose for which God made them. Can you dispute his right? Can you question his absolute claim over you? Your understanding, reason, conscience, feeling, every part of your nature should acknowledge the justice of the Divine Creator's claims on your perfect and continued service.

Consider the justice of his claims, grounded on his providential goodness.

He hath sustained us. As we owe life to him, so do we owe its continuance, and all the blessings with which it is surrounded and with which it is crowned. His visitations preserve our spirits. He nourishes and brings us up. His goodness and mercy follow us all the days of our lives. Can we, then, rebel against him? If he be our Father, giving us all things richly to enjoy, where is his honour? "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib." Shall these reprove our ignorance of our Maker, and rebuke our forgetfulness of his bounty?

Consider how his claims receive additional strength from the doctrine of the gospel, by which we are declared his purchase.

At what a price did he redeem us! We were not re-

deemed with "corruptible things such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

And think you for what end? Did Christ leave his glory, the glory which he had with the Father before the world was? Did he humble himself to take our nature upon him? Did he, in that assumed nature, endure pain and want; bear our sicknesses and carry our reproaches; endure our griefs and our sorrows; suffer contempt the most vile, agony the most excruciating, and death the most shameful and dolorous? Did he rise from the dead, and ascend into heaven, and take his seat on the right hand of the Majesty on high, to represent our persons, and plead our cause, and intercede for our interests? Did he do all this that we should live in rebellion? Did such grace abound that we might continue in sin? God forbid! "He gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

How manifold is the motive to serve God drawn from the justice of his claims!

2. Consider the rewards he gives to his servants.

In the present life he gives peace of mind. "The peace of God which passeth understanding keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." This peace abides with us in the midst of outward troubles and persecutions, and renders us superior to them. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."

He gives the supply of every want. "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Here the pious man has every confidence, and can keep himself quiet from the fear of evil. The

care that the Almighty has for him inspires him with contentment, with assurance that he shall not lack any good thing. He knows our wants; he has infinite resources at his command; his heart meditates loving-kindnesses. "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."

He gives protection from danger. "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, and the righteous runneth into it and is safe."

In the future—what? When he shall sit upon the throne as Judge; when he shall separate the pure from the vile, the saint from the sinner; when he shall administer to each the just reward of his deeds, he will bless the righteous with eternal life, and punish the wicked with everlasting destruction. Then shall his servants be honoured by his gracious smile and approval; then shall he crown them with his glory, enrich them with his joys and pleasures, and make them to "inherit all things." We are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ.

II. IMPROVE THE SUBJECT.

1. Think then of the pleasure of serving God.

There is the joy arising from the consciousness, that we render unto the Almighty the service due unto his name; the delight we have in all the exercises of piety and devotion; the foretastes of future glory. Let us *reflect*—consider what is the Almighty? How absolute his claims to our best service, and how reasonable it is that we should render that service!

2. Think of the improvement of all our powers—for all the advantage is ours.

We give nothing to God. "Is it any pleasure to him

that thou art righteous, or is it gain unto him that thou makest thy way perfect?" But *we* find profit in every way, in our service of him. Fellowship with the Infinite Intelligence, with Him who is glorious in holiness, tends at once to exalt and sanctify our mental and moral powers. He that walketh with God will increase in the highest knowledge, and gather upon his nature the richest hues of spiritual beauty.

3. Think, by contrast, that if you do not serve God, you serve the god of this world. What a terrible contrast! Is this an honour? Is it not the deepest degradation of your being? Has he any right to your service? Have you any right to choose him for your master? Is not this a grievous sin unto you? What will be his rewards? He promises much, but he always disappoints. Truly he is a hard master, and his servants find that the way of transgressors is hard; that the fruits of sin are deadly.

Think of the future rewards of ungodly service! The wicked "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

THE NECESSITY OF HOLINESS.

"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."—John xiii. 8.

JESUS CHRIST was an example of everything amiable and good. All his precepts were sanctioned by his example.

He was a striking example of humility.

The conduct of Christ towards his disciples, mentioned in this paragraph of his history, is a living comment upon his charge to his disciples. "He that is greatest among you let him be as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth serve."

Pride was not made for man, yet it is clearly interwoven with the nature of all men—how difficult to be eradicated—nothing is more calculated to do this than the example before us.

Why are you proud? Why do you carry yourselves loftily to those whom you consider your inferiors? Because you are wise? See the only wise God, our Saviour, washing the feet of his disciples. Because you are rich? See him who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor. Because you are honourable? See him who is infinite in glory and honour, taking upon himself the form of a servant, and doing a servant's work. Let us—

I. Ascertain the meaning of the expression, *"If I wash thee not."*

II. The necessity of the washing here intended. "If I wash thee not, *thou hast no part with me.*"

I. THE MEANING OF THE EXPRESSION. (Read 6, 7, 8, 9 verses.)

It cannot be supposed that Christ meant only the washing of Peter's feet. He refused to see his Master so much degraded, and himself so much honoured. But when Christ says, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me," he appears immediately to understand a spiritual washing from moral defilement, and cries out, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Indeed, the act of our Lord here named, appears not only to have been intended to set forth a pattern of humility, but to have been a typical act, intending to teach the disciples the depravity of man, and that he was the appointed of God to wash them from their sins.

The following observations appear to be deducible from the words in connection with the conduct of Jesus:—

1. That man is a polluted creature.

This we need not attempt to prove. The blindness of your understandings—the perverseness of your wills—the earthliness of your affections—the carnality of your desires, and the whole tenor of your lives demonstrate the sad truth.

2. That man is not able to purify himself.

This is proved by experience, as well as by Scripture. "When I would do good, evil is present with me." "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good who are accustomed to do evil." The history of mankind furnishes melancholy and conclusive evidence of this truth. Education, trade, science, art, government, political economy, literature, all are inadequate. Excellent in themselves, yet they cannot purify human depravity.

3. That Jesus Christ is the person whom God has appointed to wash us from our iniquities.

He is constituted Priest, that by his blood he might wash from the guilt of sin; that by his Holy Spirit—often compared to water—he might wash from the corruption and defilement of sin; thus consecrating his people to the service of God. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

4. That the effects of this spiritual washing extend to the whole nature.

This appears from the tenth verse. "He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his feet,* but is clean every whit." As the feet are the active members of the body, by the use of which we are enabled to prosecute our designs, and to perform the business of life, so they may represent the motives and inward principles of the mind, which, when sanctified, the man is clean every whit. If the tree be made good, the fruit will be good also. This, then, is not ceremonial washing. It is not outward morality alone. But it is the renewal of our natures by the Holy Ghost.

II. THE NECESSITY OF THIS WASHING. "IF I WASH THEE NOT, THOU HAST NO PART WITH ME."

1. No part in Christ's church, that is, the true. You may be in the outward church. But the true church is composed of penitents who break off their sins by repentance, bringing forth fruits meet for repentance:—Of believers in different stages of experience—babes—young men—fathers—but all justified by faith in Christ, and

walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. What a curse to be excluded from this society! (Display the advantages of Christian fellowship.)

2. No part in the favour of God which Christ enjoys. All the true disciples of Christ share with him in those favours and privileges which he has received from the Father, for he is the *Head* of the church. If you are not washed you have no part with him in the favour of God. He hateth all workers of iniquity. Think of the unspeakable happiness of having the Divine smile. "In his favour is life."

3. No part in that union which Christ has with God. Contemplate the blessedness of union with God. "If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." But this you cannot realise if you are not washed, justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God. "What fellowship hath light with darkness; what concord hath Christ with Belial?" In this fellowship is our highest life, and our loftiest enjoyment.

4. No part in those favourable conquests which Christ hath gained over the world, sin, death, hell. (Illustrate each of these.)

If you are not washed you are the children of the world—slaves of sin—servants of the devil—in bondage to the fear of death. What misery to be in such a state! It is the very curse of our existence.

5. No part in Christ's glorious kingdom.

It is prepared for those who love him. "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh

abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

How overwhelming the reasons why we should come to Christ, that he may wash away our sins and restore us to the favour, and love, and fellowship of God! Can you justify your neglect of him? Can you despise him and lightly esteem the salvation he rejoices to effect for you? Are you willing that sin should hold you under its terrible curse; that it should defile and debase every power and affection of your nature; that it should entail upon your eternal being unutterable woes? Will you not be made clean; when shall it once be? Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings. Call upon Christ. He is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God through him. Have faith in his name. Yield yourselves to him. Say unto him, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me!" And he will answer in the word of sovereign power, "I will, be thou clean!" and you shall be clean every whit. Now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation!

ELIJAH'S FAITH.

"Go again seven times."—1 Kings xviii. 43.

NATIONAL iniquity will be followed by national punishments. The righteous Ruler looks to this.

Israel had sinned, and was visited by a long and severe drought, xvii. 1.

This judgment appears to have brought them to a sense of sin, to humiliation and penitence, therefore God renews the promise of rain, xviii. 1.

Though Elijah knew that the promise would be accomplished, yet he prays. "And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea." The promises of God are not designed to encourage sloth, but to excite to duty.

His faith is not shaken by delays. "There is nothing," said his servant—"Go again seven times."

Small beginnings he hailed as a precious token of the complete fulfilment of the promise. "And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand."

This passage of sacred history we shall endeavour to improve.

I. There is a striking resemblance between a land burnt with drought, and a church from which the spiritual rain —the influence of the Holy Ghost—is withheld.

In the one the rivers and reservoirs of water are dried —the fruits of the field fail—the inhabitants are famished —the husbandman sows his seed, and it perishes in the earth.

In the other the means of grace are inefficacious—the trees of righteousness wither—the members of the church cry, My leanness, my leanness—the minister sows the seed of the kingdom, which is the Word of God, and the fruit does not appear. Barrenness rather than life makes itself fearfully manifest. Does not the history of the church supply you with such pitiable instances of desolation? Picture to yourselves Zion lying wasted! A spiritual dearth is more lamentable than was the state of the country as it appeared in the days of Elijah.

II. These effects have the same cause.

Sin was the cause of the misery and the mourning of the land. Who was it that troubled Israel? Ahab, the king, said it was Elijah; so blind was he to the real cause of the Divine judgment that had spread itself over the whole land. The prophet declared to Ahab how all this had happened. "Thou, and thy father's house," have troubled Israel, "in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim."

And it is sin which occasions spiritual dearth in a church. Sin unfolding itself in the various forms of unfaithfulness, lukewarmness, worldly mindedness, etc. The commandments of God are forsaken. Idols are set up in their hearts. Their love is waxed cold. Each one follows after his covetousness. They are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Hence the Holy Spirit is grieved, and at length departs from them. Then comes the reign of spiritual death. The heavens do not rain

down righteousness. Sin is the accursed thing that causes all this.

III. True repentance in a church produces the renewal of the promise of the Divine blessing, just as the repentance of Israel secured the promise of rain.

The church is alarmed by some pointed message. Elijah charged home sin on Ahab and his house. And so God reproves unfaithful churches. He sends his servants to show unto them their sin; to denounce woe to them that are at ease in Zion; to threaten the lukewarm with utter abandonment, unless they repent. "Repent, or I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place." It sometimes happens that such unfaithful members of a church are awakened to a sense of guilt; they return unto God with weeping and lamentation, confessing their sin. "Our sins have separated between us and our God." "Lord, we have sinned; do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee." "O Lord, revive thy work."

Hence God gives his promises: "I will open springs in the desert. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose." "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

IV. These Divine promises ought to excite us to pray more earnestly, after the example of Elijah.

Prayer will prepare our hearts for the accomplishment of the promises; bring us into the position of believing suppliants. As we put the Lord in remembrance of his own words of promise, and urge him to fulfil them for his great name's sake, we rise into clearer light of his charac-

ter, and become inspired with greater confidence in his love and faithfulness.

Prayer makes us sensible of the value of the blessings. And it is the conviction of the exceeding greatness and preciousness of the promises, that stirs up our desires, and increases the fervour of our prayers and supplications. Spiritual mercies, Divine favours, appear in more commanding importance; earthly things diminish in their value and influence; and the soul is constrained to prefer and pursue things spiritual to things temporal, to give more earnest heed to the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Prayer increases the love of the members of the church. To pray one for another, strengthens brotherly affection; to pray for ministers of the gospel, leads to the cherishing of high esteem for them for their work's sake, and to desire that the word of the Lord may, through them, have free course and be glorified; to pray for the office-bearers of the church, is to inspire our respect, and to count them worthy of honour. Thus all the interests of God's house are promoted. Pray, then, with all prayer, and watch thereunto with all supplication. "Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

V. We ought to watch for the first appearance of the promise, and to *persevere.*

Ministers should watch for the appearance of success, and look for the first indications of showers of blessing.

Christian people should watch for the beginning of a revival of religion in their own souls and in the church.

The prospects may not be encouraging—appearances may be actually against them. "There is nothing," said the servant to Elijah—"Go again seven times." The pro-

phet did not murmur and complain of the seeming delay. He believed the Divine promise, and so he patiently waited and encouraged his servant to the same patient waiting. Danger that we indulge in repinings, and dissatisfaction if God does not send a gracious rain to water his spiritual heritage. Our duty is to pray—to believe—to wait. Though the vision tarry, it will come; wait for it. Indeed, the more unpromising the appearances are, the more earnestly should we intercede with God, and the more patiently should we wait his good pleasure; for he will arise and have mercy upon Zion, and show that the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is fully come.

VI. Let us learn not to despise small beginnings.

"And it came to pass at the seventh time that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand." That was regarded by the prophet as the certain forerunner of abundance of rain. And so do we observe that ofttimes the smallest beginnings have ended in the greatest results. (Instance some.)

These are pledges of the fulfilment of the promises. They are like the first fruits of the harvest, the earnest of wages. Who hath despised the day of small things?

God does not despise the day of small things. "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory." Experience shows that God's work is gradual, illustrated by the rising sun—the growing corn; also by childhood, youth, manhood. So Christians are represented in their personal experience and character. Having begun the good work, God will carry it on until the day of Jesus Christ.

Small beginnings have issued in glorious perfection, not

only in reference to individuals, but also in reference to churches. Look at the primitive church. How small and feeble in its rise! Like a grain of mustard seed. Soon it began to grow. Christianity, despised because of its seeming feebleness, waxed exceedingly strong, and produced the greatest revolutions in nations. Look at the Reformation! Consider Luther in his early religious life and movements! How insignificant appeared his first efforts, yet to what mighty issues those efforts grew! Look at Methodism, that modern revival of religion. Consider her history. Look at all churches. What bright examples, what glorious evidences that small beginnings have issued in glorious perfection!

GOD LOOKING UPON MEN.

"He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light."—Job xxxiii. 27, 28.

WERE we left without the light of revelation, we should be in the most forlorn and wretched condition imaginable. All the dispensations of Providence would be unaccountable, and the depravity of our moral conduct would exclude us from hoping in God's mercy.

But with this sacred volume in our hands our darkness is dispersed, and we take an extensive view not only of the proceedings of God towards his creatures, but also of the end or design of them. That design is a merciful one; to correct and amend, not to destroy his creatures. Whether he visits with affliction, with adversity, or prosperity (see preceding verses), yet all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living. But shall those who have, through a course of years, opposed his will and broken his laws, find favour at his hand? This, reason cannot determine. Revelation does in a thousand places; very pointedly in the text.

I. The Almighty looking down upon men. "He looketh upon men."

II. The penitent man looking up to God. "If any say (*i.e.* to God), I have sinned."

III. The merciful determination of God in behalf of the penitent. "He will deliver," etc.

I. HE LOOKETH UPON MAN.

There are several ways in which the Almighty may be considered as regarding his creatures.

1. As a Creator. He looked upon the world that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. But especially did he look on man, his last and best work, and delighted in him.

But when, as our Creator, he looks upon us now, what does he behold? The mortality of the body—the imperfections of the once perfect powers of the mind. "How is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed."

2. As the Governor of the world. He regards the state of his kingdom and subjects. "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." What a sad prospect, as yet, presents itself to his eyes! How wickedness prevails over righteousness! Men destroying each other in the horrible carnage of war; strifes, contentions; agreeing in nothing but to disown him, and break his laws.

3. As a holy Being. Looking for and searching out if anything remained amongst men of that image of himself in which he first made man, but they were all gone out of the way; they had altogether become corrupt. Variously does human sinfulness unfold itself. "The carnal mind is enmity against God;" like a prolific tree, spreading its branches, and giving forth its deadly fruits.

4. As the Judge of men. Thus he looked upon men before the flood, and sent the waters to cover the face of the earth. Thus he has looked upon and dealt with all nations since the flood; not only with nations, but with individuals who would "still go on in their trespasses."

But the expression in the text may be construed in a very different sense. Perhaps the only way to enter into its meaning, is to consider God looking upon men,

5. As a compassionate parent looks upon his family. He has given them instruction—has proposed his own example for their imitation—provided richly for them—but they have been disobedient. He, however, still loves them—uses a variety of means for their reformation—looks upon, or watches for the first appearances of contrition—and receives the prodigal back to his home and inheritance.

II. THE PENITENT MAN LOOKING UP TO GOD.

1. "I have sinned." This supposes reflection. "I thought on my ways." This supposes self-abhorrence. "Woe is me, for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips." This supposes godly sorrow; sorrow for sin. I have sinned against God. "Against thee, and thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." My sin has brought misery and evil upon myself, and exposed me to future punishment.

2. And perverted that which was right.

These words may be considered in reference to the dispensations of Providence—whether prosperous or adverse. They are perverted by man. "And it profited me not." Of prosperity, what can be enjoyed without piety and the blessing of God? What of adversity? It is "hard for thee to kick against the pricks."

Man perverteth his way as to opinion. How often men corrupt their opinions, that they may escape, if possible, the accusations of conscience; that they may display their vanity and self-importance; and some of them even for the love of contradiction. But what will it, what can it profit? God and truth continue the same. Do men deny the Divine existence? What will it profit? All Nature perpetually declares the sublime truth, and in harmony

with God's inspired revelation, pronounces the perverters of it to be FOOLS. "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Do men deny the truth as it is in Jesus? What will it profit? Does infidelity throw a cheering light on man's path? Does it surround him with gladness, and infuse joys in his inmost nature? Does it open up the future, and make it redolent of pleasures for evermore? Alas! it profiteth not. The truth as it is in Jesus, which some men pervert into a lie, is the only thing that can profit in these respects—that can meet the manifold needs, and the earnest cravings of our immortal nature. And that truth, like its Divine Author, abideth for ever.

Man perverteth his way as to moral practice.

He perverteth his way before God, with respect to sinful pleasure; breaks through the restraints of morals, to gratify his fleshly passions and appetites; often outrages even the external decencies of life, and proclaims his sin as Sodom. But it profits not. It may for a little while be pleasurable; but it is only for a season. The pleasures of sin not only carry their deadly consequences into the future world, but they produce their bitter and poisonous fruits here: in the ruin of the constitution, in the wreck of character, in the disquiet and disorder of the mental and moral faculties.

He perverteth his way for interest or gain, as well as pleasure. Sin may not take the form of indulgence in pleasure, but it indulges in worldly profit. Men make haste to be rich: they are bent upon getting money; and in their eager pursuit after it, they sacrifice justice, and honesty, and honour. But gain acquired in this way perishes in the using. The evil passes on to generations following. Here God often visits the sins of the fathers upon the children.

