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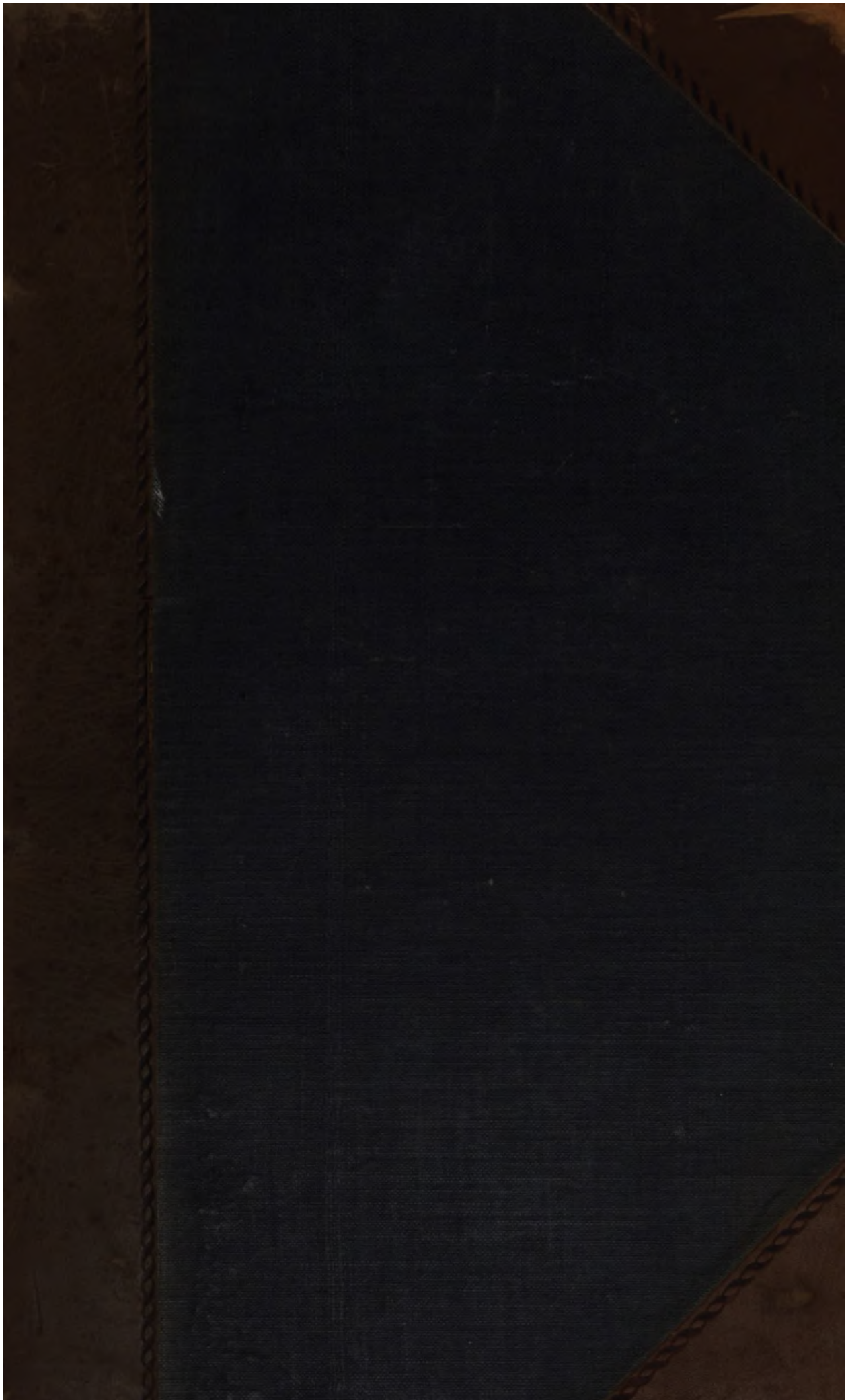
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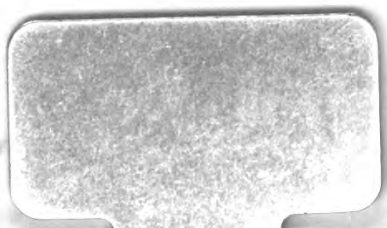


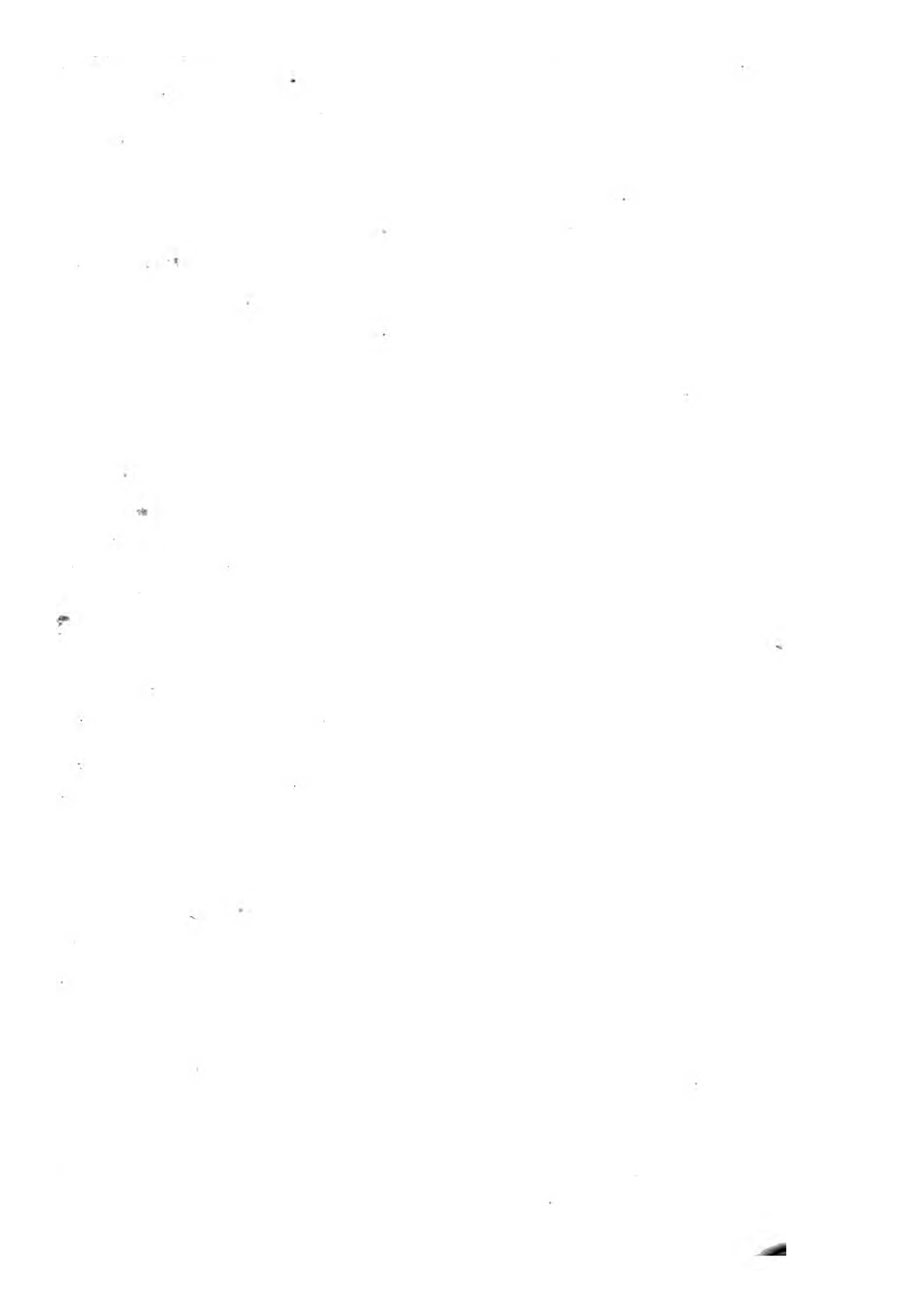
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# SERMONS.

BY THE LATE

REV. ARCHIBALD DOUGLAS,

OF READING.

With Memoir,

BY

THE REV. GEORGE CLAYTON.

LONDON :

THOMAS WARD & CO., PATERNOSTER-ROW ;

AND SOLD BY

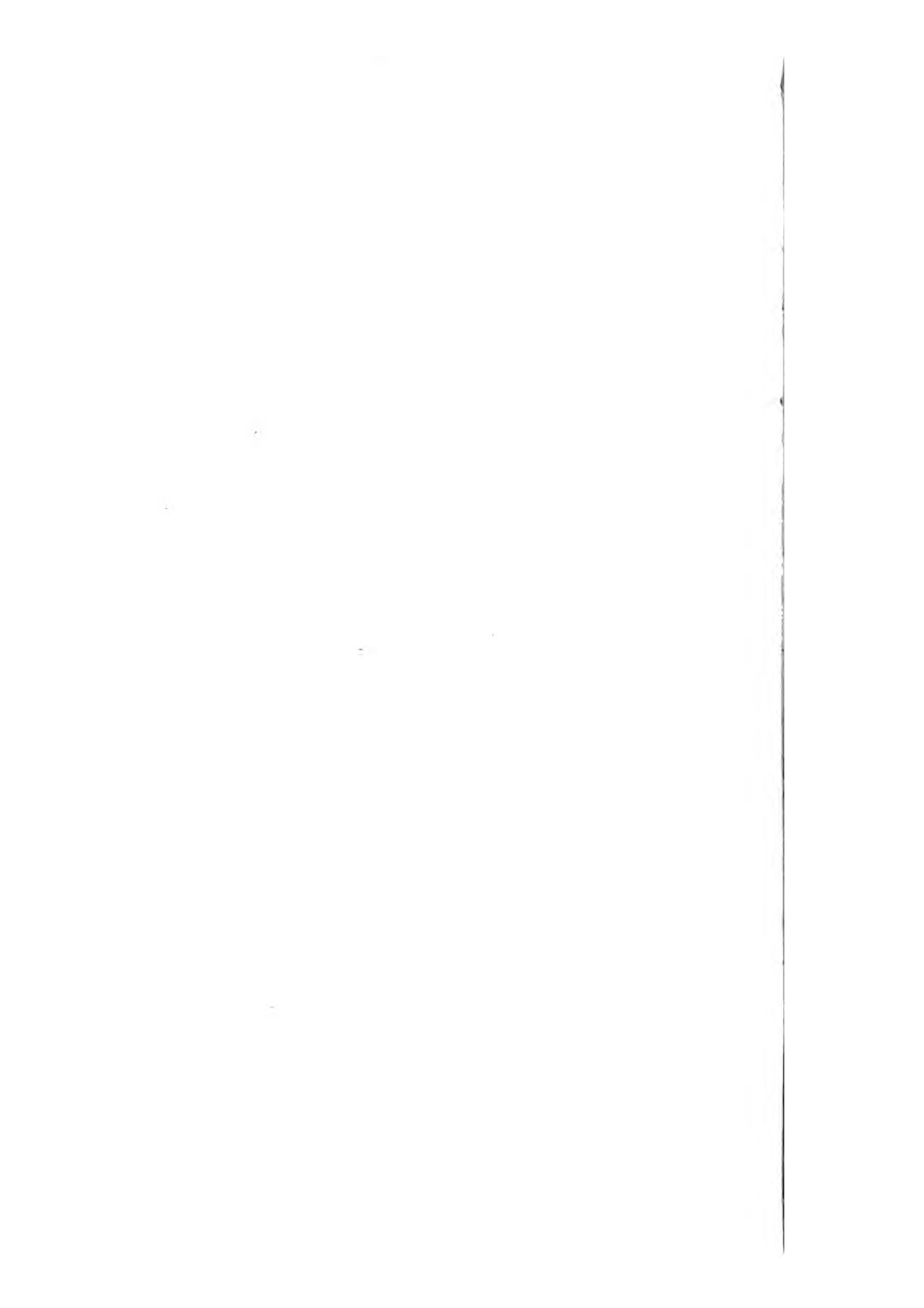
MESSRS. RUSHER AND JOHNSON ; AND W. THOMAS,  
READING.