All these things are present to the mind of the penitent, and he confesses them unto the Lord. "His iniquities are set before God, his secret sins in the light of his countenance." He confesses with a lowly and contrite heart; he confesses with the determination to put away from him all sin; he confesses in the name of Jesus the Saviour, and in the confidence that, through him, he will find mercy of the Lord.

III. THE MERCIFUL DETERMINATION OF GOD IN BEHALF OF THE PENITENT.

"He will deliver his soul from going down to the pit, and his life shall see the light."

These expressions are sometimes used for deliverance from natural death to life and health. There is no impropriety in using them in this sense here. When a man perseveres in sin, he may be in danger of being cut off from the land of the living; but if he repent and turn to God, he will, in mercy, spare him, that he may recover his strength. Christ pleads for the fig-tree that yieldeth no fruit, that it may not be cut down, but spared.

Sometimes these expressions are used figuratively for deliverance from distress, and restoration to happiness.

Sorrow and suffering are compared to darkness, and to a pit of darkness: joy and gladness are symbolised by the light. God will hear our cry, and deliver us out of all our troubles—he will deliver our soul from death, our eyes from tears, and our feet from falling. And we shall behold the light, the light of his countenance, which will put joy into our hearts, more than in the time that the corn and wine of the wicked increase. In his favour is life, and his loving-kindness is better than life. We shall walk in the light, have his presence with us

to cheer, to guide, to protect, to enrich with all needful blessings.

These expressions may be fairly used to represent deliverance from hell to heaven.

Hell is, indeed, a pit of darkness. It is called the bottomless pit, to indicate its horrors: it is called outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. How inexpressibly awful is the consideration of this eternal abode of sinners! "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God." Will you not, then, flee from this wrath to come? Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. "We are delivered from wrath through Christ."

REJOICING IN GOD.

"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation."—Isaiah xii. 2.

THESE words are used by the prophet, in the name of the church, to set forth the happiness and salvation of the Jews when they shall be gathered in with the fulness of the Gentiles.

They are also applicable to the individual experience of all the members of the church, and may therefore be used by each of God's people in the present age. They express the experience of a believer—

I. WITH RESPECT TO HIS MORAL STATE. "God is my salvation."

This is twice expressed—in the first and last clauses—to intimate its importance. It is the first and most important of the relations of God to a good man, and the foundation of every other that is beneficial.

Some would have the aid, the consolation, and the favour of God, but refuse his salvation, and remain in sin. This, however, is vain and impossible. Sin can have no fellowship with Him who is glorious in holiness. He saves his people from their sins.

The privileges of a believer are unspeakably great, but they all are founded on that change which the grace of God makes in his nature, here called salvation. Now,

salvation is deliverance, and how does this show itself in a believer?

He is delivered from darkness. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Until that light arises upon us, we are in darkness, having no true knowledge of God, and no understanding of the things of the Spirit of God.

He is delivered from insensibility. "I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." Sin hardens the heart, makes it unfeeling as the stone, and insensible to the voice of God and the calls to duty. The new heart and the right spirit which the Lord gives unto his people is tender, susceptible of Divine impressions, quick to feel the approach of sin, and loves the beauty of holiness.

He is delivered from pride. "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Then all high conceits are cast down, the arrogance of a self-righteous spirit is abased. If once pure in his own eyes, he is now humbled, and seeks to walk before God in all lowliness and meekness.

He is delivered from creaturely dependence. His own works he regards as filthy rags. His hope is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation."

He is delivered from a sense of condemnation. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

He is delivered from slavery. "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. But now, being made

free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

He is delivered from misery, into union with God, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost;—no longer a stranger and foreigner, but a fellow-heir, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and in the hope of his glory.

Observe to whom the believer refers us as the author of this salvation—God. "Behold, God is my salvation."

The text expresses the experience of a believer—

II. WITH RESPECT TO HIS AID. "The Lord Jehovah is my strength."

The blessedness of this relation will be seen if we reflect on the weakness of man—of the best of men. What! say some, do you speak of the weakness of believers? Do we not read of saints, under the Old Testament, who subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens? Do we not see the apostles and disciples of our Lord renouncing the world, resisting sin, despising threatenings, persevering in duty, and even submitting to death? Are not these proofs of a strength of mind and a vigour of resolution which we should look for in vain from any other persons? Yes, but this strength was not their own. All these things were done by *faith*, by which a Divine power was infused into their hearts. Hence, to be strong in faith is only another expression for being "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." These very persons were sensible of this themselves. Hear the saints of the old dispensation: "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick." "Our

help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." "The Lord," say they, "has wrought all our works in us." Hear Jesus Christ addressing his disciples: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me." And hear an Apostle, in direct coincidence with this, cry out, "Who is sufficient for these things?"—but our sufficiency is of God. "I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me."

If we have not yet learned that our own strength is weakness, and that we shall never be sufficiently strong until the Lord Jehovah himself strengthens with all might in our inner man, we have learnt little of Christianity, and have need to begin again at the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. But he who knows that God is his salvation, knows also that God is his strength; he feels himself inadequate to the performance of any duty, unable to resist temptation, and too insufficient to contend with the enemies of his soul's salvation, without the help of his God. But the Lord Jehovah is his strength. Hear this, believer, and be comforted! Dost thou fall? "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." Art thou faint? "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." Art thou wounded? A touch of the Divine hand shall heal thee. Art thou buffeted by Satan? God shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. "There was given me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I

besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

In one word, behold a Divine and Almighty power everywhere, and always surrounding you, at hand on all occasions, sufficient for all purposes to bless, to support, to deliver. "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places."

The text expresses the experience of a believer—

III. WITH RESPECT TO HIS CONSOLATIONS. "And my song."

Here is an allusion to the ancient custom of composing and singing sacred odes or songs upon occasions of any signal deliverance, or the communication of any peculiar blessing. Such were the songs of Moses and Miriam, when Pharaoh and his host were swallowed up in the Red Sea; of Moses, after he had brought the Israelites to the borders of the promised land; of many of the Psalms of David, etc. All these productions appear to have taken their rise from the joy in deliverance, and gratitude to God as the deliverer. In like manner, when the believer recollects the proceedings of the Divine goodness towards him—when he surveys the manner and extent of his deliverance from sin and condemnation—when he enumerates the mercies which God hath bestowed upon him, his joy and gratitude break forth in songs of praise to his great Deliverer. Hence says the Psalmist, "All thy people praise thee."

Observe the subject of his song—"the Lord Jehovah."

His nature. It is the peculiar privilege of the good man to have freedom of access to God. Through him (Christ) we have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Availing himself of this licence, he draws near to God, and beholds his glory, not with the eye of philosophy, but with the eye of faith; not as it stands in the systems of human reason, but as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ; not with the apathy of a man who studies the nature and properties of a stone, and the nature and properties of the great God, with equal emotions, but with the feelings of one who, when he beholds the awful and glorious perfection of Deity rising to his view, feels an interest in them all, and cries, "This God is our God for ever and ever, and he will be our guide even unto death." Filled with such sentiments of admiration and love, hear his song: "Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee—glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"

His dispensations. The nature of God, and his dispensations, to a good man are in perfect harmony, and reflect light on each other. Hence when, by contemplation, the believer discovers that God is wise, and just, and good; when he reflects upon his dispensations towards him, he finds in them an evident display of the same perfections: these afford ample scope for the exercise of praise and gratitude. "I was brought low," says David, "and he helped me. I cried unto the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me out of all my distresses. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise to our God." "Because thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee. Thus will I bless thee while I

live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips; when I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night-watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." This is the song of the saint, wherewith he makes himself glad in the house of his pilgrimage. These are the exercises which make his consolations to abound, even whilst he is absent from his God. Nor shall they cease with life; in heaven he will take up the blessed subject, and sing, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

The text expresses the experience of a believer—

IV. WITH RESPECT TO HIS CONFIDENCE. "I will trust, and not be afraid."

Fear is a passion which must frequently be excited, in an alarming degree, in the breasts of wicked men. A sense of guilt, consciousness of deserving punishment, the probability of experiencing some evils, and the certainty of others, all serve to excite it; but it is the prerogative of Divine virtue to raise its votaries above fear. Every good man sees all his concerns in the hands and at the disposal of a Being who rules the world, and works all things after the counsel of his own will; a Being in whose mercy he is interested, under whose care he is placed, and who has engaged that all things shall work together for his good. Why, then, should he fear? He who is fully persuaded of this, cannot fear. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings, for his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.

He is not afraid of God. Whilst the ungodly tremble

before him, and are afraid of his terrors, he regards him as his Father and his Friend, and with holy confidence encourages himself in those sacred relations in which he stands to him. "Behold God is my salvation."

He is not afraid of troubles and afflictions. "Not my will, but thine be done. The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?" They are necessary and useful for the discipline and improvement of his religious character. He is not afraid of the opposition that may be made to his spiritual progress. Reproach—persecution—the temptations of the world—Satan's devices. These may all come, yet he has confidence that the Lord will deliver him out of them all. He is not afraid of persevering to the end. "He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." God is able to make him stand. He will keep him from falling. He is not afraid of death. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be unto God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." He is not afraid of losing future happiness. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory."

CHRIST THE SOURCE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."—John vi. 67, 68.

INTRODUCE with the occasion.

The text contains two propositions which we must illustrate, and an important question which we must improve.

I. THE TWO PROPOSITIONS TO BE ILLUSTRATED.

1. Christ hath the words of eternal life.

Had Peter affirmed this of Jesus as a mere man, the affirmation would not only have been false, but blasphemous. It would have been invading the prerogative of God, who alone can give eternal life.

But he looked through the veil of Christ's humanity, and by the works he had seen Jesus perform, and the discourses which he had heard him deliver, he was convinced that he was more than human. "We know and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Second in the Trinity, one with God, and God as well as man. In this view the proposition is not only rational, but scriptural; for if there be a truth rationally deduced from Scripture, it is that Christ is God.

As God, it is easy to see that he is the sovereign disposer of eternal life; possessed of infinite skill and almighty power. "All things were made by him, and for him, and without him was not anything made that was made." In creation he followed—solely followed—the counsel of his

own will; for who hath known the mind of the Lord, and who hath been his counsellor? The number, the variety, the faculties, and the duration of his creatures, were all determined by his good pleasure. Hence, in the highest scale of beings we see thrones, and dominions, and principalities, and powers; and in the lowest, beasts and creeping things of the earth. Betwixt these is man. He is joined to the lowest by his animal nature, and to the highest by his rational nature. "With God is the fountain of life." To some he has dispensed liberally, to others sparingly. To some of his creatures he hath assigned only a few hours of existence, to others years. But rational creatures he hath stamped with immortality. Adam was made in the image of God, rational, spiritual, and incorruptible. Christ, as God, is therefore the dispenser of eternal life.

But we also see him as man, and as man, as well as God, he is said to have the words of eternal life. Not as man separate from God, but as man inexplicably one with God. To illustrate this, we must remember that, by man's original transgression, eternal life was forfeited. The tenure by which he held it was his obedience; the punishment of disobedience was, by the terms of the first covenant, death. "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." The first man, therefore, by disobedience, forfeited his own title to eternal life, and, as our federal head, forfeited ours also. Under the awful sentence we should have remained, had not help been laid on One mighty to save.

Jesus is the second Adam. He hath, by obedience and suffering, satisfied the demands of heaven, and borne our penalty. He did more—he purchased for us eternal life —that is, he hath obtained the privilege of restoring the forfeited blessing, and of making his creatures eternally

happy. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, but he that believeth not the Son of God shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." Thus we see how he hath the words of eternal life.

He hath the *doctrine* of eternal life—before unknown, for the most part, to the Gentiles—obscurely only to the Jews—fully revealed by the gospel. He hath the *promise* of eternal life. "I give unto my sheep eternal life." He will *administer* eternal life, both to soul and body, at the last day. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world."

2. That to obtain the eternal life which Christ has, we must *abide with him.*

This is fairly deducible from the words of Peter—"To whom shall we go?" intimating that eternal life could only be obtained by a connection with him.

We must abide with him as his disciples to be taught. We must abide with him under his influence, as the branch abides in the vine. We must abide with him as his servants, to be at his direction. "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" To work for him. "Go, labour in my vineyard." Encourage to service—warn against indolence—consider the unprofitable servant in the parable of the talents.

To depart from Christ is to forfeit eternal life.

"To whom shall we go?"

To God? He is a consuming fire apart from Christ, the Son of the living God.

To angels? It is only by Christ that angels are the friends of man. He reconciles in one body things on earth and things in heaven. They are ministering spirits to them who are heirs of salvation. But they are enemies

to the wicked. Angels guarded paradise; withstood Balaam; slew the prophet, the first-born of Egypt, and the Assyrian host, etc.

To saints? They durst not pray but in the name of Christ.

To the world? It will promise you eternal life, though you reject Christ and follow its maxims; but did it ever fulfil its promises?

Will you renounce all and only depend on yourselves? What can you do? You cannot ward off an affliction, alleviate a pain, preserve your bodies from death and corruption. Can you, by any service or acts of yours, obtain eternal life? No. It is Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who only can sprinkle our consciences, wash our souls, give us eternal life.

II. IMPROVE THE QUESTION. "Will ye also go away?" "*Also.*" Others have gone away. "They walked no more with him." When he discoursed on the spirituality of his kingdom—when he turned their thoughts from carnal, sensible good, to that which was celestial and eternal, they turned away offended, and would walk no more with him. But what have been the consequences? Misery—sevenfold more the children of the devil and destruction.

It is applicable to all Christians. To those who have just obtained eternal life by faith in Christ—to those who have had longer experience—to the mature Christian.

THE JUDGMENT.

"For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."—2 Cor. v. 10.

SUFFER me to call your attention from the hopes, the cares of the present life, which after a very little time will interest you no longer, to objects, the importance of which you will readily acknowledge, and the consequences of which will remain with you for ever. Time, though so short, is apt to limit all our desires, and to bound all our prospects within its limits. We look for every object which we deem valuable and worthy of attention. Alas! how are we deluded! That post shall soon pass by; that span shall speedily be measured; that vapour shall quickly disperse. Let us look to the end of being—the ocean to which the rapid stream of time conducts us—an expanse to which thought itself can fix no limits. Let us draw aside, for a few moments, the veil of sense, and look upon the situation of immortal spirits in that awful state, and let us then lay our hands upon our hearts, and ask ourselves to what our own actions tend; whither we are hastening—to happiness or misery, heaven or hell.

If we be sincere, it is not possible for us to be deceived in inquiries of this nature; but there are many who deceive themselves. Let us, however, remember that a delusion of this kind cannot last long—it cannot enter into eternity. "For we must all appear before the judg-

ment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Observe—

I. THE PERSON BY WHOM THE WORLD IS TO BE JUDGED —CHRIST.

For all judgment is given to the Son, because he is the Son of man. It is an honorary reward, because he became the Son of man, and died in our stead, and for our salvation.

And it is of great propriety for Christ to be the Judge. It will stop the mouths of sinners, and show to all the world the fitness and justice of their condemnation, when Christ shows himself in the body which was made a sacrifice for them, but which they despised. Hence it is said, "They shall look upon him whom they pierced, and mourn." They might complain of mortal weaknesses and infirmities, the strength of temptation, etc.; but the sight of the body of Christ, in which he supported infirmities and vanquished temptations, thereby leaving us an example that we should follow his steps, will convince them that they are without excuse.

Christ, the Son of man, as Judge, will be a glorious sight to the saints. All the wonders of his love will be brought to mind, and stir the affections. What praise! what rapture! what enjoyment!

But though Christ will appear to judge the world in the same body in which he came to redeem it, the manner of his coming will be far different. The Son of man shall come in his glory, and in the glory of his Father, and all the holy angels with him. Them that sleep in Jesus will he also bring with him. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming

fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. Our God shall come." Such is the glory of the Judge.

When he shall fix his seat in the air, the creatures to be judged will be in several states. The saints in paradise. The spirits of wicked men and devils in that gloomy prison where they have been reserved till the judgment of the great day. Those who live on earth at the time will be surprised in the midst of their buying, selling, and getting gain; or, still worse, drinking, swearing, and a host of gross and scandalous crimes.

The bodies of all that shall be in the grave shall come forth. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Then the spirits of the just shall come with joy to meet their former partners in pain and sorrow, and the members of which were made members of righteousness; and the spirits of the wicked shall move sullenly to occupy those bodies which were the instruments of unrighteousness, and which must now share the same everlasting shame and torment. Observe—

II. THAT ALL SHALL NOT ONLY BE ASSEMBLED BEFORE THE JUDGE, BUT ALL MUST APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT-SEAT, INTIMATING THAT EVERY INDIVIDUAL MUST BE PUT TO THE BAR TO RECEIVE HIS TRIAL.

That this will take up much time, is no objection. "One

day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." None can excuse themselves from this appearance; not the great, though they have been above human law; nor the poor, though they may think that their miseries here may have atoned for their crimes, and rendered a future account unnecessary. Not the mere professors of religion—their pretensions must be examined—their thoughts, words, actions, must be tried. Sinner, thou must stand there; so also the Pharisee and the hypocrite, and the lukewarm; and so also the Christian. "Every one shall give account of himself to God." (Press this home to the conscience.) Observe—

III. THE RULE OF JUDGMENT.

Not according to profession, opinion, sect, notion, age. This is not the rule, but what we have done, whether good or bad. Those that live after the flesh shall die. "The wages of sin is death." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nothing but true piety, beginning with repentance, passing on to reformation of manners, faith in Christ, holiness, and finished by perseverance, can give us admittance to the Divine favour. Whether it be good, the reward of heaven; or bad, the punishment of hell.

As the judgment proceeds, the persons judged are placed on the right or left hand—"sheep and goats." After this, the whole is finished by three of the most solemn and important acts:—

1st. Passing sentence: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from before the foundation of the world." "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

2d. Burning the world.

3d. The triumphant ascent of the Judge, with the glorious train of angels and saints, to the abodes of heaven, when the church will be presented to the Father.

APPLICATION.

And shall we then appear? What ought to be our inquiry? "How shall we escape the damnation of hell?" What ought to be our determination? "I will return unto the Lord, and say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips."

Give this subject its full force when you indulge a train of sinful thoughts. Think, how shall I feel when all these are exposed at the great day. When you commit sinful actions, think how you can bear to have them revealed; to be obliged to hear their character exposed. Pretended piety shall be stript of its mask, and made to appear in its own hollowness. When you feel any reluctance to receive and obey the gospel, think how you will esteem it, what value you will put upon it then! Suppose after the wicked are separated from the righteous, waiting for their fearful doom, a minister of the gospel should be delegated to make one more offer, would not joy gild their gloomy countenances? Why, then, should you not now accept of Christ, and receive his salvation? The difference is only in point of time.

I beseech you, by the awful majestic terror of the Judge —by the solemnity of judgment—by a burning world—by a frightful hell—by a glorious heaven—to fly to Christ the Saviour of sinners.

Exhort backsliders to return unto the Lord—believers to persevere.

AGAINST LUKEWARMNESS.

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot."—Rev. iii. 15.