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1840.

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## P R E F A C E.

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IN commending this volume to the favourable notice of the Christian church, and more especially of the religious society who so long enjoyed the benefit of the public labours and private example of the deceased Pastor, the compiler bespeaks the candour of his readers. The task of preparing these sheets for the press was not sought by him, but assigned to him by the solicitations of many whose friendship he values, and whose wishes have, with him, the force and obligation of a law. He has scarcely the privilege of a leisure hour amidst the various and active duties of his ministerial vocation, so that he has written and revised his pages not without many irksome interruptions, and in those snatches of time and opportunity which he may have been able to command. The manu-

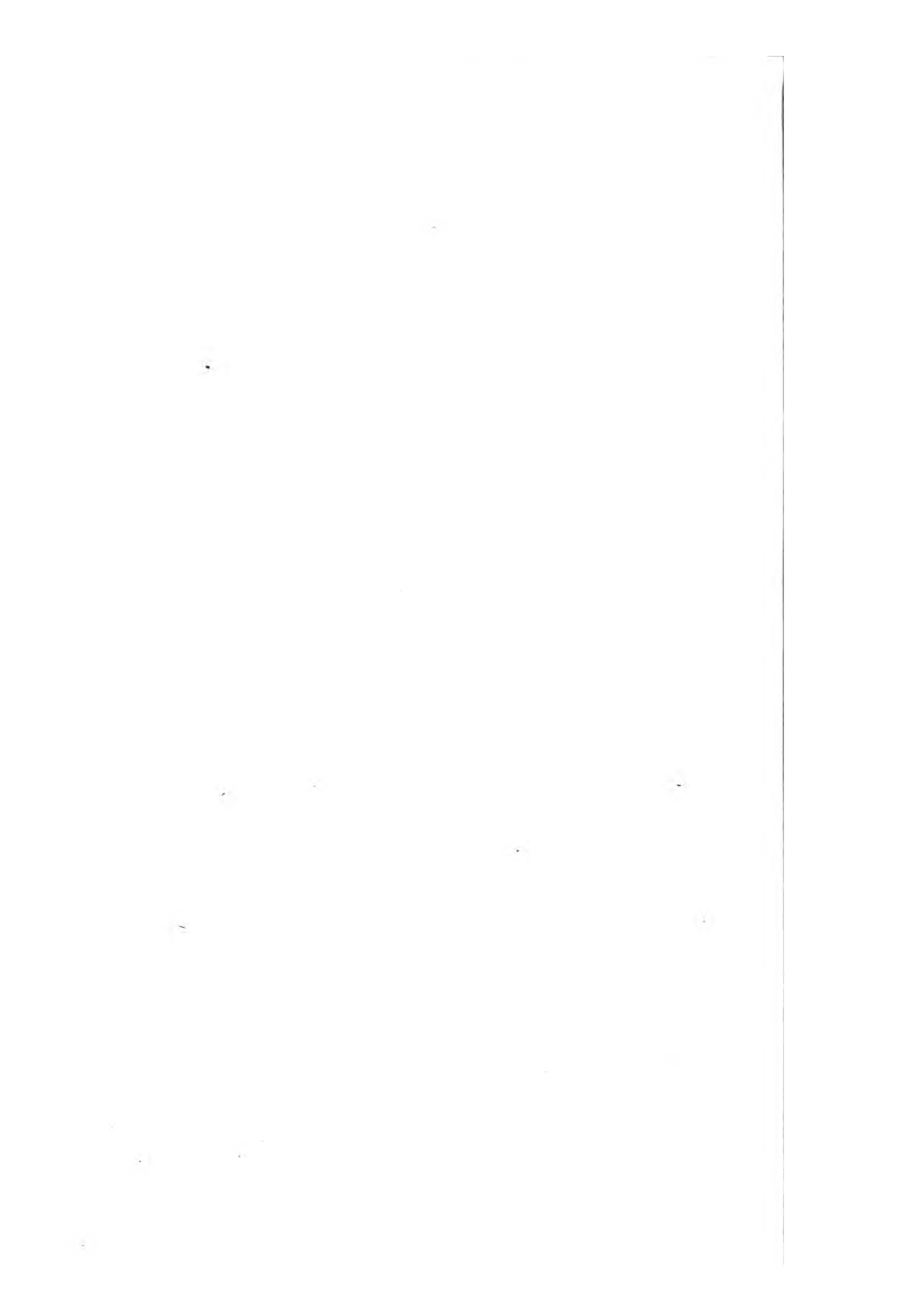
scripts also from which the sermons are printed, are without the advantage of having received the final transcription and corrections of the author, so that some indulgence may be reasonably claimed for the manner and style in which they are presented. No indulgence, however, is asked either for the doctrinal truths or practical applications which they embody. These are believed by the compiler, to be the "true sayings of God," set forth with "sound speech that cannot be condemned," and with a "wisdom" which no adversary can successfully "gainsay or resist." Should the perusal of these discourses revive a taste for the old-fashioned style of preaching, in which the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus is made the foundation of all our hope and holiness, our consolation and our joy, and the federal relations subsisting between the "first and second Adam," and those whom they respectively represent are exhibited in all their more immediate effects and remoter consequences, a most desirable object will be secured. Not a few of the wise and the pious find cause to regret that the divinity of the olden time, the days of the Puritans and of the earlier Nonconformists, has been superseded in too great a degree by a lean, meagre, and immethodical theology, too desultory

to engage the attention, too bare to satisfy the understanding, and too fine to feed the soul.

While the thanks of the writer are respectfully tendered to those friends, generally, who have favoured him with the facts or observations which appear in the narrative, and more especially to the Rev. Geo. Lawrie and Mr. Poulton, both of Reading, who enjoyed for many years the confidence and intimacy of the deceased, he humbly requests the prayers of all who read, that the life-giving Spirit may breathe upon these pages, and thereby perpetuate the useful testimony of a "faithful minister," who "being dead, yet speaketh."

G. C.

*Walworth, March, 1840.*



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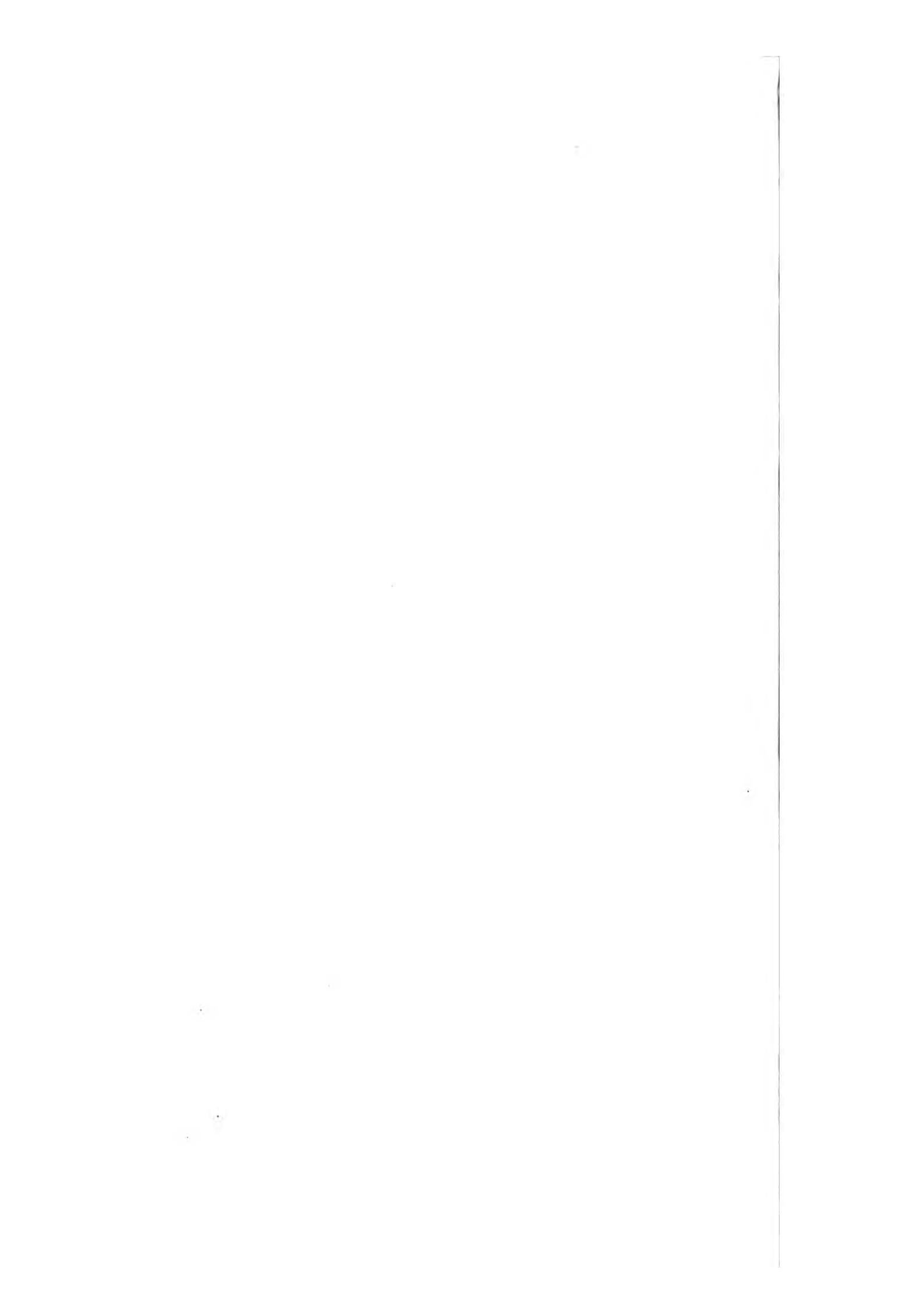
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**M E M O I R.**



## MEMOIR.

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IF it be the wisdom and duty of Christians to be followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises, it is obvious that they must make themselves acquainted with the history of those who have preceded them in the profession of the gospel, and in the practice of piety. To contemplate the great principles, which, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, formed their character, and gave excellence and usefulness to their course, will powerfully assist in the imitation of their example. While there is only one model of absolute perfection from which we can copy with unqualified confidence, even Jesus, "the author and finisher of our faith," there are extant many fine specimens of Christian virtue to which we owe a sedulous though subordinate regard. Happily for this age of the church, these are continually multiplying; and by the aid of the press,

are securing a permanent and extended notoriety, insomuch, that it may be affirmed with an emphasis peculiar to our own times, that we are surrounded with "a great cloud of witnesses," whose testimony and conduct are every way fitted to incite within us a holy emulation, and to engage us to follow them as they "followed Christ." To rescue from oblivion, and to place in the records of evangelical fame, the names of those whom God has raised up to be the lights of the world and the benefactors of the church is at once a gratifying and edifying service, and forms one at least of those means by which the righteous will be had in everlasting remembrance.