WERE we to reason from men's conduct in the world, to their conduct towards God and religion, we should conclude that but few lukewarm persons are to be found in the church. For in the pursuit of worldly objects there are lively emotions, indefatigable exertion, and hardy perseverance. But look at the conduct of these characters towards religion—how languid and heartless! Are, then, the interests and concerns of religion less important? Are the affairs of the present life of greater moment than those of an eternal world? No. But the things which are eternal are not seen, whilst the things which are temporal are now seen, felt, enjoyed. Men walk by sight, not by faith—are blind, and do not see afar off. Lukewarmness in the church is like an epidemical disorder. Those who are truly warm, lively, and vigorous, are solitary instances —like beacons upon a hill.

I. Describe the character of the lukewarm.

II. Consider what is affirmed of them.

I. THE CHARACTER OF THE LUKEWARM.

What is lukewarm unites in itself the opposite qualities of heat and cold, and by this union the effects of both are destroyed.

Thus a lukewarm person is a centre in which the extremes of virtue and vice meet and are blended together, a character made up of inconsistencies.

In order to describe this character accurately, it is necessary to view it on both sides.

1. Look upon the most favourable side, and ascertain those real excellencies which are to be found in his character. He does not live in the commission of outward gross sin, for he has too much of the fear of God to allow himself in such sins, too tender a conscience, too delicate a sense of character. He is an enlightened person. He knows the doctrines of the gospel—Christian experience, Christian practice, Christian privilege. He is not inattentive to religious duties. Indeed, he is very regular in the discharge of them—hearing the word of God—meeting in Christian fellowship—may exercise himself in active duties: preach, pray in public, and in private, and in the family.

Nor is he without zeal. He may sustain offices in the church—he may wish for the spread of the gospel—he may contribute freely, according to his means, towards religious and philanthropic institutions.

Nor is he without feeling. He may be often affected by the word—have joy, sorrow, providences of trial and of blessing—he may desire, resolve. These are the most favourable parts of his character, and further than this I know not that we are warranted to go.

2. Look on the other side.

He does not sin grossly, but his heart remains unchanged —corruptions reign there; and though not gross in his conduct, yet very careless and worldly in his conversation and deportment.

He is enlightened, but only partially so. He knows not that he is "miserable, and blind, and naked."

He is regular in duties. But when he hears the gospel "he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a

glass; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was." He does not receive and apply the word. When he prays, his words are mere sounds; no energy, no breathing desire after God his Saviour.

He has zeal, but not in a degree to lead him to labour for the good of souls, to set such an example of active piety, as to bring glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good-will to men. And how should he be when he is not zealous for the salvation of his own soul?

He has feelings, but they are like the morning cloud and early dew, which quickly pass away. And to complete all, he is particularly destitute of the two principal graces of the Christian character—FAITH, LOVE.

II. CONSIDER WHAT IS AFFIRMED OF LUKEWARM PERSONS. "I would ye were cold or hot."

Not that God is indifferent. Consider what he has done for our salvation. He is anxious that we should come to the knowledge of his name—delights in mercy towards us—rejoices over us to do us good.

But so much may be gathered from the words—

1. That he would rather have us for his open than his secret enemies; that any state is preferable to a lukewarm state.

It dishonours God more than open profanity.

It renders our salvation more doubtful. Publicans and sinners enter into heaven before you.

It will bring upon us greater damnation.

2. That God anxiously desires that we may end our lukewarmness, and become lively and vigorous.

(Quote the concluding verses, and on these found the application.)

THE OFFERINGS OF CAIN AND ABEL.

"And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering: but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door."—Gen. iv. 3–7.

IT is pleasing to reflect that, notwithstanding the heinous transgression of the first man, that the Almighty did not execute upon him all the fierceness of his anger.

He was spared to repent, and to regain the divine favour.

We see the same long-suffering exercised towards his descendants, who, though born in sin, and running into the practice of iniquity, were the objects of the divine pity—blessed with temporal blessings, fruits of the earth, lambs of the flocks, etc., and favoured with liberty to approach God and worship him.

Can we contemplate this without recollecting the divine long-suffering and goodness towards us?

I. Observe, that to worship God is both the duty and the privilege of man.

Both Cain and Abel brought their offerings in compliance with a divine institution. "In process of time,"

or at the end of days—of the days of the week—the Sabbath, sanctified from the beginning. They rested from daily toil—they sought to render homage and service to their supreme Lord.

The whole history shows that they regarded it also as a lofty *privilege* to worship the Most High.

To worship God, is a duty founded on the most reasonable and general principles. It is an expression of reverence for the greatest of beings; of love to the best of beings; of gratitude to the most beneficent of beings, and of submission to the universal Sovereign.

To neglect it, discovers pride, petulance, presumption, ingratitude, rebellion.

But the yoke of duty, considered simply as such, is always galling to depraved and unsubmissive man.

Consider it then as your privilege. All its advantages are yours. "If thou be righteous, what givest thou him?"

Worship consists of adoration, petition, thanksgiving.

Adoration raises pleasing emotions, increases our knowledge of God.

Petition prepares for the reception of blessings.

Thanksgiving. Gratitude is pleasant, destroys unamiable tempers. He that loves God will love his brother also. All the advantages, then, are ours.

II. Let us gather instruction from the alteration in the mode of worshipping God after the Fall.

In paradise divine worship was immediate. Man could directly go to God because of his innocence of nature. There no lamb groaned under the sacrificial knife—man brought no offering in his hand to appease God.

Now, since the Fall, man draws nigh to the Lord through the medium of sacrifices and offerings. These

were instituted as types, showing the mode of redemption.

These, however, could not take away sin. They pointed, significantly pointed, to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. This mode of approach equally showed God's hatred of sin, and his determination to punish it; yet also, and more especially, the means of pardon. If God had received his creatures with as great familiarity as before, man would have been encouraged to sin, as the sons of Eli were by the connivance of their father. If God had been swift to punish, who could have stood before him? The middle path of atonement—mediation by sacrifice—is what God has instituted and made known, thus securing the divine honour and man's salvation.

III. The great end we ought to have in view in worship is the acceptance of our offerings.

Cain and Abel both expected this, though God had respect to one only.

God gave some visible token of acceptance, perhaps fire. Levit. ix. 24; Judges vi. 21; 1 Kings xviii. 38, etc.

He now testifies to his people that he accepts their religious services, by inward assurances and consolations—by answering their prayers.

Without this what are outward services? Suppose the building in which we worship a splendid temple; suppose the minister spoke with the tongues of men and angels, etc., what would all this pomp and magnificence avail if God should say, "I will cover myself with a thick cloud that their prayers shall not pass through." I will make the heavens brass. When they pray I will not hear, and when they call I will not regard, for this people are an

hypocritical people; they draw near with their mouths, but their hearts are far from me.

On the other hand, what matters it however plain our mode of worship, however weak our speech, the tongue of the stammerer, sighs, groans, if God shall say, Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace! "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires!"

IV. Let us examine what rendered the sacrifice of Abel acceptable, and for what reasons the offering of Cain was rejected.

1. The Apostle says, By *faith* Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. His offering was a sacrifice. The firstlings of his flock. By this sacrifice he acknowledged himself a sinner, needing atonement and pardon.

He evidenced his faith in the meritorious death of the promised seed of the woman, on which he depended for acceptance, pardon, and every other blessing.

2. The offering of Cain was a mere thank-offering, not sacrifice; he did not confess sin, nor testify faith in the promised seed. Besides, he was wicked. If thou *doest well*, shalt thou not be accepted? If we justify ourselves God will resist us. "God, I thank thee I am not as other men." Were our services ever so correct, yet if we "do not well," they are an abomination. Sin lieth at the door.

V. Behold in Cain the picture of a proud, hypocritical formalist.

1. Mark his temper. He was wroth, and his countenance fell.

2. Mark his conduct. He hated and slew his brother.

Such Pharisaic hypocrites have always been the most implacable persecutors of God's people. Formal Jews persecuted the prophets; Scribes and Pharisees persecuted Christ and his apostles; priests and hirelings persecuted the Reformers; and now, who despise and ridicule experimental religion, and stigmatise its professors with fanaticism? Are they the abandoned and profligate? No; but those who have the form of godliness, and deny the power thereof.

VI. That it is wholly the fault of the sinner if he be not accepted. "If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door."

IMPROVEMENT.

1. Think of the importance of worshipping God.
2. Examine and previously prepare yourselves.
3. Above all, ask in faith, and it shall be done unto you.

TRUE SOLICITUDE.

"I stand in doubt of you."—Gal. iv. 20.

THE ministerial office devolves upon those who sustain it, a charge the most solemn of any other, and a care the most anxious to those who properly enter into its spirit. Nothing, it is true, can give a higher pleasure to the mind when the work of the ministry is successful; when many are pricked in their hearts, and cry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" when one says unto another, Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord; and another says, I am the Lord's; and another subscribes himself by the name of the God of Israel; when the servant of God speaks to edification, and the churches under his care rise up into a holy building to the Lord.

But this, alas! is not always the case. Sometimes he cries out, "All day long have I stretched out my hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people." "Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" Like a husbandman he ploughs and sows, and sees but here and there a blade springing up; or if his prospect be flattering, an untimely blight cuts off his hopes, and robs him of his harvest. Like a builder, who, when the superstructure is being erected, and he contemplates its progress with pleasure, finds that suddenly an enemy has thrown down the walls, and razed the building to the ground.

In some cases he is like Joshua, having the honour of leading the people into a portion of God's promised inheritance, but a secret accursed thing creeps in, and behold they are discomfited before Ai, and he cries out, "O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs upon their enemies?" Then he feels that the care of the churches is above every other. It is true, though Israel be not gathered, he will be glorified; but though assured of this, if he faithfully discharge his duty, how cutting the reflection, that some of his flock must perish through their wanderings into the wilderness, beyond the pastures and protection of the Good Shepherd!

We see St Paul in this situation. Of the Galatian church he had entertained the highest hopes. But they had been turned from the obedience of the faith by false teachers. He laments over them: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again"—feeling the strongest pain and the most tender anxiety—"until Christ be formed in you," till your Christian character be complete—"I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice; for I stand in doubt of you."

Do you ask, why apply this to us? Have we rejected the ministry of Christ? Have we corrupted the pure gospel of the Saviour? Do we desire any other doctrine but Christ and him crucified? Perhaps not. Yet such is my anxiety for your welfare, such the godly jealousy that I have for you, that I am constrained to say, that I stand in doubt of you.

I. I stand in doubt as it respects some of you, that after all your reading and hearing, you are still unac-

quainted with many of the most essential truths of the gospel.

The *exceeding* sinfulness of sin—the necessity of a speedy repentance because of your sin—the method of salvation by *faith* in Christ Jesus—the extent of the Christian character—his privileges and his duties.

I may apply the same doubt to some Christians. You are still only babes in Christ, and are such as have need to be fed with milk and not with strong meat. You rest in the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, and do not go on unto perfection. Are you not ignorant of Satan's devices? of the snares of the world? of the operations of your own heart? Can you see through the disguises which the devil and the world put upon sin? For want of this wisdom you are unstable—your minds are variable, driven about with almost every wind—your faith is feeble and unsteady—you live only by feeling, and when that is not buoyant, you are cast down and disheartened. Temptation comes, and you cannot resist, steadfast in the faith. Adversity comes, and you are faint. Tribulation comes, and you are offended, and complain that the Lord deals hardly with you.

II. I stand in doubt of some of you, that though your judgments may be instructed, your creed correct, that the great truths of the gospel *do not affect you.*

We present to you no truth but you know it; no argument but you assent to it; no motive but you acknowledge its force. You therefore hear without emotion, as a tale that is often told, as a book often read, etc. In vain do we urge you to awake to righteousness and sin not. You acknowledge the justice of the exhortation, and sleep on. In vain we tell you that your judgment lingereth

not, and your damnation slumbereth not. It is inexpressibly awful, say you, yet you remain unconcerned, etc. In vain we tell you of the advantages of piety. You hear, you assent, yet will not seek them. How hopeless seems your case! We have no new doctrines, no new arguments to advance, and the old have been urged upon you in vain. Ministers say, What shall we do unto you, for we are to you as a pleasant song, and one that can play well on an instrument? You hear the words but do them not. God says, "O my people, what have I done unto thee? and wherein have I wearied thee?"

III. I stand in doubt of some of you that though you may be occasionally affected by the truths you hear, yet your goodness is as the morning cloud and early dew, which passeth away.

You have trembled at the threatenings of the Divine word—you have been encouraged by its exceeding great and precious promises—you have been allured by the pleasures and rewards of piety—and you have resolved to serve the Lord. But how long has the impression remained? A few days, weeks, or months at the longest. Then some favourite propensity, some flattering temptation has crossed your mind and shared the affections, produced coldness, finally, sin. And where are you now? Are you not farther from God? broken and dispirited? etc. Yet once more I call upon you to remember that a few feeble efforts will not take the kingdom. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." You must give up all to follow Christ.

IV. I stand in doubt of some of you, that though your resolutions may not have been altogether unproductive, you yet stop short of a full and complete *conversion.*

Conversion, in a religious sense, is the turning of the heart and life from sin to holiness. You appear among the people of God, your lives are not marked with enormities. But have you dominion over sin of every kind? Is the love of God shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto you? Are you adorned with the image of Christ? Do you follow his perfect example and seek to exemplify his life? Nothing less than this will suffice. "Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

V. I stand in doubt of you that you do not feel so interested in the welfare of Zion as you ought.

Your friends and neighbours are posting to destruction, and yet you have not a heart to warn them "to flee from the wrath to come." They neglect the worship of God, and you never say to them, Come let us go up to the house of the Lord.

Some are inquiring the way to Zion, bowed down with sorrow, oppressed with grief, roaring by reason of the disquietude of their heart; and yet you drop no gospel promise into their ears, you speak to them no words of consolation, you say not to them, "Come with us and we will do you good, for God hath spoken good concerning Israel." For you they may sink under their burdens, and waste away with their grief, and be turned out of the way of righteousness into the way that leadeth to destruction. Some are ignorant, but you instruct them not: believers are tempted and tried, but you give them no direction and

encouragement; they are cast down and disheartened, but you say not to the fearful heart, be strong, fear not; you pass by and never notice them. Christian sympathy, alas! is estranged from you; a brother's care you feel not, a brother's burden you do not help to bear. The means of grace require your attendance, but you are absent. The ways of Zion mourn, she languisheth, yet you are not afflicted. Her walls are broken down, but you seek not to be a repairer of the breach. The enemy hath spoiled her, but you labour not to cultivate her waste places, and restore her to her true glory.

O how different the language and conduct of good men! "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee. Because of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good." "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." "Who is weak and I am not weak? who is offended and I burn not?" For the hope of Israel I am bound in this chain. What cometh upon me daily? the care of all the churches! How can you love God and not love his cause? and labour to promote it? "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion." They all shall "be confounded, and turned back that hate Zion." Ye lie upon beds of ivory, etc., "but are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph." Amos vi. 4-6. Will you not co-operate in this work? "Ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence, and give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth."

VI. I stand in doubt of some of you, that like the

Galatians, having begun in the spirit, you are now again under the dominion of the flesh.

Such are backsliders—open—secret. (Point out their state. Exhort to return.)

CONCLUSION.

I bless God there are some of you of whom I feel no doubt—pious, upright, zealous, etc. May I presume upon this—

1. That it is a pledge of our security. "Thou hast a few names in Sardis, who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy." "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it."

2. That it affords us hope. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." Let Christians then pray, labour, be encouraged, etc.

EVILS OF FORGETTING GOD.

"Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength, therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips: in the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow."—Isaiah xvii. 10, 11.

THIS prophecy, though called the burden of Damascus, does likewise relate to Israel: "In that day it shall come to pass that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean."

This was accomplished by Tiglath-pileser's taking Damascus, and carrying the people captive to Kir, (2 Kings xvi. 9) and by his carrying a vast number of the Israelites captives to Assyria.

The text alleges a forgetfulness of God as the reason of these judgments being executed upon them. But it is referable also to the general conduct of men, and will furnish us with the following ideas:—

I. Forgetfulness of God is an evil which too generally prevails among men.

II. The attention thus drawn from God and his service is transferred to worldly and sensual pleasures. They "plant pleasant plants, and set it with strange slips."

III. Disappointment and sorrow are the consequences of such conduct: "The harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and desperate sorrow."

I. FORGETFULNESS OF GOD IS AN EVIL WHICH TOO GENERALLY PREVAILS AMONG MEN.

The text does not so much charge with positive wickedness (though it is implied) as forgetfulness of God, which supposes folly, because he is the God of salvation, and the rock of strength; and when he bears such amiable characters, it is surely the height of folly to be unmindful of him.

Men reject him as their Lawgiver and Sovereign, but in so doing, they reject him as their salvation and help, for these are inseparable.

To the obedient he stands in the most endearing relations, but disobedience changes the aspect of love into that of darkness and wrath.

Consider these relations—

1. The God of thy salvation.

He is infinitely able to save his creatures, whether the salvation required be temporal, spiritual, or eternal.

He is always willing to save them. He assures them of this in his Word. He calls their attention to it by his servants—by his Holy Spirit.

How inexcusable is man!

How criminal to forget, to be unmindful of him!

2. The rock of thy strength.

A rock to support.

Here we may lean and prove it to be a rock, not a broken reed. Here we may build, and the fabric will never be shaken. Here we may shelter, as in the cleft of a rock, and no evil shall prevail against us. For so helpless and weak a creature as man to have such a refuge, such a support, and to be unmindful of it, how great is his folly!

But when may we be said to forget, and to be unmind-

ful of God? When we live without thinking of him—without praying to him—without seeking his glory—without surrendering our souls, bodies, and all our cares into his hands.

II. THE ATTENTION THUS DRAWN FROM GOD AND HIS SERVICE IS TRANSFERRED TO WORLDLY AND SENSUAL PLEASURES.

The soul of man in this case strives to supply its want of happiness from the world: "Therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants." Not by my will, but such shall be the event. This is a figurative expression, intimating the general conduct of men, who, having forsaken God, cultivate worldly pleasures.

Infinitely varied are the objects of the attention or culture of men, but they all proceed from the above principle, or rather have the same end in view. Some seek their pleasure in learning, others in the arts, riches, honours, employments, amusements.

But they are "strange slips," not natural, not designed to answer the intended purpose. The soul was, by its Creator, endowed with certain faculties to answer certain ends, which he proposed in the creation of it.

These powers cannot be directed to any other objects without folly and wickedness. It is strange and unnatural, yet the sons of men, notwithstanding this, pursue these earthly objects with diligence and perseverance. They are determined to prove what the world can do for them. "In the day they make their plant to grow, and in the morning their seed to flourish."

They shall in some measure succeed. Every person is not disappointed in the world. *Some* of the designs of most men are accomplished; and they get a kind of habit

of rejoicing and taking pleasure in the works of their hands, and in the enjoyments of the world.

The mind becomes at length darkened, and the taste vitiated. They call evil good, and good evil; put darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! They are perfectly besotted; and though in most things disappointed, yet still following after the fleeting shadows. "Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow."

III. DISAPPOINTMENT AND SORROW ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF SUCH CONDUCT. "But the harvest shall be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow."

A heap of rottenness—cut off, blighted, etc. In the day of grief, that is, in that day when they shall find it to be so, grief and desperate sorrow shall be their portion.

This is frequently the case in the present life, when, by some providence, their eyes are opened, they wake from the dreams of pleasures and safety.

This is especially the case in the future judgment. (Insist chiefly on this.)

THE DIVINE CALL AND PROMISE.

"Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."—Isaiah lv. 3.

THE attention of man is called upon by innumerable objects. The demands of business—the invitations of worldly enjoyments—the cries of distress, alternately assail us, and leave us but little leisure. Or if we ascend higher—the contentions of nations—the alarms of war—the groans of a world, arrest our thoughts and interest our hearts. But amidst all this tumult and commotion, where is the voice of God? or rather, where is the attention that is caught by it? God speaks once, twice have I heard it, that power belongeth unto God. In the arrangements of Providence—in the revolutions of nature—in the dictates of revelation, and in the secret remonstrances of conscience, his voice is to be heard; but it is calm and gentle, it is small and still, and therefore unheard in the tumult of passions and the roar of contentions.

It is, however, occasionally heard by all, and constantly by those who, sensible of the dignity of their natures, do habitually think and reflect.

The institution of public worship derives a peculiar value from its tendency to dispose men to listen to the voice of God. This is your professed design in attending it; and though the distractions of the world do sometimes follow you even into the sanctuary, and occupy the atten-

tion which then especially ought to be sacred to God, yet the vagrant thought is sometimes fixed, and you aspire secretly, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Happy for me, happy for yourselves will it be, if this be your frame of mind, for your attention is demanded, demanded by the most interesting truths and the most powerful motives.

"Hear, and your soul shall live."

But what has God to speak to sinful man? What to a number of ungrateful and obstinate rebels? What to those who have rejected his counsel and despised his reproof? Is he about to make requisition for sin, to render unto man his work, and to pronounce the sentence of eternal separation, and eternal fire? No; his voice is the voice of compassion, of comfort, of mercy: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Consider—

I. THE GRACIOUS PROPOSAL ON THE PART OF GOD. "I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

All men are, in one sense, in covenant with God, for Adam, as the federal head, stipulated likewise for his offspring. This was a covenant of works in which Adam engaged to obey, and God to reward. Life and death were the sanctions. Men, as sinners, are then liable to the penalty.

The covenant here proposed is a covenant of promise, that is, a covenant in which God promises to bestow freely upon his creatures a variety of the greatest and most necessary blessings, as you see from the terms of the text.

It is an act of mercy, not of justice, though, as we shall afterwards show, consistent with justice. Two things here call for our attention; the extent of the engagements in this covenant, and the ground of dependence upon it.

1. The extent here specified of the engagements of the covenant: "The sure mercies of David." This covenant was first discovered to Adam, more fully to Abraham, still more so to David, who was an eminent type of Christ. In this sense it signifies all the blessings promised when the covenant was made to David, but I should rather take the name David patronymically for Christ, who is often called by the name of this prince, being David's son; and then the meaning is, that according to covenant he would give them his only begotten Son as a sacrifice for, and a Saviour from, their sins, and with him all the blessings of life and salvation. Now Christ, the spiritual David, is come; what these sure mercies are, we know more fully. In the days of his flesh, he went about doing good. He healed the sick, gave sight to the blind, unstopped the ears of the deaf. But these were the lowest of his mercies.

He received sinners. He does so now.

He forgave sinners: "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." He does so now.

He united his disciples to himself in the closest intimacy. He does so now.

He regenerated: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." He does so now.

He supplied their spiritual wants agreeably to the foregoing verses in this chapter: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Where-

fore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." "My flesh is meat, indeed, and my blood is drink, indeed. He that cometh to me shall never hunger; he that believeth on me shall never thirst." He does so now.

He protected: "Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." He does so now.

He promised a kingdom: "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you, but I go to prepare a place for you." "I appoint unto you a kingdom." He does so now.

But they are *sure* mercies, which leads—

2. To the ground of dependence.

It is so astonishing an act of grace that it appears almost incredible. Even this consideration sometimes causes unbelief. But the prime character of God is goodness. We see it in nature and providence. (Illustrate.) The covenant, then, is founded upon the goodness of God, which these witness to.

Think of the fidelity of his promises: "God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent." "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

Think of his ability: "He is rich in mercy to all that call upon him in truth."

Think of the pledge he has given us. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things."

Think of the great cloud of witnesses who all testify to the Divine character, and speak the mercies to be sure.

They are, therefore, *sure mercies.* Sure to all who humbly apply for them without exception.

Sure in the effects they produce. As in an apostle, so in the weakest saint, filling with all joy and peace in believing.

Sure in all changes. These never fail. "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."

Sure in another state of existence, for it is an everlasting covenant administered by an Eternal Being.

II. THE MEANS OF OUR SECURING THESE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID. "Incline your ear, and come unto me, hear, and your soul shall live."

1. The person speaking ought to induce attention.

It is the Lord, our Maker, Preserver, Redeemer.

2. The interest we have in the subject ought to induce attention.

3. Our attention must lead us to God: "Incline your ear, and come unto me."

4. The amazing issues which depend on our obedience should lead us at once to obey: "Hear, and your soul shall live."

THE REMEDY FOR TROUBLE.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."—John xiv. 1.

INTRODUCE with the occasion, xiii. 33.

These words lead us to consider—

I. Christ as the proper object of our faith.

II. Faith in Christ as the proper remedy for our troubles.

I. CHRIST IS THE PROPER OBJECT OF OUR FAITH.

There were various opinions respecting the person of Christ when he was personally in the world.

"Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?"

"And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets."

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?"

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

The same diversity of opinion remains. Some think that he is God; others, man; others, a superior angel. Almost all seem to have erred in endeavouring to be wise above what is written; in attempting to explain what is either in its own nature inexplicable, or what God has left in obscurity for reasons unknown to us, but doubtless wise and good.

Had men contented themselves with the simple and brief declarations of God's Word in matters of this kind,

without indulging in vain speculations; and had they uniformly expressed themselves in Scriptural phrase, without introducing terms of their own invention, we should at least have had more peace in the Church, and perhaps more uniformity.

In treating the subject before us, we shall endeavour to avoid these errors, and confine ourselves to the plain sense of Scripture.

1. Jesus Christ is the object of our faith, in common with God the Father.

Ye believe in God, believe also in me.

As the eternal God.

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come—the Almighty."

As the Almighty Creator.

"All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made."

"By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

As the Universal King.

"He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth."

"All kings shall fall down before him."

"Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."

As the object of worship.

"The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him."

"God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow; of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

"When he bringeth in the first-begotten into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him."

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

He is the object of worship in heaven.

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

Thus, from the authority of Scripture, we see that Christ ought to be the object of our faith, in common with God the Father.

As for the particular manner of his existence, in connection with the other persons of the mystic Trinity, it is not for us to know, at least in the present state.

2. He is the object of our faith as the Messiah, the anointed of God.

"Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh."

This event presents the Son of God as the object of our faith, in a manner peculiar and distinct.

It opens to us new prospects, and establishes new relations.

Considered in his mixed nature of God and man, he is the Messiah, or the anointed, to accomplish the work of our salvation, and to discharge the duties of a variety of offices and situations, in each of which he ought to be the object of our faith.

Teacher. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Surety. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."

Saviour. "And thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."

Mediator. "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

Representative. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous."

II. FAITH IN CHRIST IS THE PROPER REMEDY FOR OUR TROUBLES.

Bear in remembrance that it is concerning living, active faith we affirm this. The mere belief of the understanding will not be sufficient, for the devils believe and tremble. It is the faith of the heart; the faith that is of the operation of God; the faith by which a poor, helpless sinner comes to Christ as his last resource, and lays upon him the whole weight of his sins and sorrows. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

1. Consider the case of one troubled in mind on account of sin.

This, in most cases, is one of the severest troubles we can possibly feel. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" There is the painful sense of guilt; the consciousness of the Divine anger; the fear of judgment, and of the damnation of hell. Hence his spirit is grieved within him; he is bowed down greatly; he mourns because of his sin.

Give me leave to apply to you the words of the compassionate Saviour: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." He is your surety, and he hath paid your debt. He is your atoning Saviour, and he hath put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. He loved you, and gave himself for you. He waits to be gracious. Believe and be saved. Does not hope spring up? Does it not grow? Does not such love melt, subdue. Dost thou give up thine all? Already, then, is the song of praise upon thy lips: "Thou art my God, and I will praise thee; thou art my God, and I will exalt thee."

2. Consider the believer in trouble on account of weak faith, powerful corruptions, strong temptations.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." I am thy salvation. Look unto me

for I am God, and beside me there is no Saviour. A sight of Christ strengthens faith, and gives vigour to the battle.

3. Consider the believer in trouble from persecution, affliction, and sorrow.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." Exalted to the right hand of the Father, he watches over his people, etc.

4. Consider the believer in trouble from the pressure of spiritual wants.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." He is head over all things to his church. In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

5. Consider the believer in trouble on account of the abounding of sin, and the breaches of Zion.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." The residue of the Spirit is with him.

6. Consider the believer in trouble on account of absence from his native home—the presence of God.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

But what if you do not believe in the Saviour? Comfort? No! You must be left to the trouble of a guilty conscience—of reigning sin—of the world's sorrow—of everlasting separation from God.

NEGLECT OF PRAYER.

"And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee."—Isaiah lxiv. 7.

AT the time when the prophet wrote, the Jews were very corrupt, and their religion consisted chiefly in formality. This, together with their apostatizing to the worship of idols, paved the way for their captivity.

This chapter may be considered as an act of humiliation and confession by the prophet, in behalf of the Jews, similar to that in the ninth chapter of Daniel.

In the text he aggravates their other crimes by that of hypocrisy, for he does not mean by the expression that none called upon or prayed to God at all, but that they did not do it spiritually, heartily, fervently. Their service was lip service.

The last clause in the sentence explains (as is common in the prophetic writings) the former. "None calleth upon thy name;" that is, "None stirreth up himself to take hold of thee."

It is figurative. God was about to depart from them, and yet they were so stupid and careless, that none stirred up himself to take hold of God to detain him. Perhaps also an allusion to Jacob and the angel.

The words thus opened suggest to us two observations—

I. That prayer, properly so called, consists in certain inward exercises of the mind.

II. That, however frequently or forcibly we pray, if our prayers are separate and distinct from these exercises, we

shall be regarded by God as though we never prayed at all—that is, we shall derive no benefit from our services.

I. PRAYER, PROPERLY SO CALLED, CONSISTS IN CERTAIN EXERCISES OF THE MIND.

1. Attention to our wants.

Without this, prayer is vain babbling.

Our wants arise from our sinful conduct—our unholy nature—powerful opposition—daily circumstances in our experience. Our state ought to be as diligently attended to as the most assiduous tradesman attends to his business—as the humane physician attends to the symptoms of disease in his patient.

2. Regard to God as the Being who only can relieve us.

With him is the fountain of life. Think of his infinite fulness—of his engagements to us in Christ Jesus—of the means of access by the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ.

3. Strong and fervent desire.

"Oh, that thou wouldest bless me indeed! Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee! With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early. God be merciful to me a sinner."

4. Affiance in God.

One would suppose that all who pray had this faith, or why do they pray?

But it is rather customary and formal, than from the possession of faith. They may believe generally, but not for themselves—not for personal blessing. Every man who has the true spirit of prayer looks to the promises—their grounds—their fulness, and trusts in God, who keepeth covenant and truth for ever, to fulfil them.

5. Humble and patient expectation.

"I waited patiently for the Lord. My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning."

This is called watching unto prayer. Though the vision tarry, wait for it; not leaving it, under the idea that it is not God's time, but watching for the answer every moment.

II. THAT HOWEVER FREQUENTLY OR FORCIBLY WE PRAY, IF OUR PRAYERS ARE SEPARATE AND DISTINCT FROM THESE EXERCISES, WE SHALL BE REGARDED BY GOD AS THOUGH WE NEVER PRAYED AT ALL—THAT IS, WE SHALL DERIVE NO BENEFIT FROM OUR SERVICES.

1. This will appear from the ancient Jews, who drew near to God with their lips, but their hearts were far from him. Were their sacrifices, under these circumstances, acceptable? No.—This appears also from the Pharisees who, for a pretence, made long prayers. No outward service can atone for the want of piety. "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

2. That prayer must be distinguished by right dispositions of the mind, is evident from the very design of prayer.

Consider its parts—

Adoration. Is this to offer God vain compliments? No, but that we ourselves may be abased. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee." "Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Thanksgiving. Is this part of prayer designed as any recompense for mercies received? No, but that we may place his mercies before us and be grateful. "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."

Confession. Do we confess to give God information? No, but because we see sin and hate it. "Woe 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."

Intercession. Do we pray to change the mind of God? No, but that we may see the value, and be properly prepared to receive his favours.

The whole of this duty is designed to promote piety, by working certain holy dispositions in our hearts, by the help and blessing of God. "For all these things will I be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do them for them."

Will not these remarks account for the barrenness of mere professors? No blessing can they receive. Prayer must be made with true hearts, and faith unfeigned. The prayer of the hypocrite is an abomination unto the Lord. They are still guilty, miserable, and liable to the wrath of God.

As for you who live without praying at all, it is manifest that you are in the broad way that leadeth to destruction. Begin, then, to make prayer unto God. Seek his mercy to pardon your sins. Seek his Holy Spirit to create in you clean hearts, and renew right spirits within you. Seek his face evermore.

Christians, stir up the gift of God that is within you, etc.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO PRAYER.

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"—Matt. vii. 11.

AMONGST the many excellencies of the religion of Christ, the amiable and attractive views of the Divine character it presents to us stand foremost. Other religions place God at a distance—as the heathen, as the Jewish, and render the way of access difficult by manifold ceremonies and costly sacrifices.

In the Christian religion the way is open; we have boldness to enter into the holiest of all. God is most nigh to us through Christ, in the graciousness of his character and the abundance of his liberality. Jesus, in the preceding verses, teaches to pray, and, to encourage to the duty, uses the language of the text. Wherein we have—

I. AN ENCOURAGING CHARACTER OF THE BEING TO WHOM WE PRAY—A FATHER.

Most endearing is such a character.

He feels the tenderest concern for us.

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him."

We have freedom of access to him.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

He has placed us here under a course of instruction and discipline to fit us for the eternal enjoyment of his bounty.

But the extent of this fatherly relation is in the text illustrated—

1. By appeal. "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"

For a parent to refuse bread to a hungry child, or to mock him by giving him a scorpion to destroy instead of food to nourish him, would characterise a monster; and would you level the Deity, whose goodness is infinite, to such characters?

2. By contrast. "If ye then, being evil, how much more," etc.

Though a parent may not act so monstrous a part as to give to his son who asks for bread a stone, or for a fish a scorpion, yet being evil, he may act either through weakness or sin.

God cannot so act towards us.

He may be partial. God is no respecter of persons. He may be negligent in the discharge of many duties, though he may not withhold bread. God is ever mindful of us. His eye neither slumbers nor sleeps: he is the faithful God.

His changing tempers or caprice may render his bounties unstable. God is unchangeably the same.

He may in many cases do for his children, with a good design, what is ungracious to them, erring through ignorance. God is infinitely wise, and knows all things.

He may have inclination to give his children many good gifts that he has not in his power to give. God is all-sufficient and almighty.

He may give good gifts, but cannot give the inclination to use them properly. God does both.

He may give to the body, not to the soul—for time, not for eternity. God does all these.

II. THE BLESSINGS WE SHALL RECEIVE FROM OUR HEAVENLY FATHER IN ANSWER TO OUR PRAYERS.

"Good things."

This may be applied to temporal things. The affairs of the wicked are not left to chance, much less the affairs of good men. Good things! Not perhaps apparently good to us in all cases, but ultimately so. We know not what is good for a man in this life. The Lord chooses our inheritance for us. He fixes the bounds of our habitation.

This may more especially be applied to spiritual things, which appear to be summed up in that parallel place in St Luke's Gospel, "He will give the Holy Spirit."

To enlighten us in the knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord.

To witness with our spirits that we are the children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ.

To purify us a peculiar people unto himself.

To support under temptations and trials.

To perfect Christian character.

(Or you may take it, he will give pardon, peace, holiness, fellowship, heaven.)

These are good. Morally, beneficially; for our happiness, eternally.

1. What an encouragement to pray!
2. How careful we should be to pray aright!
3. Address those who do not pray.

LIVING TO CHRIST.

"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."—Phil. i. 21.

AFTER the Apostle became truly acquainted with Christ, he cherished for him an ardent attachment—"The love of Christ" constrained him.

His zeal and fidelity in the ministerial office were strikingly displayed—"I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

He had the comfortable hope of the Redeemer's glory—"Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

I. What is the character of those who can say with the Apostle, "For me to live is Christ?"

II. How does it appear that to such persons "death is gain?"

I. WHAT IS THE CHARACTER OF THOSE WHO CAN SAY, "FOR ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST?"

1. They are fully persuaded of the truth of the Christian revelation.

An infidel can never live to Christ; for he disowns him, rejects his teaching, disregards his precepts, etc. It would be well, however, before any man makes this profession of infidelity, if he would remember that he makes a solemn renunciation of the salvation that Christ offers

—the promises he makes—the assistance he gives—the heaven he hath purchased.

To live to the honour of Christ—to live under the influence of Christ—to live in the enjoyment of the favours of Christ, we must steadily believe, we must open our eyes to the light; for unless our faith be firm, the motives of the Christian religion will be powerless. Its promises will yield us no support, nor its prospects any comfort.

There are two ways of proving the truth of Christianity —the one is by a series of reasoning from historical facts; the other by its obvious effects upon the human mind and conduct. The former is the more learned, the latter the more simple; the one is the circuitous, the other the direct way; one requires a certain degree of intellectual improvement, the other is obvious to the most ignorant. For my own part, after wearying myself with the writers for and against the Christian system, and out of all patience with their intricacies and ill tempers—when I meet with a man who, by believing in Christ, has become a new creature, and supported his pretensions for a series of years with honour to himself and credit to the gospel, I find an argument worth a folio: it is made up of sunbeams; it penetrates the judgment and secures its assent. It is then that, after poring over Tindal, and Bolingbroke, and Voltaire, and Hume, and Paine, with their numerous answerers, I sedately restore them to their places in the library, and leave them to fight it out by themselves. I leave history, and criticism, and metaphysics, and enjoy the rich satisfaction of contemplating nature and truth. "Once I was blind, now I see;" once under guilt, now in the favour of God; once the slave of vice, now reigning over corruption; once miserable, now happy; once a child of wrath, now an heir of heaven. "Ye are washed, ye are

sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Blessed God! could a religion producing such effects—diffusing so much happiness—exalting thy fallen creatures—bringing back thy rebels to thy footstool—inspiring them with a zeal for thy glory, and subjecting them to thy laws, be the offspring of collusion and imposture! Was it dictated by the father of lies? Presumptuous, blasphemous thought! Does it not wear thy image? Is it not the fairest offspring of light and love? Has it not thy seal? Are not these thy witnesses, commending the truth to every man's conscience in the sight of God? Thus I would wish you to reason, etc.

2. Those who can say, "For me to live is Christ," live in the enjoyment of the benefits derived from the relations in which he stands to his people.

"I am the light of the world." "Christ," says an Apostle, "is made unto us wisdom." What an interesting relation! Blind and ignorant, he becomes our teacher; he is our sun. And when he rises upon the mind, what blessed discoveries! What views of God in the face of his Son! of Providence! of our own personal interest in these things, etc.

Christ is made unto us righteousness. What a glorious privilege to man who has violated God's holy law, and exposed himself to its curse—who at his best estate, if proceeded against according to the rigid covenant of works, could not stand! But Christ is our justification.