The writer of the following pages is far from presuming that he can do aught to immortalize his loved and lamented friend whose "record is on high," yet he humbly hopes that he may be the instrument of introducing him to the acquaintance of some to whom he was unknown, and of perpetuating those sentiments of esteem and veneration which cannot fail to encircle his name among others to whom it has long been familiar. His aim is not to eulogize the dead but to instruct the living; and thus, to bring honour to that sovereign

grace which made the departed minister what he was, both personally and relatively considered, that all who read this brief memorial may “glorify God” in him.

The materials furnished for the task are comparatively scanty, but the compiler has not felt at liberty to decline presenting them to the public eye, as well from deference to the opinions of those who wished him to undertake the service, as from the promptings of filial reverence and affection inspired by the almost paternal care and kindness which in early youth it was his privilege to receive from the departed.\*

The Rev. ARCHIBALD DOUGLAS was born in the parish of Clerkenwell, London, of parents not only really pious, but eminently so, by whom, while

\* For the space of two years the writer lived under the roof of his friend while pursuing his classical studies in the establishment of the late Rev. Dr. Valpy, who may justly be considered to have been a distinguished ornament of the town of Reading, and as a teacher of youth was equalled by few, and excelled by none in this department of useful occupation. It is with indescribable satisfaction, the pupil has learned from the most authentic information, that the last days of this revered preceptor were emphatically his best, that his sun went down cheered by the bright hopes and consolations of the gospel, while in the spirit of entire self-renunciation he looked for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.



yet an infant, he was solemnly dedicated to God in the covenant of baptism. After having received an ordinary school education in the vicinity of his birth-place, he was at the usual age apprenticed to a respectable tradesman in Coleman-street in the City, and conducted himself during the period of servitude with such propriety and decorum as to ensure the esteem and approbation of his employer. At that early period of his life, there were not wanting those indications of stability of mind and fixed habits of application which distinguished him in his future course. The precise time at which he became the subject of inward and spiritual religion does not appear; the work was probably gradual in all its developments, but it is sufficiently clear that he was one who feared God from his youth. The means of his first serious awakening was a sermon delivered by the Rev. Dr. Peckwell, at the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel in Spa-fields. The text was taken from 1 John i. 8, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." While that powerful and eloquent preacher opened the Scripture, he felt the arrow of conviction pierce his inmost soul. "Sin revived" in all the forms of turpitude and

demerit, and ashamed and confounded by conscious guilt, he returned from the assembly exclaiming with feelings to which he had hitherto been a stranger, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

In this state of anxiety and alarm, he obtained sensible relief by a discourse of the Rev. Timothy Priestley, founded upon those words recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, "Him hath God exalted with his own right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins." This was just the message which he required. Its adaptation to his case and circumstances was most exact and peculiar. A Saviour—a mighty Prince—exalted to bestow the blessings of which he was now in earnest quest, repentance and remission of sins—could not fail, by the teaching of the Spirit, to be good news, glad tidings of great joy, a balm and a cordial to his awakened and wounded heart. He did not, however, at the first, see all things clearly. Difficulties oppressed his mind with respect to the nature of holiness, and the place which it occupied in the economy of saving mercy. He had learned how God may be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly through faith in the imputed righteousness

of the Redeemer ; but he saw and felt the absolute necessity of holiness in order to communion with God on earth, and the enjoyment of God in heaven. Greatly distressed by conflicting views and partial apprehensions on this subject, he was led to hear the Rev. J. Martin, formerly of Keppel-street, Russel-square, by whose scriptural and judicious statements of the doctrine of sanctification his mind was brought to rest ; he thus records the methods by which he was brought to a satisfactory conclusion.

“ But alas ! I did not properly or rightly see these things to be the work of the Spirit, till I heard Mr. Martin from the words, ‘ Be ye holy, for I am holy.’ That judicious minister showed the necessity of holiness, and observed, ‘ that if there was ever a pure, upright, and holy desire from an impure nature, it was the effect of the Holy Spirit, and not of nature, reason, or philosophy.’ Thus did it please God to put into his hand the master-key of all doctrinal truth in a clear apprehension of the nature of justification and sanctification, and the relative position of each to the other ; by which he not only arrived at a settled peace in his own experience as a Christian, but became ever after,

a wise master-builder in the office of the ministry, thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work.

His sentiments having now ripened into decision, and his mind and character being moulded by the precious truths which he had embraced with the full assurance of the understanding, he was prepared to say, "O God, my heart is fixed, my heart is fixed." For some time he had placed himself statedly under the ministrations of the Rev. John Clayton, of the King's Weigh-house in Eastcheap, which were signally blest to his establishment, comfort, and growth in grace. On the 6th of November, 1785, he united himself, by a public profession of Christianity, to the church under the pastoral care of that venerable servant of Christ who survives his junior brother, and is qualified, from long and intimate observation, extending through a period of fifty-four years, to bear his cordial testimony to the sterling worth and Christian consistency of his early friend. While recording these facts, the writer cannot forbear to invite the particular attention of those who may read his narrative, to two points of great practical importance. The first is, the remarkable blessing which in the

ordination of God's providence and the operations of his grace is found to accompany a religious education. By parental instruction, prayer, and example, together with an attendance on the means of grace, especially a preached gospel, the subject of this memoir was gradually brought out of darkness into marvellous light; and having by faith accepted the Redeemer in his person, offices, and work, was inclined to devote himself to God, decidedly and publicly, in a covenant never to be broken. Here we have another evidence, added to the many which the history of the church supplies, of the faithfulness of Jehovah to the promises which he has made to his people and their offspring, and of the blessing which he has annexed to the pious training of Christian families. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Let the godly parent take courage under the weighty cares, the overwhelming responsibilities, and the not infrequent depressions of hope, incident to his relative position. Let him remember, that amidst the toils and trials of his path, he may possibly be rearing his child for God, and preparing the future minister for his sanctuary, or the future missionary for an alienated and

revolted world. The family under consideration yields singular encouragement in this particular, having supplied to the church of God two able, useful, and honoured pastors. The Rev. Samuel Douglas, for many years an approved congregational minister at Chelmsford, in Essex, as well as the late pastor of the church at Broad-street, Reading. The second point worthy of distinct observation is, the varied but concurring agencies which the great Head of the church employs, in forming the christian, and in sending forth the minister. A forcible illustration of this occurs in the case before us. The work is of God, and not of man. Yet God effects his purposes by human instruments, and these selected, with surpassing wisdom, from amongst all the varieties of sect and denomination in the christian commonwealth. As though the eternal Father, in the method of his working, intended to show that no man should glory in man, and that he is not restricted to any one section of the church more than another, in the communication of those gifts and callings which are common to all his faithful people. It would seem as though He determined to give no sanction to the intolerance of the bigot, or the exclusive partialities of the secta-

rian, by employing some of every name as agents in accomplishing his pleasure. He would have the members of his redeemed family to live in harmony with each other, and cordially to co-operate in their respective fields of labour for the salvation of souls, and the extension of his kingdom. "See that ye be not puffed up one against another." "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." 1 Cor. iii. 5, *et seq.*

The first abiding religious impressions on the mind of Mr. Douglas, were produced by the preaching of Dr. Peckwell, a clergyman of the Established Church. Into the full light and liberty of the gospel he was conducted by a sermon of the Rev. T. Priestley, at that time ministering in the connexion of the Countess of Huntingdon. By

the pastor of a Baptist congregation he was relieved from the perplexities which beset his path in the anxious process of religious inquiry ; and to a minister of the Congregational denomination, his chosen pastor, he was indebted for his establishment in the faith, and his introduction, as we shall see, into the work of the ministry. Nor is this by any means a solitary example of the method of divine procedure. In truth, it is the common, if not the ordinary plan of God's operation. One and the self-same Spirit dividing to every man severally as he will. Assuredly then, there should be no feeling of distance, of jealousy, of contention, among those who are fellow-workers together with God, and are severally employed by one Master, for one and the same high and holy purpose. How appropriate the caution, "See that ye fall not out by the way."

But to return to our narrative. When Mr. Douglas had honourably completed the term of his apprenticeship, and for a season had conducted business on his own account, he became the subject of an earnest desire towards the work of the ministry. Having been taught the value of his own soul, he felt a tender compassion for



the souls of others, and became anxious to impart the light, and peace, and consolation which he had received. After deliberate thought, frequent hesitations arising from the modest estimate he formed of his own capacity for so important an undertaking, and fervent prayer for direction, he explained his wishes, motives and aims, to his minister. Every encouragement was given to his pious intentions, and the way was opened to him for entering on a course of preparatory studies in the academy at Mile End, then under the superintendence of the Rev. Stephen Addington, D.D., a man of sound learning, and esteemed as a good theologian. This institution was afterwards removed to Hoxton, and is now known as the Highbury College.

Having finished his academical studies, Mr. Douglas accepted the charge of a Christian church at Newmarket, in Suffolk, where he gave himself to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine. He was intent on self-improvement, and, as the smallness of the congregation afforded him more of leisure than, generally speaking, falls to the lot of ministers in the present day, he devoted a considerable portion of his time to the cultivation

of his intellect and his heart. Here, he continued to labour with encouraging evidences of acceptance and success, for about the space of six or seven years. Amongst his nearest neighbours in this sphere of duty, was the late Rev. Robert Hall of Cambridge, with whose friendship he was honoured, and from whose intellectual superiority, cultivated genius, extensive learning, and refined taste, he derived essential assistance in the choice of books, and the prosecution of study. Although at the time referred to, there might be something in the sentiments and in the spirit of that great and good man, with which Mr. Douglas could by no means sympathise, he saw much to admire, and much that he would fain have attempted to copy. He was himself a learner, and therefore delighted to listen to the conversations and sermons of one whose brilliant track, as he pursued his onward career, shone clearer and brighter unto the perfect day. It has often occurred to the writer to hear from the lips of Mr. Douglas, accounts of the intercourse he was favoured to hold with this master mind. Though himself of a calm and not very excitable temperament, his eye would glisten, and his cheek glow, while he called to remem-

brance the force of argument, the play of genius, and the pure but impassioned eloquence displayed by that distinguished and extraordinary man. It was some years after this, that the Rev. Dr. Simpson, Theological Tutor of Hoxton Academy, accidentally passed part of a day in the company of Robert Hall; and returning to the College, gave this characteristic description of him to the students then under his care. "I never," said he, "met with such a man in the course of my life, he has all the intellect of an angel, all the piety of a saint, and all the humility of a worm." In this estimate, Mr. Douglas would, at the period when the remark was made, have perfectly coincided.