Christ is made to us sanctification. By his gracious influence we are cleansed from the filth of sin, and separated to the service of our God.

Christ is made unto us redemption. Redeemed, purchased by him, we become his own. What care he takes

of his people! "Who is he that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" His own, though exposed to trials and difficulties; his own, though in a strange land. And "they shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels." So to live as to say that Christ is mine under all these relations, is to live indeed! What a never-failing spring of comfort!

3. They live in a course of obedience to the wise and holy precepts of Christ.

They who are of Christ must not sin, that grace may abound. God forbid! They are quickened, that they may live to him; they are purchased, that the consideration that they are not their own, may induce them to glorify him. His laws are searching, affecting the heart; extensive, admitting of no evil, and restraining from worldly pleasure; awful, having the sanction of eternal life and death. By obeying these laws they not only rejoice in the Divine favour, but secure the peace of a good conscience, and spread his praise below.

4. They exert themselves to spread the knowledge of Christ and his gospel.

If we are unconcerned for the honour of Christ; careless whether his church prosper or not; whether truth or error, piety or wickedness, go foremost in the world; it is easy to see that we do not belong to Christ. There is no cold neutrality here. If amongst our earthly connexions, where we are united by the ties of love or friendship, we feel interested in the prosperity of our friends; much more in this case. (Here address the wicked who support the opposite cause, and the careless professor, etc.)

II. How does it appear that death is gain to those who live to Christ?

Death in itself is not gain. But to the Christian to die is to exchange worlds, and to enter upon the felicities of eternity. What do such persons *gain* by dying?

1. A perfection of nature.

Our natural imperfections are both bodily and mental. In death they drop the former; all their pain and sicknesses are buried in the grave with their body; and the spirit, disengaged from the frail and cumbrous house of clay, becomes like the angels of God, which are characterised as *spirits* and *flames* of fire.

At death, the mind, by being let into a world of kindred spirits, and freed from so many hindrances to its operations, will exercise itself with greater freedom.

Its reasonings will be more solid; for as its acquaintance with God, and divine, and probably human things, will be more extensive, so the chain of reasoning will be carried on through a longer series, and truths now hid from the wisest of men, will then be familiar to the weakest.

The prejudices of education, example, and custom, will then be removed; and we all know that these are great obstacles to our mental improvement.

The attention will not be demanded by outward or trifling things, our engagements being all of a solemn and important kind.

The mind will then be free from the influence of passion, which interposes in this world a dark medium betwixt truth and our understandings. For as passion depends in a great measure upon the state of the blood and spirits, these being left with the body cannot affect the pure mind.

The will, too, as it was rendered obedient on earth by a course of holy discipline, shall, without any variation, accord with the Divine pleasure. For as the understand-

ing will then be more clear, and the glories of God be more distinctly apprehended, the submission of the will will be constantly secured.

The perfection of reason and will being admitted, the perfection of the affections will naturally follow. For we do not in this world usually love, and desire, and hope for, and rejoice in those things which we know to be evils, or hurtful to us; but only because we are mistaken in our views. So, as these affections have been in part regulated here, and placed upon God, the moment we behold him, our perceptions of his excellence will be so lively, and our recollection of his goodness to us so strong, that we shall be carried in affection to him as our centre by an irresistible force, and shall for ever rest in him.

Such will be the state of good men immediately upon the dissolution of the body.

But at the resurrection, as a most mysterious change will pass upon the body, so it is likely that a still further change may take place in the soul. The whole man will then arise to a perfection of nature, of which we can form no conception. "It doth not yet appear," said an inspired Apostle, "what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

2. They gain an eternal establishment in holiness.

There is no fear of falling. Here we are always in danger. So we are exhorted to diligence, and watching, and circumspection, that we may stand secure. Let not him that girdeth on his harness, boast himself, as he that putteth it off. Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. The Apostle himself says, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, after I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway."

What an unspeakable gain to be secure!

3. They enter upon the enjoyment of eternal and unchanging pleasures.

(Here contrast the suffering state of the saints with this, and the imperfection even of their religious pleasures in the present state, etc.)

4. They enter into the presence of God and Christ.

As soon as the soul quits the body, it is, says St Paul, "present with the Lord." The veil of flesh is drawn aside, and the soul becomes conscious of his immediate presence; expatiates in the plenitude of the Divine perfections, and feels an unspeakable interest in them all.

The soul becomes conscious of the immediate presence of Christ. There is a local presence of the God-man. He sits upon his throne, the centre of the glory of the Godhead. His saints are admitted to him. They admire, adore, love, bless, etc.

5. They gain those eternal rewards which the gospel has promised.

(Conclude by showing, that as for sinners to live is sin, so to die will be loss.)

Loss of their worldly enjoyments.

Loss of the prayers of God's people.

Loss of the invitations of ministers of the gospel.

Loss of heaven.

Loss of hope.

They gain misery—darkness—damnation.

JABEZ'S PRAYER.

"O that thou wouldest bless me indeed, . . . and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me!"—1 Chron. iv. 10.

THOUGH men have almost universally agreed in the necessity, yet they have widely differed in the subjects of prayer.

Prayer is expressive of the wishes and desires of the mind. Some ask for temporal, others for spiritual good. Generally we are too worldly-minded in our prayers, and this blunts the edge and destroys the efficacy of our spiritual devotions.

Jabez was intensely earnest in his desire for blessing. His prayer recognises—

I. BLESSING IN GENERAL: "BLESS ME INDEED."

Give me those things which will be in all circumstances and at all times most beneficial to me. It is of importance for you to have your hearts impressed with the need of blessing. Think of your immortality—how you must exist in another world.

Reflect upon the relation in which the God of your life stands to you as the observer of your present conduct, and as your future Judge.

Consider the undertaking of the Lord Jesus Christ. These will lead you to see the importance of blessing from God, and constrain you to seek such a character as would

secure that blessing. There must be in you holy principles, pure affections, fervent desires, heavenly dispositions, before you will plead with this impassioned earnestness. All those spiritual blessings which God hath promised to us in Christ Jesus should be desired and prayed for with fervour. Intercourse with God is the highest *privilege* of the creature. Good men rejoice in it—they avail themselves of it—their experience shows what free access is granted by the Supreme to all those who call upon him in sincerity and in truth. Jabez, having expressed his desire for blessing generally, proceeds—

II. TO PARTICULARS.

1. The presence of the Divine hand: "That thine hand might be with me." The expression is figurative, and often used.

What did he mean by this desire? What are the truths which this petition embodies? It implies—

The supply of our wants.

"Thou openest thy hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." Our wants are temporal. These God hath promised to supply, and hath taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Yet more especially our spiritual wants should be sought; God has promised to supply them, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Christ is made the head of the church, that spiritual blessings may flow through him to us. God's hand is with us in the promises—in religious ordinances.

Faith is our hand, by which we take the supply from the hand of God.

Direction. The hand is used for this purpose, so, in a peculiar manner, is the hand of God our guide and direc-

tor. He points out the path by his Word. He takes his faithful people, as it were, by the hand, and leads them by his Spirit. "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." "Thou shalt uphold me with the right hand of thy righteousness." "I will uphold thee by the right hand of my righteousness."

Deliverance. Thus Israel was delivered by the hand of the Lord in Egypt. David was drawn out of deep waters by the hand of the Lord. Isaiah says the hand of the Lord is not shortened that it cannot save. In all distressing cases, then, we are warranted to pray that his hand may be with us to deliver us.

In the whole work of salvation, which is our spiritual deliverance, we see the hand of God. It is his hand that takes away the scales from the eyes of the understanding —that lifts us out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and sets our feet upon the rock—that destroys our sins—that moulds us to his image—that raises us to heaven.

Safety. When a sacred writer would express the safety of God's people, he says, "All thy saints are in thine hand." If his hand be with us to protect us we shall be safe. In all attacks from the world—from the flesh—from the devil, we shall be safe for ever. "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

O then, let thine hand be with me!

Co-operation. This, though partly anticipated, deserves a distinct notice.

To the assisting hand of God we must always look. In our prayers—in working out our salvation—in our undertakings in life—in all we do for the good of the church.

2. Preservation from evil, that it may not grieve.

The unavoidable consequences of sin is misery. This

sentiment is the foundation of this part of Jabez's prayer. Sin is the transgression of the law, and this is the reason why it produces misery. For the law is not only *holy*, requiring holiness of heart and life; and *just*, founded upon the natural relations of the Creator and the creature; but *good*, designing the happiness of man, and admirably contrived for this purpose.

Sin produces misery by frustrating the designs of the law in man's happiness. The law was intended to make man happy, by regulating the powers of his mind. But sin frustrates this design, by corrupting his conduct as well as his nature.

Sin subjects man to the penalties of the law: "The wages of sin is death." How much is the misery consequent upon sin heightened, when we take into consideration the words of Christ! "He that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth on him." Sin is also productive of *eternal misery.*

If you feel the force of such observations, you will offer the prayer of Jabez with a feeling heart: "O that thou wouldest keep me from evil."

But it is not simply offering a petition of this kind that will deliver us from sin and its consequences. There are certain dispositions which must be connected with this prayer to give it force and efficacy—a conviction that we are sinful—humility before God—penitence and contrition of soul—desire to be delivered from all sin—knowledge of our weakness and inability, and that God is able and willing to keep us.

Having thus besought the help of God, we must begin our attacks upon sin, depending upon his promised aid. We must immediately break off every evil practice—manfully resist temptation—steadily mortify every evil passion

and propensity—go on to perfection of holiness. To do these things with spirit, let us set God before us—let us seek his strength—let us "be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."

In this manner you must act if you would be delivered from the power of sin. Do you plead, "It will take up our time?" What was time given for? "But it is yet too soon!" O my God, have mercy upon the souls that are led by this delusion.

THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST NECESSARY.

"Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."—Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

INTRODUCE with the history.

Take the words in order.

I. IT BEHOVED CHRIST TO SUFFER.

1. To accomplish the plan of man's salvation laid in the counsels of eternity.

2. To fulfil all the intimations and predictions of the sufferings of the Messiah contained in the Old Testament.

Christ says, "Thus it is written." The predictions were of two kinds—symbolical, as the institution of sacrifices and of ceremonies; verbal, as foretold by a great number of the prophecies.

3. To give consistency and propriety to God's government of the world in those ages previous to his coming.

It is evident that God, before the offering of Christ, regarded man through a proposed Mediator. He spared the wicked. He received the repentant and believing. He did good to all—which could not in justice have been done but in respect of the future sufferings of Christ. Had not Christ died, he must have reversed, as far as possible, his former proceedings; turned those out of paradise he had before received for the sake of the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world.

4. To give us firm ground of hope and confidence in a promised salvation.

II. IT BEHOVED HIM TO RISE AGAIN.

1. To attest his Messiahship and Divine mission to the world. "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."

2. To become the Advocate of man in the court of heaven.

(Expatiate on the figure. Suppose man arraigned, etc.)

3. To become the Head of the Church. "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

4. To become the Sovereign of the world. "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

5. To assure us of a resurrection and a future state. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."

6. To become the Judge of all. "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereby he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead."

III. THAT REPENTANCE AND REMISSION OF SINS SHOULD BE PREACHED IN HIS NAME, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM.

This latter part of the text presents five things to our consideration.

1. The Divine appointment of the preachers of the gospel. "That repentance and remission of sins should be *preached.*" "And ye are *witnesses* of these things."

Jesus chose them for this work, for they had been with him from the beginning. They had seen his miracles—heard and received his doctrines—witnessed his resurrection and ascension.

He saw, too, that they were faithful, zealous, upright. From hence we learn that Jesus chooses and appoints his servants. He does not leave it altogether to man, much less to wicked men, to educate persons for his work. If they be not witnesses of Jesus' miracles and resurrection, they must be witnesses of his salvation, turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God.

If Jesus thus appoints some to preach, he appoints others to hear. And if the one be accountable for preaching, the other is responsible for hearing.

2. The subjects upon which they are to preach. "Repentance and remission of sins."

3. The authority by which they are to preach. "In his name." "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations."

4. The province in which they are first to preach. "Beginning at Jerusalem."

5. The universal extent of their preaching. "Among all nations."

THE OBJECT OF DIVINE REGARD.

"To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."—Isaiah lxvi. 2.

THE heathen doctrine, which excludes God from the government of the world, is uncomfortable, cold, blighting; and though it was supported by some pretences apparently tending to exalt our conceptions of the Divine Being, as he is too pure, too lofty, etc., it is false in itself, and immoral in its consequences.

The confining the favour and blessings of God to one particular place and people is nearly as shocking to our feelings, and as destructive in its effects. So with the Jews. So are bigots of every religion.

The Bible expands our conceptions—opens the wide prospect of the Divine beneficence—blessing all—giving opportunities of salvation, and encouraging all to obey, by peculiarly distinguishing the penitent and pious in every country. Nor is the peculiar favour he shows to these the result of partiality—he would equally bless all, but only a few are willing.

I. THE CHARACTER OF THOSE WHO ARE THE PECULIAR OBJECTS OF THE DIVINE REGARD.

1. To him that is poor. Not literally, for these distinctions are little noticed by God. Spiritual things are expressed in Scripture by allusion to natural—thus riches and poverty are used, one to express the state of a mind elevated by an imaginary idea of its own sufficiency and

virtue. "The rich he hath sent empty away." Thou sayest, "I am rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing." The other the reverse, a state of mind sensible of its vices, frailties, weakness, etc. Such characters feel themselves—

Destitute of goodness, natural or acquired; wisdom, righteousness, faith, love, benevolence, etc.

Destitute of ability—no help in themselves—yet they may read, pray, etc. But they cannot make their heart clean, cannot secure the Divine favour.

Destitute of any title to a future inheritance. There is an inheritance, but it is not theirs. Such characters feel themselves—

Necessitous. They feel their wants—they long for supplies; and being cut off from their own help and sufficiency, they turn to God, and pray that he would supply all their need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus.

2. "Of a contrite spirit." When they review their necessities and sins, they do not do it with coldness and indifference, etc., but with such a conviction of the evil of sin, and such tenderness of conscience, as produces godly and unfeigned sorrow: "For mine iniquities are gone over mine head; as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me. I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. I am feeble and sore broken; I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart."

Such a frame of mind we all ought to feel, and proper reflections would produce it. Consider our contempt of God—our ingratitude to him—our rejection of the gospel, by which all our wants might have been supplied—the harm we have done in the world—the good we might have done had we been servants of God—the difficulties we have thrown into the way of our salvation by evil

habits and evil connexions, etc.—the time we have misspent and abused, etc.

3. "And trembleth at thy word." A solemn and reverential regard to the great truths contained in the Word, in opposition to that coldness and apathy with which they are treated by the wicked.

The Word reveals the great and awful perfections of God—and they tremble for fear of him.

The Word reveals his laws—and they tremble because they have broken them.

The Word reveals his threatenings—and they tremble lest he should execute them.

The Word reveals his love in Christ—and they tremble, for they have rejected his salvation.

The Word reveals eternity—and they tremble, etc.

Hence attention, willingness to obey, etc.

II. GOD'S REGARD TO SUCH CHARACTERS. "To that man will I look."

Figuratively, to turn away the face is expressive of disgust, disdain, etc.; to look is to approve, to care, to bless. The text then expresses—

1. Divine approval. He approves of their *characters.* It is fit and proper, for he himself hath wrought in them these principles and dispositions. It is the way to advancement. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

He approves of their *religious services.* He passes by their solemn temples, the splendid ceremonies, and looks

with pleasure upon the humble prayer of the contrite. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." (Illustrate this by the Pharisee and the publican, and the prodigal son.)

2. Divine care—he watches them.

3. Divine blessing. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

INFERENCES.

1. How different the characters whom God esteems to those the world delights in! "Man looketh at the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh at the heart."

2. What adorable condescension in God! "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?"

3. What encouragement to the penitent! "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

4. What a source of terror to hypocrites, proud Pharisees, etc.

THE GOOD MAN AND HIS END.

"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace."—Psalm xxxvii. 37.

Our attention is here called to a person we are too prone to overlook. Good men do not obtrude themselves upon public notice, and men in general have too little regard for them to find them out. When they fall in their way they are sometimes disagreeable, as they are a standing reproof to sinners.

The attention of the world is turned to the rich, the great, the honourable.

But the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour, and is more worthy of notice. It is instructive, endearing, to mark and behold the perfect and upright man. To look at the wicked is humiliating and painful. We need not envy their wealth, for their money will perish with them. We need not be ambitious of their greatness, for their honour descendeth not with them. We need not fret ourselves about worldly distinctions and rank, for the glory of it will soon fade—it is a fashion which passeth away. Let us therefore, according to the direction of the Psalmist, contemplate the good man in three views—

I. His character.

II. His conduct.

III. His end.

I. HIS CHARACTER. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright."

1. He is a perfect man. In strict speech, he is a perfect man who knows without mistake, reasons without error, wills without change; one whose love to God is uninfluenced by creature attachments; whose affections all find, and all rest in their proper objects constantly and invariably; whose every thought and motive of his soul, and action of his life, are in full conformity to the will of God.

But where shall we find such an one? Not on earth. For this is a description of an angel, or a glorified saint, and not of a man in a state of trial and imperfection, whose character is mixed, and whose virtues must all be imperfect.

Let us try again. There are many who would obtrude themselves upon us as perfect in a religious sense, as they suppose man can be in the present state. They are high in their pretensions, serious in their deportment, regular in their devotions, moral in their practices. But look within; they are proud, self-willed, full of the world, without true zeal. There is a change of demeanour, but not of heart. Now here is scarcely anything worth marking. And we are sure that the end of such is not peace, for "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

A perfect man, in the Scripture sense, stands betwixt these extremes; neither so perfect as the one, nor so imperfect as the other. He is forgiven his iniquity, and has had created within him a new heart and a right spirit. His holiness is so perfect as to prevail over wilful and habitual sin; his love to God so perfect, as to be the reigning disposition of his soul; his choice so perfect, that he

considers and takes God as his chief good; his obedience so perfect, that he yields unto God his soul and body to glorify him, and by the grace of God is able to escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2. Upright. This is seen in his conduct towards himself. He does not deceive his own heart but examines himself. He prays to the All-seeing One, "Search me, and know my thoughts: prove me, and try my reins."

This is seen in his conduct towards God. He is no hypocrite, but serves him in spirit and in truth.

This uprightness is seen in his conduct towards his fellow-man. His yea is yea, and his nay nay. No guile is in his mouth; there is no gathering by fraud; no withholding that which is due to his neighbour. As he would that others should do unto him, so would he do unto them.

II. MARK HIS CONDUCT.

1. In the world. Single and uncorrupted. He may be obscure and unknown, still he looks from his retreat, and sees a world lying in wickedness. He grieves with a godly grief—he prays with all prayer—he kindly reproves sin—he supports public institutions for the good of man. Such was Noah, such was Lot. Many other examples are to be found in Scripture.

2. His conduct in the family. Here we see him on a smaller scale, yet in a relationship of deepest interest and importance. His house is a sanctuary in which he finds refreshment and rest, and which is sacred to devotion. He walks before his house with a perfect heart—he instructs them in the knowledge of God and Divine things—he travails in birth for their salvation—he sets them an example of piety and devotedness to God—his religious

character secures the reverence of his house, and becomes a means of blessing.