By the demise of the Rev. W. Noon, in the year 1795, the pastorate of the Church in Broadstreet, Reading, became vacant. It happened that the bereaved flock deputed some of their number to apply to the Rev. John Clayton of London, for his counsel in the choice of a successor to their venerable teacher. On a sedate consideration of the existing emergency, together with the peculiar circumstances of the people, and the claims of so important a town as Reading, at that time favoured with the powerful, and heart-stirring

ministry of the Hon. and Rev. William Bromley Cadogan, Mr. Clayton felt that there was no one within the circle of his acquaintance so well adapted to the state of affairs, as Mr. Douglas. Well assured of his attachment to evangelical truth, his "humbleness of mind," his quiet and unobtrusive manners, his habits of close application to the one grand object of his ministry, and above all, his catholic and unsectarian spirit; he recommended him to the widowed church with cordiality and confidence, and having preached for a season on probation, he was as cordially chosen to the office of the pastor. Of the ministers engaged in his settlement, not one survives, save the venerable man to whom it has been necessary to make repeated allusion in connexion with the earlier period of Mr. Douglas's history. In what manner, and with what benefit to the souls of men, he fulfilled his ministry, during a lengthened incumbency of forty-four years, the writer needs not testify. How holily, and justly, and unblameably he behaved himself among his flock, and in his converse with the world at large, is known and read of all men. The Lord of all power and might gave testimony to the word of his grace, so that many

were successively turned from darkness unto light, the church was multiplied and edified, and the cause of the Redeemer flourished. The old Meeting House, heavy and incommodious, though venerable for its antiquity, has given place to the more capacious and elegant structure in which the congregation now assembles, and from time to time, the Lord has added unto the church such as shall be saved. While accessions have been from time to time received, not a few of them, it is hoped, matured in character, and fitted for a better state of existence, have been translated to a fairer clime, and are worshipping in the heavenly temple. In the commencement of his ministrations in this new sphere, he was favoured with the notice and friendly countenance of Mr. Cadogan, who, "condescended to visit" him, to use his own words, in his comparatively humble dwelling, and greatly strengthened and encouraged him in the work of the Lord. He knew that he was a Protestant Dissenter from conviction, but believed him to be a servant of Christ, working the work of an evangelist, as he also did, and therefore gave to him the right hand of fellowship, and bade him God-speed.

It need not be told, that this beloved and honoured clergyman was brought to the knowledge of the truth in a most remarkable manner, and became the organ of proclaiming, defending, and recommending, with no ordinary zeal and energy, the faith which, at one time, he laboured to destroy. His whole soul was in his work. Determined to know nothing among his people, save "Jesus the crucified," he was instant in season and out of season, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom. His efforts were crowned with an abundant blessing, and made productive of consequences, which are felt in all their freshness to the present hour, by some who yet survive, and will be gratefully acknowledged by multitudes, through eternal ages. That such a man, of noble birth and blood, and highly gifted in his profession, in the zenith too of his well-earned popularity and extensive usefulness, with a church always full to overflowing, should thus have encouraged the newly settled pastor of a nonconforming society, affords, in these days of separation, a lively and refreshing spectacle. Oh that this pure spirit of Catholic Christianity, descending from the Romaines, the Shirleys, the Venns, the Newtons,

the Cecils, the Scotts, and the Cadogans, of a former age, may rest, in an abundant measure, upon their successors! These eminent men, in spite of known and acknowledged disagreements on matters of form and discipline between themselves and ministers of other denominations, could, and did exhibit, in place of what is cold and distant, and even hostile, all that is bland and courteous, sympathising and kind, and could readily co-operate in demolishing the kingdom of Satan, and exalting the kingdom of Christ, with those who, in certain respects, they regarded as mistaken brethren. May He, who is the author of peace and lover of concord, forgive our wranglings, heal our breaches, and pour upon us the spirit of mutual forbearance, and mutual love, that so we may endeavour to "hold the truth in unity of spirit and in the bond of peace." If one heaven of blessedness shall contain us hereafter, what should hinder that one bond of charity unite us here?

Mr. Douglas responded in the fullest manner to the exemplary kindness then shown to him as a comparative stranger in the town, and he honoured the varied excellences of this devoted minister of the Lord, while living, as, after death, he embalmed them in sacred remembrance.

No one more sincerely deplored the sudden, and in the view of short-sighted mortals, the premature decease of Mr. Cadogan, in the midst of his days and of his usefulness, than he. He attended the sad spectacle of the interment, and delivered a funeral discourse upon the mournful occasion at the Meeting-house. A portion of the dispersed flock of St. Giles's sought a temporary refuge at Broad-street. There, however, no mean arts of proselytism were resorted to; the pews were thrown open to accommodate the bereaved congregation hungering for the bread of life; and to the honour of those who entertained them be it recorded, that by an unanimous resolve of the church and its pastor, all the stated communicants under Mr. Cadogan were invited *en masse* to the sacramental table, as avowed members of the Church of England, without any requisite compromise of their principles and predilections. Several availed themselves of the privilege, until the new chapel in Castle-street was prepared for their reception, when they took leave of their dissenting brethren to celebrate the worship of God in forms more entirely congenial with their conscientious preferences. Thus they met, united, and parted with



Christian feeling and mutual good-will ; the friends of the established religion, not a whit less friendly to it than before the junction took place, and their non-conforming brethren, as fully attached as ever to their distinguishing principles and modes of worship. Is not this as it ought to be among the followers of that divine Master who has said, “ By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another ? ” Here was union without compromise, liberality without latitudinarianism, the interchange of Christian civilities and hospitalities without an abandonment of denominational peculiarities. Why should not such fraternal intercommunication become general among the churches of Christ ? Were it but occasional only, it would bring us into nearer approximation to that predicted era “ when Ephraim shall not envy Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim ; when the prophets of the Lord shall see eye to eye, and the unbelieving world, at once convinced and attracted by the spectacle, shall exclaim, “ See how these Christians love one another ! ”

As for Mr. Cadogan, he had too much of the urbanity of the gentleman, the liberality of the scholar, and the largeness of heart which Christi-

anity inspires, to sympathise with those narrow and exclusive opinions, the offspring of bigotry and party-spirit, by which, in too many instances, sincere believers are hindered from friendly intercourse and co-operation. The love of the Saviour glowed in his bosom with inextinguishable ardour, and he therefore could not but love all those for whom that Saviour shed his blood, on whom his image was delineated, and who, like himself, were devoted to his cause and to his service.

To return from this digression. About the period of Mr. Cadogan's decease, which took place unexpectedly, after an illness of a few days only, Mr. Douglas was pursuing a course of expository lectures among his own flock upon the 11th chapter of the prophecy of Zechariah. The week prior to that on which the melancholy event was announced, the 8th verse was the subject of his exposition, "Three shepherds also I cut off in one month." He descanted largely upon the office of the ministry, the absolute dependence of those who sustain it upon the great Head of the church, and his sovereign pleasure in appointing their sphere of labour, and limiting the duration of their service. It literally happened that three distinguished minis-

ters were removed by death at that time, of whom the lamented rector of St. Giles's was one. This singular coincidence Mr. Douglas often adverted to as among the most remarkable circumstances of his ministry, but without the least conception that there was any thing like a prophetic augury in his exposition, which, indeed, the context will by no means justify ; although he could not but think that there was somewhat of providential instruction connected with it, which served to many as a note of seasonable preparation for forthcoming events.

From this time he became more firmly established than ever in the esteem of his congregation, and the respect and good-will of his fellow-townsmen. Determined upon self-improvement, with a view to more permanent and extensive usefulness, he read much, studied closely, and maintained, at the same time, a humble and devoted walk with God. Though he declined no call of duty to pastoral visitation, and the more active engagements of public life, he was much at home, and passed many hours of each day in the retirement of his study. There he watched for souls, and as a wise householder, prepared for the respec-

tive classes of hearers their portion in due season.

The discourses presented to the reader in this volume afford a fair specimen of his style of preaching. Simple, short, and unadorned, they are highly evangelical, and replete with thought, with feeling, and a holy aim to benefit his hearers. The sermons addressed to his charge on the anniversary of his settlement among them, will be read by his brethren in the ministry with profound sympathy, and by his people with undecaying interest. Some of the funeral pieces are peculiarly instructive, and solemnly impressive. That occasioned by the death of Mrs. Talfourd, an aged member of the church, admirably represents the only effective mean of triumph over the last enemy. This venerable Christian lady was the mother of Mr. Talfourd, of Reading, who married a daughter of the Rev. Mr. Noon, to whom reference has already been made, as Mr. D.'s immediate predecessor, a man of considerable learning, and marked by the sterling piety of the old school. His daughter, Mrs. Talfourd, still survives, grateful to witness the commanding talents, the cultivated genius, the social influence and importance of her son, Mr. Sergeant Talfourd, who, in the ordinations of Divine

providence, has become the representative in Parliament of the same borough in which his revered grandfather dispensed the word of life.

In Mr. D.'s congregation at this time, there was a gentlewoman of family and fortune, allied by marriage to the noble houses of Hawkesbury and Beaufort, who, while regular in her attendance at the Meeting-house, once at least, on the Sabbath, mingled much in the worldly associations of the town. She was a woman of fascinating manners, of good sense, and rich in deeds of charity ; but, alas ! though ever welcome to the circles of the polite and fashionable, and passing there for a devout and honourable woman, was a stranger to the religion of the heart. Like many among the church-goers and meeting-goers of every age, she had a name that she lived, and was dead. Amiable and benevolent, attractive and beloved, she thought well of her condition, and fancied that she was in the high road to the happiness of heaven.

She was laid upon the couch of sickness. Mr. Douglas visited her in her affliction, as he had previously sat at her hospitable and elegant board. He felt that the occasion called for the exercise of ministerial faithfulness, and impressed with a

conviction of the unutterable worth of the never-dying soul; after engaging in prayer with the invalid, he took his leave, with the words, "These are WARNINGS, Madam." He gave utterance to these sounds with a tone and emphasis which bespoke the solemn, tender, and solicitous emotions of which he was the subject. At that interview, he said neither more nor less, than "these are warnings." On his departure, she began to revolve in her mind, this one word, "warnings." What can he mean? Do I need to be warned? Of what did he intend to warn me? That single, simple word struck to the heart, and like a barbed arrow, was not to be soon, or easily extracted. Impatient for the repetition of the pastor's visit, as soon as the first salutations were ended, she accosted him thus: "When you last saw me on the bed of sickness, you left me with these words, 'These are warnings,' may I ask your meaning?" "I will most readily explain. All afflictions, Madam, are warnings. They warn us of our sinful state, which has subjected us to pains and sufferings; they warn us of the just displeasure of a holy God; they warn us to turn away our eyes from the vanities of this passing life; they warn us of death, of judgment, of a

coming eternity!" Unused to be talked to after this fashion, she listened, and she trembled. She began to suspect that all was not so safe and so hopeful with her, as she had long persuaded herself to believe. The Holy Spirit, operating by means of this one word, convinced her of sin, imparted to her the docility of a little child, awakened in her bosom the spirit of prayer, filled her soul with emotions of godly sorrow for the omissions and errors of a vain and unprofitable life, and in the end brought her, as a penitent believer, to the cross of Christ, who was now become all her trust, all her salvation, and all her desire. The world beheld the change—some wondered—some pitied—some ridiculed—and all looked shyly upon her, whom they once admired, and almost idolized. But not till she had first forsaken them; for she dropped her attendance at card parties, and gave none. Earthly pleasures could no longer please, those forsaken joys were remembered only with aversion and contrition; and now, although far advanced in the evening of her days, she began to live; old things had passed away, all things had become new. Her Bible was her constant companion; the house of God her chosen resort; her spiritual guide was her chief friend; her fortune was dedica-

ted to the service of her Redeemer, and God was her everlasting portion.

After this spiritual transition, she lived for several years, and yielded abundance of fruit, in acts of piety and charity, till having benefited society, and the Church of Christ, of which she became a member, she quitted this mortal stage, full of days and honour, in the peaceful hope of eternal blessedness, through the merits of the Divine Redeemer. Thus, with her, "at the evening time it was light." The spirit of the departed pastor has, we humbly trust, received a welcome from this distinguished member of his flock, as well as from many more, who were the seals of his ministry, and will be for ever his glory and joy. A word fitly spoken, how good is it, when sent home, and applied by the life-giving Spirit!

Among the kindest and best of Mr. Douglas's friends, were the late Thomas Welman, Esq., and his excellent Sisters, of Poundisford Park. They were frequent visitors at Reading, having a near relative then residing in the town. They always attended his ministrations during their sojourn, which was sometimes considerably prolonged, and found them truly instructive and edifying. He was invited to visit them in Somersetshire, and oc-



casionally accepted their friendly hospitality, when his home duties permitted him to enjoy a season of recreation. He maintained a correspondence with Mrs. Rebecca Welman, whose mental stores, and pre-eminent piety, rendered her conversation and letters a treasure to all who were favoured with them. The circle of Mr. Douglas's friendly and social intercourse was most agreeably and beneficially enlarged, by the settlement of the Rev. Dr. Davies, formerly pastor of the church in Fetter-lane, London, and since successively under the care of the Rev. Mr. Maurice, and the Rev. G. Burder, and of the Rev. Caleb Morris, in Reading. He was a minister of profound reading, of an amiable disposition, and of high-toned piety. With his valuable lady, he united in fellowship with the church at Broad-street, greatly enjoyed the ministry of its pastor, and occasionally took the pulpit, when his state of health permitted; thus enriching the auditory with the ripe fruits of his knowledge and experience. These circumstances brought to Mr. Douglas's acquaintance and friendship, the family of Thomas Stiff, Esq., for many years an honoured Deacon of the church in Fetter-lane, and the brother-in-law of Dr. Davies. This gentleman eventually retired from business to the same town, and having built

himself a pleasant and commodious house in the immediate vicinity of his minister, ended his days, while on a visit at Poundisford Park, accompanied by his two daughters, where the message reached him, which was to call his spirit to its heavenly home. Thus bereaved of their sole surviving parent, these two ladies were destined, by the good providence of God, to find in Mr. Douglas a second father. The estimate they formed of his worth, and the advantage they derived from his private friendship, his wise counsels, and his public instructions, are best attested by their grief for his loss, and their generous efforts to secure and perpetuate their remembrance of his virtues, and their veneration for his character. With Mr. Stiff while he lived, and with his daughters after his decease, Mr. Douglas was in the habit of taking an annual excursion, during which, he was usually from home for three or four weeks. Christchurch in Hampshire, Worthing in Sussex, Eastbourn in the same county, and Swanage in Dorsetshire, were places of favourite resort. On these occasions the good man was ever willing to render even his recreations subservient to public usefulness. Without seeking to

make himself conspicuous, he was ready, when solicited, to preach for the ministers whom he occasionally attended. Many a pleasing incident occurred in connexion with these labours of Christian love, and in several instances the happiest results followed them. At Swanage he spoke to a large assembly in the open air, while the new Chapel was in building, and those who witnessed the scene describe it as one of surpassing interest. The heaven above was serene and bright, the blue ocean wrought into gentle undulations by the breeze extended itself in tranquil majesty beneath, while the preacher, standing on a hillock of green, addressed the words of salvation to a still and attentive auditory, as they lined one of the romantic slopes, shelving towards the shore. In his old age he became a field preacher, and there is undoubted evidence that his labour was not in vain in the Lord.

On one occasion when at Eastbourn, the congregation with whom he was worshipping was disappointed of the expected minister. The time of commencing the service being past, considerable anxiety and disquietude began to pervade the assembly, when some one suggested that there was a

gentleman present who looked very like a minister. He was motioned to, as he sat in the pew, and after an explanation of the circumstances, was soon seen to ascend the pulpit, and delivered without any specific preparation, an instructive and impressive discourse upon those words, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." This sermon was long remembered by many who heard it, as peculiarly refreshing and profitable to their souls, and the preacher was thenceforth very cordially welcomed to the pulpit as often as he repeated his visit to that place of resort.

Among the accessions to his stated hearers and to the church under his care, were the Rev. William Kingsbury, and his sister-in-law Mrs. Taylor, of Portswood-green, near Southampton, together with several members of their respective families. That venerable and beloved minister, upon finally resigning his pastoral charge, retired to the beautiful village of Caversham, where he finished his course. There, too, his amiable daughter, Miss F. Kingsbury, took her flight to the realms of purity, of harmony, and of perfection. Hence, also, the excellent Mrs. Taylor departed to that better country which had long been the object

of her believing expectation. The addition made by this little hallowed colony to the circle of Mr. Douglas's friendships was found peculiarly acceptable, and conduced much to his improvement and his pleasure. It might be expected that converse with Mr. K. and his associates, matured and still maturing as they were for a brighter scene of existence, must have yielded peculiar delight to a mind like that of Mr. Douglas. The shadows of the evening were falling upon himself, and he found it good to witness in those a little in advance of him, the calmness of resignation, the full assurance of hope, the glow of affection, and the varied indications of preparation for death and meetness for heaven.

Mr. Douglas was not slow to detect in his own case, even before they became observable to others, the encroachments of growing age upon his physical powers. Blest with a firm and vigorous constitution, which rendered him capable of great exertion, and almost a stranger to exhausture and fatigue, he nevertheless began to be conscious of those feelings which admonished him that there is a time when the "strong men must bow themselves." So vigorous had been his health, and so rare the interruption of his labours from the casual

indisposition to which all are more or less liable, that he was designated by one of his earliest friends, by the familiar cognomen of "Archibald Ironsides."

Perceiving in himself, after thirty years' service at Reading, the symptoms of decaying strength, he resolved to call for timely assistance in the public engagements of the ministerial office. His attention was in the first instance, drawn to the Rev. Mr. Stamper, who was associated with him for a season, in the labours of the sanctuary, and is now the much esteemed pastor of a flourishing church at Uxbridge. After his retirement, the church at Broad-street became interested in the ministrations of the Rev. Thomas Chivers Everett, at that time a student at the Hoxton, now the Highbury College. Having preached for six months as an assistant, he was so entirely acceptable to Mr. D. and his flock, that he received an unanimous invitation to the co-pastorship, which he accepted on the 19th of April, 1827. His ordination took place on the 17th of July, in the same year. In this union, every thing was found that could promise comfort and usefulness to the pastors, and spiritual edification to the people. The bright scene, how-

ever, was soon overcast, and the amiable, talented, and excellent minister, who had been chosen to serve as a son with the father in the work of the ministry, became the subject of failing health, and threatening disease. In his peculiar afflictions, personal and domestic, and they were trying to his principles and his affections in no ordinary measure, he preserved great equanimity and fortitude, and his Christian course shone brighter and brighter, till the 9th of September, 1830, when he considered it to be his duty to tender his resignation of his collegiate charge, which the sympathising and sorrowing church had no alternative but to accept.\*

In the month of August of the following year, the Rev. W. Legg, A. B., having passed a season of probationary labour at Broad-street, was unanimously chosen to the office of co-pastor with Mr. Douglas, and was ordained by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, on the 14th day of December following. After an association with the aged minister, of more than seven years, in which

\* See an instructive memoir of this devoted young minister, whose piety and morals were of the highest tone. Edited by the Rev. H. J. Crump, chaplain of the Protestant Dissenters Grammar School, Mill Hill, Hendon, and published by Messrs. Hamilton and Co.

they co-operated with each other in the work to which they were appointed, with mutual respect, and affectionate friendship, Mr. Legg has been called to close the eyes of his venerable predecessor and fellow labourer, and has succeeded to the sole pastoral charge, amidst the benedictions and prayers of those who wish well to Zion.

It may not be unsuitable to mention in this place, a remarkable fact connected with Mr. D.'s ministry, to which the memory of some of his hearers will readily advert. He was by no means of a superstitious temperament, or in any wise addicted to give prominence to his personal experience in his public addresses. In discoursing, one Lord's day evening, upon that heart-cheering promise in Isaiah xli. 10, "Fear not, I am with thee;" he spoke to the following effect. "All can bear me witness, that I seldom speak of myself in the pulpit, and it would be wrong if I did, when topics of such momentous importance are demanding our utmost attention; but perhaps in this instance, I may be excused if I advert to the circumstance which suggested to my mind the words of the text. I dreamed that I was on a journey, and entirely ignorant of my way. On making known my dilemma to those who were my



companions, one of them, a tall, powerful, athletic man, kindly engaged to be my conductor. On our road we met several suspicious looking characters, but having perfect confidence in my guide, I endeavoured to banish fear from my mind, and thus we travelled on till we reached our destination in safety. On awaking, the passage of Scripture under consideration instantly presented itself to my mind, and I thought if I needed a guide to conduct me on an earthly journey, how much more did I require one to conduct me to my eternal home." An interesting train of observations followed this recital, upon spiritual guidance and heavenly consolation. The following lines were penned on a subsequent recollection of the occurrence, by a female hand.

"Fear not, for I am with thee."—Heavenly guide,  
Shall fear approach, when thou art by my side?  
Abroad, at home, in darkest night, by day,  
Commissioned angels guard my devious way.  
My rock, my refuge, my abiding tower,  
When danger threatens in life's stormy hour,  
Aid me! O aid, to feel the power of prayer!  
Trust in thy love, and claim a father's care,  
Looking with eye of faith through this dim sphere,  
And fearing Thee, to know no other fear!