3. His conduct in the church. He loves the brethren with a pure heart fervently—he helps to bear their burdens—sympathises with them in their sorrows—joins them in their labours—assembles with them for pious fellowship, and the public worship of their God and Saviour.

4. His conduct in private. In all times, indeed, the good man seeks and enjoys retirement. Then he reads the Word of the Lord, and makes himself familiar with its sublime and gracious contents. He meditates in that Word, not only that he may ascertain its meaning, but be impressed and transformed by its Divine influence. Isaac went out into the fields at eventide to meditate. David was passionately fond of this religious exercise: "O how love I thy law: it is my meditation all the day." He holds intercourse with heaven. Then especially does he pour out his soul before God; he makes known his requests, deplores and confesses his sins, joyously acknowledges his mercies, and seeks to know more of the greatness of the Divine power, and the exceeding riches of his grace. Our blessed Lord attached great importance to private religious exercises. "Thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet and shut to thy door, and pray to thy Father which seeth in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."

5. His conduct in the different states of life. In prosperity his heart is not lifted up within him, but he remembers the God of all his mercies, and acknowledges his indebtedness to him. In adversity he considers, reflects, seeks to gather the lessons intended to be taught, submits to the rod, and him who appointed it.

III. MARK HIS END. "Peace."

There is always something solemn and interesting in the close of life.

Come, then, gather yourselves round the dying couch of this perfect and upright man. Ask him how he regards his past life. He tells you how he regrets that he spent so much time in sin and folly before he was made acquainted with Christ. But I adore, adds he, the grace that found me, and restored me to the Divine favour, and made me a partaker of his holiness and of the joys of his salvation. "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God."

Ask him his present state. I feel, says he, God is with me. His comforts delight my soul. He is my pleasure in pain; my joy in sorrow; my support in weakness; my very present help in trouble. He is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Ask him as to his future prospects. "Though I walk through the valley and shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." Death therefore has no terrors to him. And beyond death and the grave his spiritual eye opens on the glory of the Lord, and he rejoices that he will soon behold it. He shall receive me to glory. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."

1. Mark him as an example to be followed.
2. Mark him as having his end assuredly peace.
3. Mark him as an encouragement to Christians in all times of their affliction and sufferings.

KNOWING THE GRACE OF GOD.

"And knew the grace of God in truth."—Col. i. 6.

CONTEMPLATE the manner in which we ought to hear the Word of God, so as to know it in truth. Very numerous are the directions which preachers and writers have given for this purpose—directions which I shall not particularly enumerate, but shall reduce what I have to offer upon the subject to two observations—

I. That we ought to hear with *attention*, that we may know the gospel.

II. That we ought to hear with self-application, that we may *know it in truth.*

I. ATTENTION IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO KNOWLEDGE OF EVERY KIND.

A wandering mind, like the fool's eye, can never make progress in substantial knowledge.

And especially is attention required to know the lofty truths of Holy Scripture. Want of consideration is a fatal want: "Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

We must both hear and read with attention, that we may know—

1. The evidences of the truth of the gospel. How manifold in their number, grand in their character, and irresistible in their force! Ponder them. With a fixed-

ness of thought let there be joined the ardour of affection. Study the Divine word in the love of it.

We should hear and read with attention, that we may know—

2. The design of the gospel. It is not to gratify the curiosity in revealing great and unknown truths, but to sanctify and to save man. This indeed is our life, our eternal life. How such a sublime end should recommend it to our most earnest study!

We should hear and read with attention, that we may know—

3. The means by which the gospel effects this noble purpose. Repentance—faith—obedience.

We should hear and read with attention, that we may know—

4. The moral precepts of the gospel. The gospel is not only the power of God to salvation to them that believe, but it is their supreme and unchanging law. It has an authority entire and universal. No part of our nature is exempt from its control; no circumstances, relations, duties of life, but what are under its jurisdiction, and are to be shaped accordingly.

We should hear and read with attention, that we may know—

5. The motives of the gospel. Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, the assurance of his favour by the Spirit of adoption, holiness, security, joy unspeakable and full of glory.

II. WE OUGHT TO HEAR THE WORD OF GOD WITH SELF-APPLICATION, THAT WE MAY KNOW IT IN TRUTH.

To know the gospel in truth is to know it *experimen-*

tally—in a word, to be saved by it, which must be effected by self-application as the means.

For though this is peculiarly the Holy Spirit's work, it does not preclude the use of means. To assist you in this, let me suggest the following reflections:—

1. That whatever the gospel affirms of the miserable state of man, is not only of general but *individual* application.

His guilt and depravity.

His condemnation, because of guilt and depravity.

2. That no external qualifications can relieve him. Knowledge, though of Divine truth—zeal for truth—profession of religion—diligence in outward acts of piety—all these, excellent as they are in themselves, cannot save a man.

3. That without the pardon of sin, and a total change of nature, we must perish. The relation and the nature of one who by faith is accepted in the Beloved.

4. That the promised advantages of the gospel are of individual application. And you must know them experimentally, by repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

Pardon of sin is offered—you must know it for yourselves.

Deliverance from sin is offered—you must know it for yourselves.

Christ is offered in all the riches of his grace and glory—you must know him for yourselves—formed in your hearts the hope of glory.

APPLICATION.

You have heard—you have had many opportunities and means of knowledge. Think of the responsibility.

Do you know the grace of God in truth? Examine

yourselves, whether you be in the faith—prove your own selves. "Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" Mark its preciousness! Buy the truth, and sell it not. Come to Christ—he is the way, the truth, and the life. "No man cometh unto the Father but by him." Coming to him, you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free; and he whom the truth makes free is free indeed.

Do you know the grace of God in truth? Then stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free.

Commend that grace to others; seek to bring them to know its saving influence.

THE WISE CAUTION.

"Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off."—1 Kings xx. 11.

MENTION the occasion.

This was probably a proverb then in use; and the meaning is, Let not him that goeth to battle boast as he that returneth victorious from it.

The general observation that may be drawn from it is, that in undertaking enterprises, the success of which is doubtful, and, at all events, attended with difficulty, we should rather be modest and diffident, than vainly confident and presumptuous.

Though this observation may be applied with propriety to various undertakings in life, we shall confine our attention to that spiritual warfare in which every Christian is engaged.

Two observations claim our especial notice—

I. That our entrance into the Christian warfare ought to be attended by consideration, prudence, and fear.

II. That when we shall have conquered our enemies and obtained the prize, we shall be at full liberty to boast and rejoice.

I. THAT OUR ENTRANCE INTO THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE OUGHT TO BE ATTENDED BY CONSIDERATION, PRUDENCE, AND FEAR.

1. Consideration. We should consider the number and strength of the enemies we have to combat—the thousands who have undertaken the same enterprise and have been defeated—the glorious reward if we conquer—the misery if we are defeated.

2. Prudence. We must not take this step without making allies—the Triune God. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

We must preserve a good understanding with our allies by—

Prayer—supplicating aid.

Faith—trusting in our Leader and Commander.

Obedience—doing the commands.

"Behold I send an angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not: for he will not pardon your transgressions, for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak; then I will be an enemy unto thine enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries."

3. Fear. Not that kind of fear which is destructive of faith, or paralyses exertion, or turns us into cowards.

But that fear which will make us circumspect—watchful—laborious. For ours is not a set battle, but a constant warfare, ending only with life. "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear," etc., 1 Pet. i. 17–21.

The object of this fear is not the ability of our Captain, or the invincibleness of our enemies, but our own folly and sin.

II. THAT WHEN WE SHALL HAVE CONQUERED OUR ENEMIES AND OBTAINED THE PRIZE, WE SHALL BE AT FULL LIBERTY TO BOAST AND REJOICE.

We may then *rejoice* without fear or anxiety, for there is no sin in heaven. "And there shall in nowise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

There is no vain and deceitful world, for the former things are done away. "Behold, I create all things new."

There is no devil to tempt and oppose, for Satan is cast out.

And *boast*, but of what? Of our own strength, wisdom, etc.? No. But of him who brought us off more than conquerors.

What a song of praise is that! They extol very high the Captain of their Salvation. With what rapture they make their boast of him! "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindred, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb."

THE TRUE PORTION.

"The Lord is my portion, saith my soul."—Lamentation iii. 24.

CONSIDER the difference between good and wicked men in trouble. What support—heavenly influence—peace that the world knows not of—confidence in a Being to whom the world is a stranger—the good man experiences. Remark the force of these words in the mouth of the prophet—they are the words of a man in prosperity, verse 1.

He had warned the nation; but they disobeyed.

All that evil had come upon them, yet he remained upon the spot to see the devastation.

Her temple services ceased; the "Lord despised, in the indignation of his anger, the king and the priest." The prophet had himself been thrown into a dungeon, and had partaken of the miseries inflicted upon his country. Yet the Lord was his portion. This is the experience of every child of God.

Consider—

I. THE AUTHORITY UPON WHICH GOD IS CLAIMED AS THE PORTION OF GOOD MEN.

It is high language for worms of the earth—sinners.

Not natural relation, for that has been forfeited by sin.

Not church privileges. The Jews were mistaken in claiming the favour of God on account of Abraham, Moses, the law, and the covenant, and the promises.

Our claim stands upon another foundation, for we can

say, "Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not."

God claims his people by right of purchase, and by virtue of their choice. On the same grounds, his people say the Lord is our portion.

God claims his people by right of purchase.

As Christ has purchased believers for God, so he hath purchased God for believers; hence they are called "heirs of God." He is

Of infinite power to support.

Of infinite wisdom to direct.

Of infinite goodness to supply.

Christ has received the fulness of the Godhead for believers. He is their wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

"It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell."

Christ hath purchased and hath given the Holy Spirit.

He is the Divine Agent by whom we have access to the Father through Christ. He dwells in the believer, and from this he cries unto the Lord, "Thou art my portion."

Choice. He calls his people his portion, because they choose him, and we call him our portion, because he chooses us.

We are warranted to use this language by his own word: "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." "He is not ashamed to be called their God."

But when may it be said that God is our portion, or that we may use the language with *sincerity?* "Saith my soul:" not whilst anything else is preferred to him; not whilst our thoughts are absent from him; not whilst we live without true devotion.

II. THE ADVANTAGES OF SUCH AN ATTAINMENT.

1. Abundant, and never-failing in its produce.
2. Satisfying in its enjoyments.
3. Eternal in possession.

III. THE DUTIES RESULTING FROM THIS RELATION.

1. Thankful acknowledgment: "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage." These thankful acknowledgments are made in private and in public.
2. Dependence upon God for every spiritual supply. As a man upon his portion.
3. To reside in it—dwell in God.
4. Defend your possession.
5. Delight in it.

THE REWARDS OF GOD'S SERVANTS.

"Also the sons of the stranger, that join themselves to the Lord, to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar, for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people."—Isaiah lvi. 6, 7.

THIS passage is connected with the foregoing chapter, and its meaning is determined by it.

The preceding chapter, and doubtless part of this also, refer to the times of the gospel, and express the rich blessings that God would then bestow upon men: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." The extent of these blessings: "Behold I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Behold thou shalt call a nation that thou knewest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God." The certainty of these events: "For as the heavens are higher than the earth," etc., verses 9–13. And given without any respect of persons.

These words—

I. Hold out universal encouragement to the sons of men.

II. Inculcate universal piety.

III. Promise universal happiness.

I. THESE WORDS HOLD OUT UNIVERSAL ENCOURAGEMENT TO MAN.

1. By the transfer of the priesthood from Aaron to Christ.

2. By the change of sacrifice. From the blood of bulls and of goats to the precious blood of the Son of God.

3. By the removal of place. From Jerusalem to the temple of the universe.

4. By a change of worship. From ritual to spiritual.

What an encouraging prospect! See Eph. ii. 11 to the end.

II. THE TEXT INCULCATES UNIVERSAL PIETY.

Piety in heart and practice. The duties here enumerated may be divided into three classes.

1. Those which relate to Christ, expressed by taking hold of his covenant—accepting—agreeing to it.

2. Those which relate to God as the Governor of the world.

His servants—walk by his laws—keep his Sabbaths.

3. Those which relate to the church.

III. THE TEXT PROMISES UNIVERSAL HAPPINESS.

1. Access to heaven. "I will bring them to my holy mountain."

There was near approach to God, through the high priest, under the law. Yet more especially is this the case through Christ, the great High Priest of our profession.

2. Joyfulness in his service. "I will make them joyful in my house of prayer."

In the use of every divine ordinance they shall find rich satisfactions and delights. "With joy shall ye draw water

out of the wells of salvation." Praise shall rejoice their spirits. In psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, they make melody in their hearts unto the Lord. Prayer opens heaven in the exhaustlessness of its store, and satisfies them with good. Holy thoughts in conversing with the Supreme. Such meditation of God is sweet. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul."

3. The Divine acceptance of their religious engagements. "Their burnt-offerings and sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar."

APPLICATION.

What encouragement to all men to worship God, and serve him in sincerity and in truth!

But how do you really view the gospel?

Are you seeking to realise these high privileges? or are you only making a profession of religion?

Ponder these weighty matters. Take hold of the covenant of the Redeemer. Join yourselves to the Lord and to his church by his will. Love him with all your heart, and serve him with all your strength: then will the Lord delight in you, rejoice over you with joy; and you shall delight yourselves in him, and prove him to be the joy and the rejoicing of your heart.

GOD'S PEOPLE ENCOURAGED.

"For he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly."—Psalm lxxxv. 8.

THE whole Bible discovers God's hatred of sin and love of holiness.

Whatever threatenings it contains are directed against the wicked, and its promises are given for the encouragement of the righteous.

It is as the pillar which God interposed betwixt the Israelites and the Egyptians—darkness and terror to the one, light and comfort to the other.

(Take particular care to prevent mistakes, by accurately describing the characters both of the righteous and of the wicked.)

The text affords high encouragement to the people of God, and describes who they are—"saints:" set apart for God's service by purification—sprinkling of blood—washing of water—representing the atonement for sin, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. We have here—

I. An encouraging assurance: "He will speak peace to his people and to his saints."

II. An important caution: "But let them not turn again to folly."

I. AN ENCOURAGING ASSURANCE.

The word signifies that he will *give peace;* for *to speak,* when applied to God, is the same as *to do.* "He spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."

Consider the nature of this peace which he will bestow upon his people.

1. Peace in the sense of agreement in opposition to enmity.

Man is at enmity with God—opposes, resists him.

When God speaks peace through the blood of atonement, man yields submission from a sense of duty, love, delight, and joy.

2. Peace in the sense of tranquillity in opposition to commotion. "The wicked are like the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt," and passive as the sea, agitated by every storm—anger, malice, uncharitableness, discontent, murmuring—these, and such like evils, are the elements of inward disquiet and turmoil.

When God speaks peace he gives existence to meekness—forgiveness of spirit—love—resignation—thanksgiving. These are the virtues that create the mind's rest.

3. Peace, in the sense of felicity of condition, in opposition to wretchedness. The wicked are called the children of the devil. The wrath of God abideth upon them. They are aliens.

The saints are the sons of God; they walk in the light of his countenance, and possess the privileges and enjoyments of his kingdom.

4. Peace, in the sense of security, and so opposed to alarm and danger. The wicked are alarmed by afflictions—by the prospect of death, judgment, punishment.

The righteous are the reverse. Afflictions improve their character; death is regarded as theirs; the judgment will be the occasion of their acquittal and justification; in eternity they will find the high perfection of their nature and happiness.

II. AN IMPORTANT CAUTION. "But let them not turn again to folly."

1. A state of sin, which is folly in its nature, as opposed—

To the dictates of reason;

To what we ourselves cannot justify;

To the judgment of God in the Scriptures.

2. A state of sin, which is *folly* in its consequences.

For saints to turn again to sin would be to lose—

The favour of God, and come under his frown.

The love of God, and come under the power of darkness.

The joy of God, and taste the bitterness of the deadly fruits of sin.

The heaven of God, and have the miseries of hell, Heb. vi. 4–8; Heb. x. 38; 2 Pet. ii. 21, 22.

IMPROVEMENT.

Encourage men to become pious, to seek to be saints, by repenting of their folly, by faith in Christ, who is the Saviour of sinners.

Let the people of God watch and pray that they enter not into temptation.

Let them be careful to maintain good works, and thus prove their saintly character, and finally lay hold on eternal life. "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

THE TESTIMONIES OF GOD.

"Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them."—Psalm cxix. 129.

INTRODUCE by referring to the marvellous character of the Psalms, and especially of this Psalm. It celebrates the excellency and preciousness of the Word of God.

I. REMARK ON THE TERM "TESTIMONIES," AS HERE GIVEN TO THE DIVINE LAWS. WHY ARE THEY CALLED TESTIMONIES?

1. Because they bear testimony to the goodness of God in condescending to guide men by his law. Most unhappy would be the state of man if he had no rule to distinguish betwixt good and evil, blessing and cursing.

What reason for obedience, when every law, however painful to the flesh, springs from the goodness of God.

2. Because they bear testimony to the holiness of God.

The Divine laws tend to the depression of vice, and the encouragement of holiness.

These laws are the spontaneous offspring of the will of God; therefore he must be holy, for they are so. Sin renders us abominable to him; righteousness acceptable through Christ our Saviour. A motive to obedience.

3. Because they bear testimony to the respect that God has for the happiness of his creatures. He has connected the highest pleasures with obedience.

4. Because they bear testimony to the wisdom and jus-

tice of God. They are adapted to the present imperfect state of man, going upon the principle, where little is given little will be required, and where much is given much will be required. We are not under the covenant of works but of grace. (Refer to heathens, Jews, Christians.)

II. REMARK ON THE CHARACTER OF THE DIVINE TESTIMONIES. "THEY ARE WONDERFUL." HOW?

1. In respect of the discoveries they make of God. Look to people without these testimonies. How ignorant of the Supreme! They know not God in the mysterious grandeur of an eternal self-existent Being, possessed of every perfection in an absolute degree, and in unchanging endurance.

2. In respect of the discoveries of God's providence. (Refer again to heathen ignorance, pagan philosophers—how bewildered!) The Divine Scriptures testify of his wondrous observance of us; his care, his watchfulness, his benignity. "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

3. In respect of the provision which the Scriptures discover for our repentance and pardon.

We have all sinned, and come short of the glory of God. A remedy has been provided. Hence the sacrifices under the old, and the Mediator under the new dispensations. "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations."

4. In respect of their universal application to us. They extend to the thoughts, affections, desires, intentions of men, of every man: "Thy commandment is exceeding broad."

5. In respect of the assistance which they offer in the keeping of them.

A Divine Agent to strengthen, that is, the Holy Ghost.

Sublime motives to stimulate and encourage us.

6. In respect of their weight and importance.

They determine the eternal conditions of men. The gospel is the savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. We shall be judged according to the Divine testimonies.

III. REMARK ON THE PRACTICAL REGARD WHICH A GOOD MAN HAS FOR THE DIVINE TESTIMONIES. "Therefore doth my soul keep them."

1. As a precious treasure of knowledge.

2. As objects of affection and study. "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."

3. As the rules—the guiding lights of my conduct.

4. As embodied in my daily life and practice.

APPLICATION.

Think of the importance, necessity, advantage of keeping the Divine testimonies.

Pray with all prayer that the Lord and Spirit of life may open your eyes, that you may behold wondrous things out of his law.