The preaching of Mr. Douglas was character-

ized by plainness and simplicity, by sobriety of thought, and usefulness of aim. There was little of genius and imagination in his public addresses, but much of unction and spiritual power. It cannot be doubted, that if he had thrown more of embellishment into his style, and if his delivery had been accompanied with more of animated action, and the graces of elocution, he would have been numbered amongst the most popular teachers of the age. It will be found that the specimens of sermons which form this volume contain sterling truths supported by sound reasoning and scriptural proofs, and exhibited in language which, while perfectly intelligible to the unlearned, can supply no just ground of offence to those of more cultivated understandings. They who read for religious profit, rather than the gratification of mere curiosity or refined taste, will find in them a welcome and a wholesome repast. Practical usefulness, not vain display, appears to be the uniform aim of the preacher. He generally wrote in a short-hand, containing a variety of original characters, to which he alone had the key, and consequently, many valuable manuscripts may be said to have perished with him. As his great study was

to be useful, so God, who alone "giveth the increase," was pleased to accompany his labours with an encouraging measure of success. By his pulpit exercises, some were awakened and converted, and many others built up and prepared for glory. It may encourage the servants of Christ, in the absence of those manifestations of visible success which all earnestly desire, to record that Mr. Douglas, in his last sickness, was apprised of the fact that his prayers and his preaching had been blessed to an individual in the town, and now living, full forty years before the time when it was brought to his knowledge. One of his valued Deacons carried to him this cheering piece of intelligence, not long before his departure, and as he received it with expressions of humility and gratitude, so it operated as a cordial to his fainting heart. He recollected the name of the individual to whose conversion he had been instrumental, but knew nothing of the circumstances of the case till that moment. The party referred to, is an aged man, occupying an almshouse in Silver-street, possessing a deep acquaintance with the word of God, and living under its hallowed influence. His story is this: For years, he had been

accustomed to attend St. Giles's Church, and, to use his own words, was a "Parish Church bigot," and so great was his abhorrence of Dissenters, that he would have rejoiced to have "pitched them all into the river," could he have done so with impunity. After the decease of the Rev. W. B. Cadogan, his mind became unsettled, and his prejudices were somewhat subdued, so that one evening, about the year 1799, though half ashamed, he determined to attend at Broad-street. The text taken by the preacher, was, "Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out." John vi. 37. As he unfolded and applied the truth, the attention of the hearer was arrested, conviction of sin, and deep compunction for it, ensued; the message delivered was just that which he felt that he wanted, and in about half a year, after great mental suffering, he obtained peace. He continued to attend Broad-street Meeting-house, for a period of three or four years, and had fully purposed to join himself to the church of Christ in that place, but his wife, a pious woman, having united with the congregation at Castle-street chapel, persuaded him to accompany her to that spot, where he continued till her death, when he became a stated attendant at St. John's Church.

He retains an affectionate veneration for his spiritual father, and while he lived, manifested it by frequent prayers on his behalf, often exclaiming, "May God bless the aged Douglas!" and in a species of rhyme, not peculiarly poetical, but springing from the heart :—

"O happy, happy, was that Sabbath-day  
On which I first heard Douglas preach and pray!"

Men of plain minds are sometimes shrewd and accurate observers, and the mention of the prayer, as well as of the sermon by this individual, leads us to the contemplation of another prominent point in the character of the departed minister; the gift and grace of prayer, by which he was eminently distinguished. None could listen to his devotional addresses, in the family, the social circle, or the sanctuary, without being struck with the seriousness, propriety, fluency, and fulness of his supplications. In this exercise he excelled; in it he appeared always and completely at home; it was his familiar element, and he looked, and spoke, as one in commerce with the skies. This important talent, if so it may be called, rendered his pastoral visits truly consoling to the afflicted, and instructive to all who shared them. In this

department of labour he was remarkably assiduous during the earlier stages of his ministry. He preached not only in the public assembly, but also from house to house. He acted upon the sound practical maxim of the great and good Dr. Chalmers, that, "a house-going minister, makes a church-going people." If, in later years, he abounded less in those short, but profitable visits, which he was wont to pay to the poor and afflicted of his charge at their own habitations, it ought to be remembered, that from his weight of character and standing in the town, he was called upon to give much of his time and attention to various institutions of piety and benevolence, which have sprung up within the last quarter of a century; that he was singularly devoted and active in these public engagements; that his advancing years compelled him to abridge, in some degree, his labours of Christian love; and above all, that he was, for a long period, exercised with a domestic affliction of a delicate, but distressing character, which often demanded that his vigilance, attention, and sympathy, should be incessantly exercised at home. When, too, he had the aid of a co-pastor, he might, perchance, have thought himself justified in devolving much of the

detail of pastoral duty upon his younger fellow-labourer. While candour will make all due allowances in such cases, it cannot admit of a doubt, that to be familiar with scenes of suffering and sorrow, and to have an ear open to the tale of woe, is one way of acquiring the faculty of speaking "a word in season to him that is weary." And for every department of service, a man, to do it well, must separate himself to it, and engage in it heartily. Let ministers and private Christians who would addict themselves to works of usefulness, ever remember those thrilling words, which the Judge of all, will address to his faithful followers, "I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me." "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me."

For the last year or two, the beloved and faithful shepherd had been the subject of occasional indisposition of body, and more than once had suffered from acute inflammation of the chest, inducing a great tenderness of the lungs, and peculiar susceptibility of cold. Intimations, by no means equivocal, were apparent, that before long he must put off the tabernacle of mortal flesh. In

the January of 1839, he was laid aside by a complaint resembling the influenza. His nights were restless, his appetite failed him, his breathing was considerably embarrassed, and though exempt from violent pain, he was regarded by his friends, more, perhaps, than by himself, in a critical and dangerous state. From the nature of his disease, he spoke very seldom, and with much difficulty; this occasioned him, during a great part of his last illness, almost to dwell in silence. He seemed, indeed, to shrink, for the most part, from the effort necessary to free conversation. Disease had greatly enfeebled the power of articulation, and rendered its exercise painful. He was not, however, deterred from addressing suitable words to the few individuals who had the privilege of visiting him. To his colleague, on his first visit to him, after he had taken to his bed, he remarked, "I am lying here, waiting to see what the Lord intends to do with me. Wearisome nights are appointed unto me, but I know who has appointed them;" at another time, "I have had such views of the glory of my Redeemer's person and cross, since I have been lying here, as I never had before." To the same, after an event of some public interest, which had



occupied much of his thoughts and prayers, a disputation between Mr. Owen, and the Rev. W. Legg in the Town-hall, on the impious and offensive tenets of the former; he observed, "I am glad, my dear brother, that you were not left on the field of battle. I have had my mind much exercised with a wish, that you had given the poor unhappy scoffer a solemn word of exhortation before you parted." When informed that such was the case, he rejoiced exceedingly, and prayed that it might be blessed to the soul of the unbeliever! He continued to manifest the same spirit of devotion with his family, till he was no longer able to direct their thoughts to the mercy seat.

In one of his last prayers with his household, his desires were enlarged in a remarkable degree. He prayed for all the members of the church, and for the whole world. And when imploring blessings for his own family, he was overcome by the power of irrepressible emotion. He prayed that his upper servant, long valued for her fidelity and attachment to his interests, might be blessed and preserved, and might ever retain towards his dear afflicted wife, whom he was about to leave without his protection, all that tenderness and affection

which she had ever shown, remembering that she would be doing service to one of the redeemed. His undisturbed composure was remarked by all who saw him. In an early stage of his sickness, when suffering much, it being the morning of the sabbath, his sister said to him, "I cannot think of leaving you, while you are in such distress;" to which he replied, "By no means remain here," quoting the lines of Dr. Watts:—

"In every new distress  
We'll to thy house repair."

At this time he had not entirely relinquished the hope of appearing again in the pulpit, and remarked, "Though I suffer—Father, glorify thy name. I will preach on that text, if ever I preach again! But my will is swallowed up in God's will, if He is glorified, I am satisfied. While here, I wish to show that there is a reality in the Gospel which I have preached to others. It is a tried stone on which I have built, and able to sustain every pressure. I am not anxious to know the result of my affliction, if God is but glorified." A friend who saw him frequently, writes, "Having been admitted to his confidence, on some matters connected with his private affairs, I had various

opportunities of seeing him during his illness, and as he grew weaker, introduced more sparingly to his notice concerns of business, and oftener heard him dwell upon the holier realities of eternity, and could not but observe the sacred pleasure with which he spoke of them, and the absorption of his own in the Divine will. He referred on one occasion, to his younger days, as though contrasting the beginning, with the end of his course, while he anticipated with delight, the hour when he should be reunited with those who set out with him in the Christian race, and had passed the flood before him, observing, that of a large company he was almost the only survivor. On the Wednesday prior to his death, having been apprised that his medical attendants considered that every hour might be his last, I sent a message to request that I might be permitted to bid him a last farewell; he replied, that he could not refuse so poor a request. Soon after I entered the room in which he was expiring, he told me, that the doctors had said that he might live through the day, but that he considered himself to be dying. His voice was so low, that I was obliged to place my ear close to his lips, in order to catch their utterance. He inquired

after my little family, with an expression of peculiar kindness, and while he grasped my hand he said, ‘ Give my love to your sisters, and all the “ Lambs,”\* and tell them that there is no name in heaven so sweet as that which they bear. The Lamb in the midst of the throne is now all my hope, my joy, my delight; when we meet again, may it be in His presence, to adore Him, and sing his praise! Tell all the “ Lambs ” that I charged it upon them, to meet me there.—Farewell, this is our last interview upon earth!’ His faith continued stedfast unto the end.” When a near relative saw him in great suffering, she said, with a tone of earnestness, “ Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.” He rejoined, “ Don’t say so; the Lord’s time is the best.” To another, he said, “ Do you think I am now dying!” “ I fear you are.” “ Fear,” he exclaimed, “ why do you fear? that is what I am waiting for!” His friend inquired, “ Is Jesus precious to your soul?” “ Yes, I cannot distrust him. The thought of continuing here, is much more painful than that of dying.” When his last Sabbath on earth was drawing nigh, he observed, “ How delightful would it be, having been detained so many Sabbaths from

\* The name of a family well known at Reading.

the Lord's house, to begin my next Sabbath in heaven!" Perceiving some of his friends about him, he said, "There—I will preach the gospel to you once more, 'Him that cometh, I will in no wise cast out.'" In this blessed frame of mind he remained till he obtained his release.

One of the deacons of the church, to whom he intrusted the arrangement of his affairs, having received from his lips some directions which were soon despatched, writes,—“These matters disposed of, he turned with all that deep-felt seriousness which an approaching eternity produces, to his own immediate position, and much, very much was I struck with his deep humiliation before God; his filial submission to the divine will, and his manifest desire that the glory of God might be promoted by the circumstances in which he was placed. He observed, ‘It is my particular wish that nothing may be said commendatory of me, for on the review of the past, I find so much that has been defective in my duties and motives, that I can only say, God be merciful to me, a sinner!’ Referring to the possibility of recovery, he said, ‘I only wish that it may be according to the will of God.’ But what most impressed my mind, was the emphatic manner in

which he expatiated on the sublime glories of the Gospel. ‘ Since lying on this bed of affliction, and meditating on the gospel which I have long preached, I find in it such increasing, such inexpressible glories, that it appears to me, that heaven itself cannot be more full of glory, than is God’s redeeming plan of mercy, the glorious Gospel ! ’ ”

The estimation in which the subject of this memoir was held by his brethren in the ministry, by his own flock, and by the public generally, was fully manifested, on the occasion when his mortal remains were conveyed to their last earthly resting place. Thirty ministers of different denominations in the town and the surrounding country attended and assisted at his obsequies. The Rev. James Sherman, of Surrey Chapel; the Rev. J. H. Hinton, of Devonshire-square, London; the Rev. Messrs. Kershaw and Wilkins, of Abingdon; the Rev. Mr. Harris, of Wallingford; and the Rev. Mr. Dryland, of Newbury, acted as pall-bearers. The Rev. W. Legg, co-pastor with the deceased, delivered the funeral oration at the interment, while several other ministers engaged in the devotional solemnities of the day, in presence of a crowded auditory. On the Sabbath following, at the re-

quest of the minister, and the bereaved Church, the funeral sermon was preached by the writer of these pages, to an overflowing congregation, from Dan. xii. 3.

As a tribute of personal friendship, on the part of the two Christian ladies, already referred to in the narrative, a neat and handsome marble tablet has been placed in the sanctuary of God, which was, for so many years, the scene of Mr. Douglas's faithful ministrations ; it bears the following inscription :

IN MEMORY OF  
THE REV. ARCHIBALD DOUGLAS,  
WHO, AFTER HAVING FOR 43 YEARS  
DISCHARGED WITH FIDELITY  
THE DUTIES OF THE PASTORAL OFFICE  
TO THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION ASSEMBLING  
IN THIS PLACE ;  
ENTERED INTO REST 26TH MARCH, 1839,  
IN HIS 75TH YEAR.

“ BLESSED IS THAT SERVANT, WHOM HIS LORD, WHEN HE  
COMETH, SHALL FIND SO DOING.”

To these manifestations of regard to the deceased, it may be proper to add, as it is certainly gratifying to record, that several of the clergy of the three parishes showed their Christian sympathy, by visiting him during his last illness, with one of whom he had been for many years associated as secretary to the Reading Auxiliary Bible Society.

In person, Mr. Douglas was rather above the middle stature, his complexion light, his frame strongly built, and his countenance giving out an expression of gravity without gloom, cheerfulness without levity, and benevolence without weakness.

In making a cursory review of his character, both as a Christian or a minister, it will be apparent to the reflecting observer, that he was a man of much thought, diligent study, and various reading. If, indeed, his gifts, and his manner, as a preacher, were not of the more striking and popular order, his qualities as a pastor were of no ordinary kind. Watchful, industrious, judicious, patient, sympathising and active, he approved himself the man of God, thoroughly furnished to every good word and work. He laboured incessantly to promote the interests of personal, domestic, and social piety amongst the people of his charge, and in his pastoral visits preached from house to house; while in the public distribution of the word, as a faithful and wise steward, he gave to each of his hearers a portion in due season.

His habits of thinking were independent, and in the best sense of the word original. It is true he affected no novelties of phrase and diction,



nor causelessly rejected the terms which have been sanctioned by long usage in the nomenclature of theology: he advocated no innovations, he practised no eccentricities, that he might pass for a great genius, soaring above the common places of ordinary minds; yet he thought and investigated truth for himself. He deferred not to human authority in matters of religious interest, any farther than it was consonant with the supreme standard of the Holy Scriptures. Often has he been heard to enjoin it upon a young friend in training for the Christian ministry, who resided for a season under his roof, "Take nothing on trust, but what you find among the true sayings of God in his inspired revelation." "Call no man master upon earth," and then, in his own colloquial phrase, would add, "Think for yourself, if you think ever so little." His views of divine truth may be summarily described as those of moderate Calvinism. To this general result, he was brought after a calm and elaborate examination of the conflicting systems of Pelagianism on the one hand, and of Supralapsarian doctrine on the other. He was deeply read in the Socinian controversy, having entered upon his public ministry at a time when the

pernicious dogmas of the self-styled Unitarian school were strenuously advocated by Drs. Price and Priestley, Mr. Belsham, and the editors of the "Monthly Review." He read—he weighed—he pondered well, the arguments for and against the doctrines which he held and preached, and became more deeply and decidedly convinced of their irrefragable truth, and essential importance. He was enabled, by the aid of a light incomparably superior to that of unassisted reason, to detect the entire fallacy, and inconceivable danger of the opposite hypothesis, and in consequence, lived and died, holding fast the faithful word, and cleaving with intense approbation, and undecaying affection to the doctrines of grace, scorned and vilified, as in some quarters they are. He received, and exhibited salvation, according to the purpose of God the Father, through the righteousness and atonement of God the Son, by sanctification of God the Holy Spirit, and belief of the truth. He insisted upon faith, as the sole instrument of justification—yet as purifying the heart—producing the fruits of holiness—teeming with good works, and conducting to immortal happiness.

He was a man of fixed and settled purpose.

All might know his object, for to it, every thing in the structure of his habits, was subordinated. His heart was fixed, and amidst the oscillations, and tergiversations of many of his contemporaries, he remained firm as the mountain, immoveable as the rock. Although far removed from that complaisant versatility, which passes under the fashionable name of liberalism, he was untainted by bigotry, bitterness, and uncharitableness.

Prudence was one of the most conspicuous of his characteristic virtues. In him, a wise circumspection never slumbered nor slept. He was guarded at all points, and none can recollect the occasion in which he thoughtlessly or injuriously committed himself. The wisdom of the serpent, was happily blended with the harmlessness of the dove. In his family, among his friends, in the concerns of his Church and congregation, this desirable combination was signally exemplified. The general control which he was enabled to exercise over his temper, his language, and his actions, demonstrated that he had been instructed in the school of Christ, to govern his thoughts, master his passions, and to live as in the presence of God.

“As ever in his great task-master’s eye.”

His prudential management of his temporal affairs is instructive. Unexpensive and frugal in his personal habits and in his plan of domestic economy, he could freely give to him that needed. With a ministerial stipend, at no time large, and without the resources of a private fortune, he contrived to provide things honest in the sight of all men, to avoid debts, to assist essentially, several of his near relatives, and to bequeath to his nearest kindred and his faithful dependents a competent provision. His surviving representatives are not left to the precarious succour of a posthumous subscription, nor to the capricious sympathies of the "religious public." What some persons are pleased to call, "living in faith," and "dying in faith," while they neglect the fair and honourable means placed at their command, for meeting the obligations of domestic and relative life, the writer cannot but regard as imprudence and presumption. It partakes more of reckless inconsideration than a holy disinterestedness and a Christian devotedness. If that be a statute law of Christ's kingdom, "He that provideth not for his own, especially those of his own household, hath denied the faith, and is worse

than an infidel;" how can it be assumed to be an attribute of an exalted and heroic "faith," to leave our nearest and dearest kindred to the tender mercies of a pitiless and inhospitable world?

While not regardless of private virtue, Mr. Douglas was much distinguished by a public spirit. From the time of his settlement at Reading, and as his influence gradually augmented, he went about doing good. This important talent was conscientiously appropriated according to his best judgment, through a widely extended range, to the highest and noblest objects. It is forty years ago, that he gave birth to a select society for reading, conversation, and the cultivation and exercise of the intellectual faculty. He was one of the first founders, the earliest supporters, and the steadiest advocates of the London Missionary Society. The open and unsectarian constitution of that society was not the least of its recommendations and attractions in his estimation. The writer deems himself to be perfectly correct in stating, that in no instance, possibly, with a solitary exception, was this friend of the gospel and of his species, absent from the annual meeting of the society from the period of its organization to the close of his own existence. At this great

festival in the month of May, he failed not to take his place in the front gallery of Surrey Chapel, and might constantly be seen there, as much like a fixture as the time-piece itself. Alas! that the place which once knew him shall know him no more.

When the British and Foreign Bible Society, like the star of the morning, arose in chaste simplicity and majestic brightness, he rejoiced with exceeding great joy. He entered at once into its comprehensive design, identified himself with its benevolent operations, and lent his counsels and his aid as one of its agents to direct its movements. The town of Reading has the imperishable honour of having taken the lead in the auxiliary system, by which the funds and labours of that princely institution have been so efficiently sustained. Joined by the pious clergy and by distinguished lay members of the Established Church, among whom Dr. Ring—a name long associated with all that is philanthropic and christian in the town, and dear, not to Reading only, but to all the churches of the saints—stood foremost. Mr. Douglas became one of the secretaries of the Auxiliary, and laboured with a fervent mind, to the day of his death, in promoting the universal dissemination of the word of life.

To the local institutions of the town and neighbourhood he dedicated much both of time and labour. To the work of village preaching, to the support and propagation of the gospel in the surrounding churches, and to the affairs of the county association, he gave himself with all his heart, and soul, and strength, and mind. A Circular Letter drawn up by him, and adopted and printed by the brethren of the Berkshire Association of Congregational Ministers, is given at the end of the volume as a specimen of his state of mind and feeling in relation to the subject of home-missionary operations.

The writer is obliged to a particular friend of the deceased, himself an acute and experienced observer of men and things, for the narrative and remarks which are gladly inserted in this place :—

“ In the summer of 1815, shortly after I came to Reading, I rode with Mr. D. to Maple Durham, when we enjoyed a few hours of the most delightful Christian intercourse, and on our return through Caversham, called on the Rev. William Kingsbury, formerly of Southampton. The conversation on that occasion turned almost exclusively on the progress of religion in the town of Reading and

the neighbourhood during the twenty years Mr. D. had spent here. He began by telling me of the great usefulness of Mr. Cadogan previous to his settlement in the town, and of the friendly reception he had had on his coming, from that honoured and devoted man, as a fellow-labourer in the same great spiritual husbandry. He spoke of his own efforts and usefulness with that characteristic sobriety, wisdom, and humility, for which he was distinguished. And though some of the accessions to the church and congregations in the early part of his ministry at Reading, were of such a nature as might have produced something like self-gratulation, from all I could perceive, these things had not acted injuriously on his own mind.

“It is a great thing when it can be said of a Christian minister who has exchanged an obscure contracted sphere for one more elevated and commanding, that he retains his original simplicity and purity of character, and that he proves to be the same self-denied, devoted man, in the one situation as in the other. I doubt not that the studies and self-denied habits which were much strengthened while Mr. D. laboured at Newmarket, greatly fitted him for the more extensive field of usefulness he



occupied at Reading. No minister who is a thorough missionary at heart, will regret the early training he may have had in his noviciate, if that training has led him to a more intimate acquaintance with himself, and with the inexhaustible resources of the Saviour's grace. To be efficient instruments of good to others, we must have acquired experience by the things we have suffered. I felt the favoured interview referred to, peculiarly refreshing to my own spirit, and could not but be thankful that my lot had been cast so near a minister of some considerable experience, who treated a younger brother in the ministry with such kind confidence.

“ Mr. D., who warmly espoused the cause of foreign missions from their commencement, was most consistent and exemplary in forwarding means to carry the gospel into destitute villages in the neighbourhood. He took a leading part in preaching in the villages as he had opportunity, and in forming the Reading Evangelical Society, which was organized and established in 1797, chiefly with a view to promote village preaching.

“ On the occasion referred to, Mr. D. gave an interesting detail of three different stations con-

nected with the Reading Evangelical Society where ministers were fixed, and where good was going forward. But Mr. D. is not a singular instance, for it will be found that whenever ministers or private Christians have had their minds directed towards foreign missions, by the same kind of process have they felt the need of home-missionary labour. There has been a healthy reaction, that has led to some good practical movements in behalf of the thousands at our own door perishing in ignorance and in sin.