Watch against the evil influences that would alienate your soul from these testimonies.

Believe with your heart these testimonies.

Realise continuously their joyousness and their power.

"Moreover, by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward."

ADVANTAGES OF PRAYER.

"But it is good for me to draw near to God."—Psalm lxxiii. 28.

"BUT will God in very deed dwell with man upon earth?" said Solomon at the dedication of the temple. A most important question. Can sinful man expect even a compassionate look from a Being so grievously offended?

But can he expect that he should incline his ears to his prayers—manifest his presence to him—make him the object of his favour, etc., and friendship? Yes; "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; but the proud he knoweth afar off."

No truth so fully insisted upon as God's respect to the worship of his people. "Lord, what is man that thou takest knowledge of him, or the son of man that thou makest account of him!"

Nor is there any testimony in which the people of God so cordially join, than that it is good for them to draw near unto God.

Our text naturally suggests two questions—

I. What is implied in drawing near unto God?

II. In what respect does it appear to be good to draw near to God?

I. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN DRAWING NEAR UNTO GOD?

The terms by which we sometimes express devotion, we have adopted from the Old Testament, where they have a

more liberal meaning than they can possibly have under the Christian dispensation. To approach to God; to go to God; to appear before God; to stand before him; or, as the text expresses it, to draw near to God—are of this kind, and have a manifold reference to the place where God, in the tabernacle and temple, peculiarly dwelt—that is, the holy of holies.

We use them figuratively, yet they are not the less expressive. Devotion, though not a drawing near of the body, is so of the *mind.* We send our thoughts and desires heavenward.

This appears—

1. In the act of adoration. "I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy loving-kindness, and for thy truth."

2. Confession. "I acknowleged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

3. Prayer. "Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God: for unto thee will I pray. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up."

4. Reading and hearing the word. "I will meditate in thy word." "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."

5. In inward, silent, and spiritual communion with God. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul."

II. IN WHAT RESPECT DOES IT APPEAR TO BE GOOD TO DRAW NEAR TO GOD?

1. It is morally good to draw near to God.

For in nothing is the perverse nature of wicked men displayed more than in their aversion to devotion. "Behold what a weariness is it!" It is a signal proof that the carnal mind is enmity to God, as the opposite is a proof of the love of the people of God. It is an evidence of ingratitude—of rebellion. They refuse to do him homage —they prefer ignorance of Deity, to going to God to learn his will, because they are disobedient. It is sinful, because it is a transgression of the law.

2. It is beneficially good. This appears to be the true sense.

It produces spiritual-mindedness. Fellowship with God assimilates us to him, and causes us to imbibe his Spirit.

It secures instruction (see the psalm). "Until I went into the sanctuary of God, then understood I their end."

It obtains relief. "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." "They shall call on my name, and I will hear them; I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God."

It inspires confidence. "Wait on the Lord, and he shall strengthen thine heart." "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength." "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee."

It brings comfort. "He shall call upon me and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation."

THE SOLEMN ADDRESS.

"Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame."—1 Cor. xv. 34.

THE Apostle here treats of a resurrection and a future state, and holds them forth as the ground and reason of righteousness.

He maintains that it would be folly for them, as ministers and Christians, to endure such sufferings as they daily met with, "if the dead rise not." "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not?" Then the maxim of the Epicurean would be just, and worthy to be acted upon—"Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die."

He asserts the doctrine of the resurrection, and opposes the foregoing maxim. "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners;" and then gives the solemn address in the text. Let us make some observations on it.

I. OBSERVE THAT A STATE OF SIN IS HERE REPRESENTED BY SLEEP.

Not to strain the figure, we shall but observe that in a state of sleep men are—

1. Unconcerned. (Apply.)
2. Unapprehensive of danger. (Apply.)

II. OBSERVE THAT MAN, BEING CARELESS AND SECURE IN THE MIDST OF THE GREATEST DANGERS, HE IS CALLED UPON TO "AWAKE."

This is an instance of the care and compassion of God.

He calls us by his providences. "Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living."

He calls us by his Holy Spirit. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come."

He calls us by his Word. The Scriptures are God's voice, speaking his mind and uttering his will concerning us.

He calls us by his ministers, etc. "Go ye therefore into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come: and let him that heareth say, Come."

III. OBSERVE THAT WE ARE CALLED TO AWAKE TO RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND TO RENOUNCE SIN.

"Awake to righteousness."

To a sense of the necessity of righteousness.

To the practice and pursuit of righteousness.

"And sin not."

Sin not, in hope that there is no resurrection.

Sin not, in hope that there is no judgment.

Sin not, in hope that there is no state of future punishment.

In these things be not deceived. God "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent. Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained;

whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

Sin not, in hope of future repentance.

Sin no more. Why shouldst thou destroy thyself, and "stand in jeopardy every hour?" "The soul that sinneth shall die." "The wages of sin is death."

IV. OBSERVE THE CHARGE ALLEGED AGAINST SOME OF THE CORINTHIANS. "Some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame."

May not the same thing be charged upon some of us?

Do we know God, so as to fear him?

Do we know God, so as to be reconciled unto him by Christ?

Do we know God, so as to love him?

Do we know God, so as to serve him with a perfect heart and willing mind?

If not, then in the Apostle's sense we do not know him.

"I speak this to your shame." It is our shame.

Because we have so many means of knowing him.

Because we have so many reasons to know him drawn from our wants, etc.

The Apostle wished to make them ashamed, that they might be stirred up to seek to know God, and that henceforward they might live as Christians, in the hope of eternal life.

Think not only of the shamefulness of being ignorant of God, but of the punishment that will be inflicted.

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

THE ELECTION OF GOD.

"But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself."—Psalm iv. 3.

INTRODUCE with the circumstances under which the Psalm was written.

I. Show what is implied in the phrase, "The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself."

II. Employ your meditations upon this procedure of the Almighty to good men: "But know," etc.

I. SHOW WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THE PHRASE, "The Lord hath set apart him that is godly."

The godly are distinguished—

1. By the change which the Lord, by his grace, makes in their character and conduct.

2. By the change which he makes in their condition.

3. By a change in their employments.

4. By a change in their pleasures.

But it is further said in the text, "That the Lord hath set apart him that is godly *for himself*."

This exalts the Divine favour to good men to its highest pitch. They are set apart for himself—

1. As his dwelling-place. "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

2. For his service. And he requires us to be faithful.

3. As instruments by which to display the unsearchable riches of his goodness. "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise."

II. EMPLOY YOUR MEDITATIONS UPON THIS PROCEDURE OF THE ALMIGHTY TO GOOD MEN: "But know that the Lord," etc.

This is certainly a subject worthy of attention, because it is capable of producing very important moral effects.

Though God is so great and high, yet he hath set apart the godly for himself.

In the meanest reptiles we see creative wisdom and providential care. Is man overlooked, especially the godly man? No. "The Lord taketh pleasure in his people."

Let the persecutors of good men know.

He that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye; so tender is his care.

Let the godly themselves know.

Think of the honour God puts upon us.

Think of the joy that springs from being the Lord's portion.

Seek to answer the lofty end for which he hath made us a peculiar people to himself.

CHRIST'S CALL.

"Come; for all things are now ready."—Luke xiv. 17.

REMARK on Christ's mode of teaching by parables.

The meaning of this parable.

Provision of the gospel;

First offered to the Jews;

Rejected by them from worldly motives;

Carried to the Gentiles with better success.

The text leads us to consider—

I. The provision made by the gospel for the sons of men.

II. The gracious invitation: "Come; for all things are now ready."

I. THE PROVISION MADE BY THE GOSPEL FOR THE SONS OF MEN.

The text declares it to be a provision adequate to all the wants of man. "*All things.*"

1. A Saviour was required. The whole creation groaned and travailed in pain to be delivered. Men were guilty, corrupt, selfish, and, with all their misery, obstinate. Afflicted, and not humbled; judged, but not subdued; delighters in the causes of their pains, and without respect for the method of their cure. Could anything but omnipotence save them? Could less be sufficient to turn the overwhelming tide of iniquity, to give a new and prevailing bias to the will of man, and restore him to holiness,

obedience, and happiness? Omnipotent power was wanting—it was given. Behold in him a sufficient Saviour. "I will send them a Saviour and a great one, and he shall deliver them. Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." The arm that upreared the stupendous fabric of the universe and peopled it, is exerted a second time to redeem it; the power which has upheld it in its ruins, and kept it from falling into perdition, is now engaged in restoring it to order and beauty.

2. A Teacher was required. Of man we may say, who can understand his errors! He was made upright, but he hath sought out many inventions. What numerous systems of doctrines, what various rules of conduct, but all contradictory, inefficacious, or pernicious, had the ingenuity and perverseness of men devised and acted upon! Their confusion and disagreement proved that truth was yet undiscovered, and man plunged still deeper into the labyrinths of his errors. The wisdom of the world was confounded, it was foiled in all its attempts to discover the path of peace, a teacher, therefore, was become absolutely necessary. Yet not a fallible man, for the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God; see these amongst the *all things* with which the gospel has provided you, a sufficient teacher—the only wise God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Hear his own testimony. "Before the mountains were settled, before the hills were brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face

of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." Hear the testimony of his personal enemies. "Never man spake like this man." Take up the record of his words; let them testify—here is the wisdom of God, even the hidden wisdom, which none of the princes of this world knew. But which God hath revealed to us by his Spirit; "the riches of his grace wherein he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence. Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to the good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him."

3. We were without any ground of confidence towards God. Our sins had separated between us and our God, and our iniquities had caused him to hide his face from us. What could man feel in the presence of God but fear and apprehension? how could he view God but as a consuming fire? Trembling and justly alarmed, what refuge, what resource had he, but to hide the recollection of his own sins, and the vengeance of his God from his sight, by chasing them from his memory and covering them with darkness?

Miserable subterfuges! how soon were they to be brought to light, and to be fixed, in all their enormity, full in the eye of the affrighted soul for ever.

But foremost amongst the blessings which the gospel has provided for us, we see those means which God hath

taken to inspire his repentant creatures with confidence in his mercy.

Under what character does Jesus represent the Deity to man? "When ye pray, say, Our Father. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?" A father grieving over the loss of his disobedient children, looking out for their return, seeing them afar off, running, falling on their necks, and kissing them.

How does he represent his own mission into the world? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

What kind of words were those that Jesus spoke when the people were astonished at his doctrines? "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

What was his conduct towards sinful man in the days of his flesh? Let that woman speak out of whom Jesus cast seven devils, and said unto her, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Let the poor debtor testify who owed his Lord a thousand talents, and, when he had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave him all. Let even the Pharisees, his bitterest enemies, declare, "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Ah, ye sanctimonious hypocrites, whilst ye thought to have censured the Saviour, ye pro-

nounced his highest praise, he receiveth sinners; whilst ye attempted, by this censure, to turn the hearts of men against him, ye only recommended him the more to our notice; for to whom shall sinners go but to him who receiveth sinners, and eateth with them?

If ye have not yet sufficient ground of confidence, if your hearts would doubt his goodness, behold him bearing your sins in his own body on the tree. In those distorted features; in that body emaciated with cruel sufferings; in that dying voice, equally expressive of the sharpest agony and of pious resignation, read an affecting comment upon the words of the prophet: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief."

Penitent! lay thy hand upon thy heart—look up to heaven—dost thou now believe?

4. Provision is made for another want.

The creation anew of our nature. Our nature is fallen —it is a noble building in ruins, not only injured but thrown down, overspread with noxious weeds, and the habitation of serpents, reptiles, and abominable creatures; or, as a body, once blooming in health and loveliness, but now dead, loathsome, and corrupt.

How desirable is it to see this building cleansed, raised, and fitted for an habitation of God through the Spirit! to feel this body of sin and death revived, raised, healed, and restored to the vigour of action, and the employment of piety!

Such views are realised in the gospel. "Ye are built

up a spiritual house." "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." To perform this work, Jesus hath purchased and employed the vital energy of the Divinity himself—the Holy Spirit. And what may we not expect from such an Agent?

How powerful! "And the earth was without form and void; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters; and darkness was upon the face of the deep;" they subsided, and the dry land appeared, shooting into all the sweet variety of hill and valley, covered with verdure, breaking with light, and glowing with beauty.

How universal! "In him we live, and move, and have our being." He upholds all things by the word of his power.

How penetrating! Guiding the stars, governing the earth, carrying on the thousand secret operations in the bowels of the earth, in the tubes of vegetables, in the bodies of animals, and in the souls of men.

This is the Agent who is engaged by Christ to perform his designs; and the work of regenerating the human soul is worthy of him. He first breathed into the nostrils of man the breath of life, and man became a living soul. The work he here performs is still greater. It is to raise this soul from pollution and evil, to the state of pristine dignity—to retrace the long-lost lineaments of the Divine likeness upon it—to purge its passions—to exalt its affections—to mould it into obedience, and by an over-shadowing influence, to transfuse it into the nature and fulness of God.

Let us never despair of obtaining the conquest over our sins, whilst we find the promise of the Holy Spirit among the "all things" which Christ has provided for us. The work is great, far beyond the ability of man to accomplish,

but here are infinite skill and almighty energy employed to effect it. He descends! and every power of the soul feels his vital and renewing influence; the eye of the understanding opens, and lets in the warm invigorating rays of the Sun of Righteousness; the stubbornness of the will subsides into filial obedience and reverential submission; pride and insensibility give place to abasement and contrition; faith feels after God, and at length finds him; love and desire rest in him as their chief good; and the whole soul, under the sense of the Divine goodness, cries out, It is the Lord!

5. Another excellence of this provision is, that it is suited to the condition and circumstances of man in this world. Man is placed in varied and ever-varying circumstances. The gospel is not adapted to Jews, Greeks, or Romans, to the exclusion of others. There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all. The same Lord over all is rich in mercy to all that call upon him in truth. This universality is founded on general, not partial principles.

It finds man a social being, and it tends to the perfection of society, by purging away selfishness, pride, anger, and revenge.

Man is the child of affliction and sorrow. Yet see the provision to which we are called; our Saviour Jesus Christ is our support and remedy. He "hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." All things are now ready.

NOW READY. The provision we have been speaking of was being made ready all the time from Adam to Christ; it came gradually, like the sun, shining more and more unto the perfect day. Now, we have it in its fulness.

We are not sent to gather a whole gospel from the single promise, "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head;" nor yet to Abraham and his family, "In whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed;" nor yet to the types, washings, and carnal ordinances, parables and prophecies. If the veil be not yet upon your hearts, you behold with open face the glory of the Lord. The scattered rays of light are now collected into one luminous body. The parts of the building are now united by the great corner-stone. All that rejoiced Abraham, when he saw the day of Christ afar off; all that entranced Moses, when he spent forty days and nights in contemplating the patterns of heavenly things in the Mount; all that filled the soul of Isaiah, when he uttered his sublime prophecies; is now opened to the sight of the weakest believer in Christ.

NOW READY. A Saviour, in whom dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, is ready to bless you: the Spirit of grace and supplication, of power, and love, and holiness, is ready to take possession of your hearts. Are you ready? Look! where will you find such offers as these? Who can bestow such blessings as the Saviour? What can make up for the loss of them? Surely you will not make light of them, and, with the wicked Jews, turn one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. Let it not be said of you who are now bidden, "None of these shall taste of my supper." What a fearful exclusion! To be shut out from this feast, is to lose all that can make us exalted, and pure, and happy. Nay more! We must be cast into outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Judgment lingers! Damnation slumbers! But Christ, the wisdom of God, utters his voice, and urges you to come to him, to receive his salvation, now to sit down at his spiritual feast.

II. THE GRACIOUS INVITATION. "COME."

1. The invitation supposes absence from God the Redeemer, and from the place where the provision is spread.

And how sadly true is this! Look at the thoughts of men! Though countless in number, God is not in the midst of them. Many are the evidences of the Divine presence and operations; still men consider him not. The outstretched heavens—the changes and revolutions of the seasons—the rising sun and the glittering stars—the refreshing dews and the falling showers—the seedtime and harvest—the unfolding of the sacred volume—cannot arrest their thoughts, and fix them on him who worketh all in all.

Look also at the affections of men. Like the thoughts, they are altogether estranged from God, and placed upon the creature. The Divine character, though revealed in the perfection of its glorious beauty, awakens not their esteem; the Divine goodness, in the riches of its providential gifts, and yet more especially in the provisions of the gospel by his Son Jesus Christ, excite no loving gratitude. Strangers to God our Saviour, though surrounded by him! What disorder and ruin have come over the affections! Men seek rest out of God and away from him; yet they find it not. Nor can they; for he is the only rest. So Christ bids them come to him. He has spread his banquet, he has prepared the feast, and he calls men to come, for all things are now ready. Ye restless wanderers, ye absentees from heaven, hasten to the provision of your great God and Saviour.

2. The invitation supposes necessity.

The provision of the gospel is a charitable one, and founded on the necessities of the creature. And our necessities arise from the circumstances in which we are placed; the spiritual and moral destitution of our nature.

We are laden with guilt! For we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. We are defiled by iniquity! All flesh has corrupted its way before God. We are enslaved to sin! We are led captive by the devil at his will! We are miserable by reason of our evil character! There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. So long as this is the case, the future is dark and portentous, for there is a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. How deep then are our necessities! and the supplying of them rendered all the more urgent by the *shortness of time.* A few moments, and God may say, "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." And what then? Think of the consequences, when it is determined you shall not taste of this supper; when God swears in his wrath that you shall not enter into his rest; when he shuts the door and will no more open it; when, in righteous vengeance, he bids you to depart from him into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Your necessities are known to God, and he pities you. They are known to his servants, and they feel for you. Both concur in enforcing the exhortation, Come, for all things are now ready! "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

3. The invitation supposes thoughtlessness.

Men do not consider the things that make for their peace. They are extremely backward; nay more, they like not the remembrance of the provisions and claims of the gospel. They are engrossed with the world, and seek their treasure and their enjoyment in this life.

Indeed, not a few do not fairly consider, because there

is the secret hope, that, notwithstanding the sins they commit, they shall finally obtain salvation. Vain hope! For God will by no means clear the guilty. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

On what are your hopes founded? Where do you place your confidence? Are they founded on God—on Jesus Christ the Saviour? Do you believe the gospel with your heart? Is your reliance on Divine mercy for acceptance through the blood of Christ? Then are you in a sure resting-place. But if you neglect this great salvation, then your hopes of heaven are vain; the judgment at the last day will find you miserably awanting. If you hope for heaven, though you despise and reject Jesus Christ, be assured that every perfection of God, every doctrine of the Bible, and every principle of equity, give the lie to your hopes. O that you were wise, that you understood this, that you would consider your latter end!

4. The invitation supposes fear.

Fear is one of the earliest evidences of a work of grace. It is the natural effect of that change in the mind, which we denominate conviction. You are afraid of God, lest he should punish you because of your sins. You are afraid of praying, lest you should not be heard. You are afraid of coming to Christ, lest you should be refused. I am glad to meet your fears; to show that they are all groundless. My message is, Come, for all things are now ready. We invite you to come to the Saviour, who himself came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. Come to the supper he has prepared; the blessings he has purchased, and laid up in the promises of the gospel. Be not afraid; he will in nowise cast you out. O be not disobedient to the heavenly calling! Count not yourselves unworthy of eternal life.

COME AND SEE! Examine the gospel. Behold its rich and exhaustless provisions! Contemplate its glorious Author. Can you reject such a Saviour? See that you refuse not him that speaketh from heaven. Mark his laws; their divinity, their extent, their propriety; and will you not be willing to be regulated by them? Consider the number, variety, value, the eternity of its blessings, and see whether they are not beyond all price, and worthy of all acceptation!

COME AND TASTE! If the provision is not good, you can leave it. But make the trial. O, taste and see that the Lord is gracious! Not merely contemplate the good things that are offered to you, but prove them by that best of all evidences—experience. Submit yourselves to Christ; yield to the influences of the Holy Spirit to sanctify and cleanse you. Compare being a child of God with being a child of the devil; the beauties of holiness with the deformity of sin; the testimony of a good conscience with the remorse and accusations of conscience; the hope of heaven with the fear of hell; and say in which of these states you would wish to live and die.

COME AND ABIDE! Be willing guests and companions of your Lord. The provision will never fail; the charges will never be advanced, for they are now, as they ever will be—without money and without price. Abide, therefore, with him. Let neither temptation, nor discouragement, nor suffering, nor sorrow, lead you to depart from him who is your only salvation.

Do you ask how you must come? I give you your directions in one word. Come as the prodigal son came, saying, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants."

THE CHURCH'S GLORY.

"Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."—Psalm xc. 16, 17.

IT is highly probable that this Psalm was composed by Moses while in the wilderness.

The circumstances which, it is supposed, gave rise to it, was the plague which God inflicted on the people for their murmuring and disobedience. On that occasion a large number of the Israelites were cut off at once. Moses (probably while walking among the dead bodies) was led to meditate upon two of the most solemn subjects that can possibly engage our attention, *i.e.*, the eternity of God, and the mortality of man.

He begins, and for a considerable way, carries on the Psalm in a kind of mournful soliloquy, ver. 1, 2. Having prefaced the Psalm in this manner, his thoughts turn to a subject, which the occasion before him would naturally suggest, ver. 3–6. "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four-score years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." This was the usual length of human life at that time, and remains pretty nearly the same at present.

The antediluvians lived much longer, even to the great age of 900 years and upwards. Soon after the flood, men

generally lived nearly two centuries. Some have thought the date of human existence was suddenly shortened at the time this passage was written, and that Moses was inspired to fix its length. Not long before, several lived a great deal longer. Jacob lived 147 years (Gen. xlvii. 28); Joseph, 110. But it is a matter of indifference to us *when* it was shortened. We are certain it is short, and that it is our highest wisdom to improve it. After Moses had sung, as it were, the funeral dirge of his brethren, he concludes the Psalm with suitable prayers for those who were left alive, ver. 12–17.

I. THE WORKS OF GOD ARE GREAT, SOUGHT OUT BY ALL THEM THAT HAVE PLEASURE THEREIN.

The Divine works may be classed under three heads. Creation, Providence, and Redemption. These have been the subjects of admiring contemplation to the pious in all ages. But here Moses alludes to the great work of religion. This includes the plan of redemption and salvation by Christ Jesus. The Old Testament saints knew more of this than we suppose. Moses had considerable light on this subject, and no doubt looked forward to the time when the great work should be completed. In considering this subject he amplifies and takes different views of it.

1. He considers it as the work of God. "Thy work."

God is the Author of our salvation. He formed the great design. In the counsels of the past eternity he arranged and purposed human redemption.

He sent his Son to execute it. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world, through him, might be saved."

He still carries it into effect in the salvation of men.

It is God's work, because we did not solicit it in behalf of ourselves.

It is an unparalleled display of the Divine love. "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

2. He considers it as that which displays the Divine glory.

All the works of God praise him. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork."

But it is his work of saving sinners, by Christ, that gives the fullest display of his glory. Here we have a view of God in his whole round of rays complete, and all in harmony. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." In this scheme of our salvation, the glorious perfections of the Supreme are revealed in their greatest splendours, and appear in the most perfect harmony. Wisdom achieves her highest results; Justice is satisfied to the utmost; Holiness shines in unclouded brightness; Truth is vindicated in all her utterances and claims; Mercy is displayed to sinners; Love, the essential nature of God, is embodied and expressed in the most perfect manner in the person and sacrificial work of Jesus Christ, the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

3. He views this work as an image of the Divine beauty. "The beauty of the Lord our God."

The beauty of God is his holiness—that general quality

or excellence of his nature, which renders him the most amiable of all beings. God's work has always his image upon it.

Part of his name divinely stands
On all his creatures writ;
They show the labour of his hands,
Or impress of his feet.

The Christian religion pre-eminently has this image of God upon it. View it as a system, it is so. "But we all, with open face, behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord."

View it in its tendency, it is so. "We are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even by the Spirit of the Lord."

By this we may try any work of God. Whatever does not bear his image, and tend to him, is not of God.

4. He considers this work in reference to those who are the objects of it.

He considers these as agents in the work, and on this account calls it their work. "Establish thou the work of our hands upon us." God, in bringing about his gracious purpose, does not so work as to leave us nothing to do. We have to concur with him in the use of means calculated to promote his work; we are to be workers together with God. Preaching is one. "We, then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." This is the great means. There are also others—exhortation, prayer, repentance, faith, liberality. Such were the views Moses had of the great work of God.

II. CONSIDER THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS PRAYER.

1. He prays that this work may appear.

This is answered when persons are raised up to engage in it. "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest."

When persons are inclined to hear the word preached.

When sinners are convinced of sin, and converted to God, by his Word and Spirit.

When the work of holiness is carried on in the hearts of Christians. O that it might appear!

2. He prays that the influence of religion may extend to the rising generation.

This is truly desirable to pious parents. In order to see this there must be instruction. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."

There must be wise discipline. "He that spareth the rod hateth his child."

There must be earnest prayer for God's blessing upon our offspring.

To all this must be added example. We must walk before our house with a perfect heart.

When religion appears in children, two extremes must be avoided—flattery and discouragement—or the tender plant of heaven will be spoiled.

3. He prays for its manifestation to others.

He beautifies the meek with salvation; with the beauty of inward and outward holiness. A Christian is one of the most beautiful objects in the eye of enlightened reason; an image of that eternal Being who is the sum total of every excellence. When the beauty of God is upon us, his work is likely to be promoted.

4. He prays for the permanent establishment of religion. "Establish thou the work of our hands upon us."

This is done when its profession is tolerated.

When there is an increase of Divine knowledge.

When the people of God are rooted and grounded in love, and zealous of good works.

How full and comprehensive are these petitions!

APPLICATION.

1. So Moses prayed, and so I hope you will.

If you have a spark of love to God and his cause, you will pray for the ministers of the gospel, who are specially engaged in this work that they may be wise to win souls; that the Word may be attended with Divine power; that sinners may be converted through the truth. Men of Israel, help! If we join heartily in this God will prosper us.

2. But what shall I say to those who stand aloof?

Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion! These are the greatest hindrances to the work. For, says Christ, he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

3. Perhaps some of you are engaged in works directly opposed to the work of God—the works of Satan.

Are you indeed the servants of sin? If so, you are working for a bad master. "The wages of sin is death."

Leave, O leave such a master! Seek to become the servants of God, that you may have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. Look well to your own souls! Pray God to work in you to will and to do of his good pleasure.

PRAISE TO CHRIST.

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

No formal introduction to this most interesting subject is needed. The text expresses—

I. What Christ has done for his people.

II. The returns of gratitude and praise which his people render to him.

I. WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE FOR HIS PEOPLE. "He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," etc.

1. He hath loved us.

Can anything be more evident? Is there anything to which the believer subscribes more heartily than to this? Contemplate it. He loved us from eternity. Things past, present, and to come are before him. He foresaw our misery, and, moved with pity, provided for our relief. He loved us when we existed only in his eternal idea; then he cried, "You have destroyed yourselves, but in me is your help." What a love, reaching through eternal ages and undiminished! It was then his intention to bestow upon us those blessings which we now enjoy, and which we shall continue to enjoy for ever. Hence, the Scriptures tell us, "God hath from the beginning chosen us to

salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." "He hath chosen us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love." "He hath predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself." All this from the infinite love of his nature; because he loved us.

He so loved us that when the fulness of time was come he appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh, that he might put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Say how he loved you, when he became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; when he hung upon the tree as an accursed one for sinners; when he made his soul an offering for sin; when he drank at the hands of his Divine Father the cup of wrath, and endured the unutterable woe of being forsaken by him. These tales of sorrow have grown old and uninteresting to careless hearers, but not to you. The cross of Christ always affects you. The remembrance of his love is always precious. His agony and bloody sweat, his cross and passion on the tree, are to you the surest evidences of his love—love which passeth knowledge.

All that he hath done for his church through ages are proofs of his love to you. Why did he call the apostles and first disciples to the knowledge of his truth? Were these striking monuments of his grace and power for their sakes only? No! But that in them first he might show forth all long-suffering for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting; that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus.

Why did he uphold his infant church against the powers of earth and hell? "Destroy it not," said the Lord,

"for a blessing is in it"—a blessing which hath descended to us. For he hath established Zion that the poor of his people might trust in her. By this merciful preservation of the church the news of salvation has reached us.

Say how he loved you when you came into existence and rose to years of discretion; when you turned to your own ways and rejected God. How strong that love that pitied, interceded, and prevailed, that you should not be dealt with according to your sins, nor rewarded according to your iniquities! But he arrested you in your career of rebellion; hitherto shalt thou go, but no further; his light penetrated your darkness; you stood convicted and condemned. Then you thought it wrath, now you know it to have been love.

But he hath loved us still more. We came to him trembling, as criminals to a judge; as debtors to a stern creditor; as rebels to an offended sovereign; and whilst we were expecting the sentence, he opened his mouth and blessed us. "I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake, and will no more remember thy sin." Then we knew that he loved us, and taking hold of him and worshipping him, we cried, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his people; he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy."

He hath loved us; watched over our welfare; raised us when fallen; healed us when diseased; helped us in distress; increased our graces; and still he loves us; he is now precious to our souls, and makes himself known to us as our loving Saviour.

2. He hath washed us from our sins in his own blood.

Under the law, persons and things were sanctified by

the sprinkling of blood, and the washing of water; but the blood was the blood of beasts.

Under the gospel we are sanctified by the blood of the Son of God himself—his *own* blood. The spear pierced his side, and forthwith there issued blood and water. What an impression it made upon the Apostle John, who was an eye witness! "He that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." What an impression ought it to make upon our hearts!

The blood of Jesus possesses both a justifying and a cleansing virtue. We do not mean a literal application of his blood; but that by virtue of his bloodshedding, he received power to pardon and sanctify his people. What an infinite merit there is in his atonement! What mountains of guilt and sin have been buried in this unfathomable ocean of love! A Magdalene heard him say, "Daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee;" a Peter beheld the look that broke his heart, and told also of mercy; a Paul, though a persecutor and a blasphemer, obtained mercy of the Lord; many of those who cried, Away with him, he is not fit to live, who crucified him, found pardon through his blood. And so with Christians now; though our sins have been more in number than the hairs of our head—aggravated—of twenty, thirty, or even threescore years continuance in rebellion, yet he has freely pardoned us. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Being justified by faith we have peace with God. There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

But the blood of Christ not only washes away the guilt, but the corruption of sin. "I will open in the house of David, and in the city of Jerusalem, a fountain for sin and uncleanness." The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, clean-

seth from *all sin.* Those who would sin because God is merciful to forgive sin, never were pardoned; for the blood that atones also *purifies.* He that is in Christ Jesus is not only free from the condemning law, but is a new creature. And the experience of the saints proves this. He hath washed us from our sins. How did Paul address himself to the Corinthian Christians who were once sadly polluted by abominable crimes? "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." And can you not testify to the same renewing power? Can you not join in the language of this doxology: "Who hath washed us from our sins in his own blood." Yes indeed. You were once earthly, sensual, devilish, carried away with divers lusts and pleasures, full of envy, malice, pride, uncharitableness. But ye have now put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and walk in holiness and righteousness, after his example and commandment.

3. He honours us. "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father."

This is honour of the highest and most sacred kind. Here is royal dignity and the divinest office.

Christians are kings. Then they must have a kingdom over which to rule. Perhaps a reference to the dominion they have over themselves, for he that ruleth his spirit is greater than he that taketh a city. Perhaps a prospective reference to the dominion they will have in heaven. He will there appoint unto them a kingdom. He will make them rulers over five or ten cities.

As kings we have conquests to win for the King of kings and Lord of lords. For we are now in a state of conflict. The kingdom and powers of darkness wage a continued opposition, and these hostile and evil forces we

have to resist and overcome. The world is antagonistic to Christ and his people. "All that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world." Hence we are not to be conformed to the world; not to love the world; though in it, yet must maintain a mastership over it. "And this is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith." Not only have we the world to conquer and subdue, but we have Satan, who is ever tempting us to evil, and seeking to destroy. The contest is spiritual and invisible, but it is real—awfully real. And against him we are to wrestle, to fight, until God shall thoroughly bruise him under our feet. Afflictions assail us. We have to endure at times a great fight of afflictions. But these shall not move us from our steadfastness, or lead us to cast away our crown. Death is the last enemy that will dispute with us, and call for the exercise of our kingly prowess. But that shall be destroyed. So that at the last, we shall come off more than conquerors through him that hath loved us. Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

As kings we are in possession of riches; the unsearchable riches of Christ. What vastness of wealth is here! unsearchable! and they are the true riches! and satisfying riches! and enduring riches! such as cannot be corroded by rust, or perish in the using, or be stolen by thieves!

Christians are also priests unto God and the Father. There is a similarity betwixt Christians and priests under the law. Called of God—anointed—set apart for his service—had no portion but God—dwelt in his presence. And is not this the case with Christians? Has not God called us with a holy calling? Has he not anointed us

with the unction of the Holy One? Has he not made himself our God, so that we say in truth, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul?" Do we not stand in his presence, and rejoice that he is at our right hand?

As priests, we have to offer sacrifices. Not expiatory, for the great High Priest of our profession hath for ever put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. We are to offer spiritual sacrifices. Broken and contrite hearts. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit." The sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. The sacrifice of prayer and intercession for themselves, for their brethren, for the kingdom of Christ, for the world. The sacrifice of themselves to the Divine service and glory, on the altar of Christ, which sanctifieth the gift. "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Such are the spiritual sacrifices which we are to render, and which are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. See, Christians, how Christ honours you! "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, to shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

II. THE RETURNS OF GRATITUDE AND PRAISE WHICH HIS PEOPLE RENDER TO HIM.

"To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

We are not to suppose that Christ's people have the power of conferring glory and dominion upon him, but they thus express their complete acquiescence in those honours which he stands possessed of; it is an expression of sentiment.

1. To him be glory. He has an essential glory as God. To this the believer subscribes. Not like the Socinian, who endeavours to rob Christ of his equality with the Father. He is the true God and eternal life. He is possessed of glory arising from his undertaking in behalf of sinful men—from his unparalleled condescension—glorious example—unreserved benevolence—patient submission—from his cross—spoiling principalities and powers—making a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it—conquest over death—glorious ascension. All this glory the believers see, with gladness, beaming on the crown of the Redeemer, and cry, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

The glory of the Saviour receives additional lustre from those offices which he so successfully fills for his people at the right hand of God. Is he an Advocate? How many causes has he gained! Is he a Priest? All the services of his people are rendered acceptable to God through him. Is he an Intercessor? What innumerable benefits hath he obtained for them! Is he a Mediator? What hosts of enemies hath he reconciled to God, making them one in him. Is he a Saviour? How complete and perfect his work, saving to the uttermost all who come unto God through him. Is he a Leader and Commander of the people? What glorious achievements and conquests have his people made through him; "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

These are his glories, and to him they are willingly

ascribed by his people. He is the Author (they say) and Finisher of our faith; without him we could have done nothing; Christ is all and in all. Not unto us, O Lord; not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory.

But his people look forward with pleasing expectation to a period when the glories of their Saviour shall be abundantly increased, and shine forth in their greatest splendour. In the day of judgment he will gather his people before him, and glorify his grace in their eternal salvation. "He will come to be glorified in his saints and admired by all them that believe." He will be glorified by their number; an innumerable multitude that no man can number. He will be glorified by their variety; out of all nations, and kindreds, and tongues. Jew and Greek, Barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, are all made one in Christ Jesus our Lord. He will be glorified by the circumstances attending their salvation. These are they which have come out of great tribulation—through reproaches and persecutions—through prisons and flames —through fire and through water, and they are brought to the wealthy place. He will be glorified by the infinite rewards which he will then bestow upon them. The magnificence of princes is known by the greatness of their gifts and honours. See the sons of earth raised in the bloom of immortal life, and these glorious bodies informed with renewed and celestial spirits. Christ in the midst, as a glorious Sun, and they, like innumerable stars, shining in his rays for ever and ever. Follow them into the glorious city of God. This innumerable company lift up their voices; there is the shout of trumpets and the eternal song of gratitude. What is the subject? Their song is but the continuation of ours. We sing, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own

blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father: to him be glory and dominion for ever." They sing, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb."

2. "To him be dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

Christ hath a natural dominion as God, and in this his people acquiesce and rejoice. "The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof."

But he hath acquired dominion as Mediator by grant from his Father. "Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." As the reward of his obedience. "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God hath highly exalted him and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess that Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." This is but partly established. So he hath taught us to pray, "Thy kingdom come." To this his people look with earnest desire; when all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, shall stand before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and ascribe salvation to God and the Lamb for ever.

Finally, we find the Apostle sets his hearty "Amen" to the whole doxology. Would to God that every heart and voice could thus join with the Apostle and say, "He hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." But, alas, many of you, I fear, have not experienced this sanctification, have not obtained these honours! O that you could join in this heavenly song!

Our hearts are moved towards you. Happy should we be to hear you sing this song of Zion with unfeigned lips. Can the song of the drunkard be compared to this? Is the noise of sinful mirth and pleasure equal to this? No! That is sensual, this rational; that is sottish, this Divine; that is like the crackling of thorns under a pot, this elevates, refines, and supports the mind; that shall soon give place to the cries of despair, the shrieks of horror, the howlings of hell; this will be succeeded by the new song of Moses and the Lamb. O would you not be excluded from that song and from that redeemed multitude who shall sing it above! Then learn it below. None sing it there who have not sung it before on earth. Come then to the Saviour! He will pardon you, wash you from your sins, honour you, and at the last glorify you with his own glory. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Let me address Christians, who may be under clouds and darkness of mind by reason of manifold temptations, and discouragements, and shortcomings, and sorrows. You have hung your harps upon the willows, and say, "How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" Come, my brethren, raise your hearts to this heavenly melody! Praise is comely for the upright! Praise him in the fires; they shall not burn you! Praise him in the waters; they shall not overflow you! He is carrying out his designs of mercy in all his dealings with us. He has thoughts of good, and not of evil, concerning us. In all our afflictions he is afflicted. He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He delighteth in mercy. Take down your harps from the willows, and strike them to the praise of him who loves you, and sanctifies you, and honours you!

I would call all to remember that every true believer contents not himself with idle praise. He glorifies Christ with his life; enters heartily into his views; and endeavours to establish his dominion. Enter with all your hearts into this glorious work, and then shall you be counted worthy to stand before the Son of man! Amen.

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