“ Since the time that the first impulse was given to the subject of village preaching by Mr. D. and the friends who acted with him, there has been a large increase of stations and agency emanating from the different congregations in the town. A few general hints on this interesting subject will form the concluding part of this letter.

“ It is to be feared, that in some instances, injury has been done to the cause of Christ by forming too low a standard in respect to the qualifications of those who engage in such services, from a mistaken notion that any thing will do for the villages. Now I apprehend that it will be found easier in many instances to raise funds than to find

suitable agents, men of consistent and exemplary piety with the other requisite qualifications needful to the village teacher. Zeal itself, apart from the meekness of wisdom, will do more harm than good. The men who engage in these labours should be men of simple, fervent piety, of acknowledged prudence, and if possible of some standing in the Christian profession, and recognized by the churches to which they belong as village agents. And as the country people are so dependent on oral instruction, it is of consequence that what they hear be of the best quality, and such as is best calculated to promote the cause of vital and enlightened piety. And to secure such invaluable objects in all the village stations connected with Christian churches throughout the land, it would be desirable that the agents employed in this good work should have some judicious culture on the part of their pastors.

“In every thing that is done to promote the kingdom of Christ in the world, we need carefully to watch against the first motions of spiritual pride and self-complacency in our doings. It is much easier to raise a man to the rank of a Christian teacher, than to insure his honouring the office

after he has been raised to it. Spiritual pride and self-conceit are no dubious evils in those who are invested with the office of Christian teachers, even though it may be only the village teacher. Let every one engaged in this honourable but self-denied service, labour to approve himself to the Great Master he professes to serve. Let him guard against every thing approaching to a spirit of self-importance, and take care that he give no high-coloured or inflated accounts of his doings or success. "Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and enduring hardness, and not fainting under discouragements in the good work of the Lord, is the sure road to real honour and usefulness. 'We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.'" 2 Cor. iv. 7.

As a protestant dissenter, Mr. Douglas was decided and uncompromising, yet candid and liberal; sincerely loving all of every persuasion who love the Lord Jesus Christ and bear his image. No one who knew him could fail to discover where he stood in relation to matters of church polity, for he was able

and ready at all times, to vindicate his principles and justify his predilections ; but you might pass days and even weeks or months in his society without having the minutiae of denominational peculiarities obtruded on your notice as though they were the topics of supreme and absorbing importance. His was the dissent of principle and not of party.

The devotional spirit which he breathed, rendered his public services and private visits singularly interesting and edifying to pious minds. He had, in an eminent degree, both the gifts and the grace of prayer. An intimate friend, and a devoted member of his flock, has favoured the writer with the following brief but judicious sketch of this feature of his character.

“ Though Mr. D. appeared always respectable when leading the devotions of others in public, his greater forte perhaps was when conversing in the social circle and engaging in family prayer. When his powers were thus called out, he appeared to peculiar advantage, and gave ample proof of the profundity of his researches in the best divinity reading. While he assigned a proper place to the productions of the day, he used to say, that reading

some of the old divines was like digging for the precious ores, and that he always found a satisfactory account of the time thus employed.

“ Mr. D. was a close student through life. He read and thought much, and his sermons and private instructions were calculated to form judicious Christians, not likely to give undue prominence to some truths to the neglect of others. Indeed, after an acquaintance of many years, the first and the last sentiment produced in our mind is this, that the character of his ministrations is expressed in those comprehensive words of St. Paul to Titus, ‘ Sound speech that cannot be condemned.’ ”

His equanimity and patience under personal and relative afflictions could not have escaped the particular notice of those who were conversant with him. Under delicate and very sorrowful inflictions of Divine Providence, by which his tranquil home was disturbed, his fire-side enjoyments desolated, and all his pleasant things laid waste, he was never heard to murmur or repine. In manly firmness, and in Christian patience, he possessed his soul. It was indeed a subject of wonder to those who knew him best, that his spirit was sustained

from day to day and from year to year under the protracted pressure of this peculiar cross. He beheld the cup of suffering as in the hand of a father, and he said with the calmness of an uncomplaining resignation, " Shall I not drink it ? "

Over all his other graces and virtues, he wore the veil of unaffected humility. By the grace of God he was instructed not to think more highly of himself than was meet. He was not one of those who seek glory of men, who struggle for the uppermost room at feasts, who love greetings in the market places, and affect the chief seat in the synagogue. On no occasion did he thrust himself offensively in the foreground, or court the public gaze. In this modest, retiring, holy, and useful course he was enabled to endure unto the end, and has passed, as we confidently believe, to that world where patience terminates in enjoyment, humility is crowned, and faith receives the prize.

# A D D R E S S

AT

THE FUNERAL OF THE REV. A. DOUGLAS,

BY HIS CO-PASTOR AND SUCCESSOR,

THE REV. W. LEGG, B. A.

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FATHERS, and Brethren in the ministry, Christian friends,—I rise before you at this time with feelings of peculiar emotion; and had it not been the express desire of my departed father, I should not have stood before you on this solemn occasion, as it would have been far preferable to me, to have been sitting at the feet, and listening to the voice of some one of the numerous ministers who have now assembled, to pay their last tribute of respect to the memory of the dead.

About a month before his death, Mr. Douglas gave directions about his funeral, and assigned to me the part he wished me to take, and this he did with as much self-possession and calmness, as



when he sometimes requested me to take his turn at a prayer-meeting, or preach a sermon in his stead, displaying an elevation of mind, which I had never so fully appreciated in him before.

I do not stand here to eulogize the dead, but merely to offer that tribute to departed worth, to which the deceased was so justly entitled, and which may tend to stimulate us to follow his example, so that, at length, we, like him, may enter into the joy of our Lord. Such examples, it is meet for us to cherish, for heaven will not be obtained by a few languid desires ; there must be the same active obedience, the offspring of the same lively faith. The living example is no more. Those mild features, that manly form, that used to soothe the heart, and satisfy the eye, are now lifeless ; that countenance, which was wont to beam with benignity and intelligence, we have now shrouded from our view ; that voice, from which issued instruction, satisfying to the most mature Christian, is now for ever silent. He has now done with all that concerns this mortal life, and is realizing, in their full extent, those joys on which, when here, he delighted to expatiate. Mr. D. was the child of godly parents, who early instilled reli-

gious principles into his mind, and stored his memory with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, which accounts for that rich fund of holy writ and sacred poetry he possessed, and with which he illustrated and enforced his discourses.

He entered early into the ministry, which may be concluded was the case, from the lengthened period during which he sustained the pastorate here, besides having been previously engaged in the same work elsewhere. His ministerial course afforded an illustration of the motto, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Faith was the grand connecting link of all his graces, from which emanated that holiness of life for which he was distinguished, and which shed such a mild lustre over the whole of his general deportment. The fervent and exalted piety, by which his devotional exercises were imbued, which has often led our minds, cherished as from a source of sweetest pleasure, very near to the footstool of the eternal throne, and which spread its sacred influence over the entire period of his closing scene with peculiar power, was piety springing from the firm faith of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

In the social circle, he was characterized by his cheerfulness and vivacity, and his conversation tended much both to cheer and edify those were favoured with his more familiar intercourses. There was indeed a certain playfulness in his manner, which frequently sparkled with the most inoffensive wit; but his pure and enlightened piety kept all his communications equally remote from levity and moroseness. In this respect, his conduct was a living refutation of the sentiment that religion generates gloom; in him it never appeared.

In his intercourse with the world, all recognized him as a man of strict, unbending integrity; never did the breath of slander descend upon his name. In affording advice to his own people, and others, his sage and judicious counsels were much, and deservedly appreciated. His judgment was sound and enlightened, and his views on almost every subject submitted to him, were accurate and just. His uniform Christian conduct, and truly catholic spirit, gained him the respect of all denominations. He entered with all his heart into the formation and support of various charitable and religious institutions of the day. He was present at the first meeting of the Fathers and Founders of the

London Missionary Society, and continued till his death, one of the secretaries of the Reading Auxiliary to the Bible Society, which was the first branch established in the kingdom. His happy tact in despatching business in committees, rendered him very useful in that department, and his attendance there, though often at a considerable sacrifice of time, was to himself a source of much satisfaction.

The faithful discharge of his ministerial duties is well known. He watched with fidelity and care over the souls committed to his charge, as one that has to render an account. In the midst of this course of usefulness he was not without his trials, though his life was on the whole both prosperous and tranquil. One all-absorbing trial visited him in the prime of manhood, and, as he told me, for many years greatly embittered his earthly cup. He was not called to follow his beloved Elizabeth to the tomb, but he had to mourn for twenty years over the flight of her intellect, and was thus bereft of that support in his ministry which arises from the circulation of rational enjoyment from heart to heart of those who are united in the closest of earthly bonds. Besides this, he had his trials peculiar to a minister. For some he had to grieve

who had gone astray from the paths of holiness, and who had no more returned to walk with Jesus. For others he was wont to tremble. He deeply felt what would be the awful doom awaiting the rejecters of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Much importance is often attached to dying experiences, but his life was a practical comment on Christianity, a living example of the truths he preached. There were, however, during his last illness, many sentences uttered by him, which evinced the tranquillity of his mind. On one occasion he said to me on entering the room, "O what delightful views I have been realizing of God and of Christ, and of my covenant relation to him! Should I ever preach again there is one text I should take, 'Father, glorify thy name.' But so that God is glorified, I am satisfied." At another time he said, "I am waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus." Being in great pain, a friend said, "Come Lord Jesus, come quickly;" he replied, "the Lord's time is the best." When approaching the dark valley, he said, "Do you think I am dying?" "I fear you are," was the reply. "O fear not," he said, "I am longing to be gone."

While there was any strength remaining, he

prayed with his family and domestics, and on one occasion was so carried out as to astonish all who were present. He prayed for all the church, the congregation, the town and neighbourhood, but was greatly overcome when he came to mention his immediate family. He prayed that his upper servant might continue the same watchful care over her mistress that she had ever evinced, remembering that she would be watching over a redeemed spirit. The last time he prayed with his family, he said at the close, "There, I will preach the gospel to you once more, 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.'"

Let me address, in conclusion, a few words to the different classes in this large assembly of unfeigned mourners.

My aged friends—your revered pastor and friend is no more. You begin to pay the penalty of long life which all who live long in this vale of tears must pay, that of surviving your best and earliest associates. One and another has recently dropped from your side, and now your sympathizing counsellor is gone. Remember his example both in the maturity of manhood and the mellowness of age.

Follow him as he followed Christ, and your end, like his, will be peace.

Young people—although of late your deceased minister was in a great measure relieved by his junior brethren from the more particular care of your souls, yet he thought of you, he prayed for you, he was solicitous for your spiritual welfare. Remember his words. Often has he admonished you that there is no more awful place from which to go unprepared to the bar of God, than from the sanctuary below and the circle of pious friends. In that sanctuary, in that circle you can see his face no more. Will you meet him in the sanctuary above?

My fathers and brethren in the ministry—let me speak one word to you over the lifeless remains of our lamented friend. I will allow myself to speak freely, for I know to whom I am speaking. I have confidence in you. My spirit is joined to your spirit. I see in you the successors of the Puritans, and of those wonderful men who for the last fifty years preached the gospel to the churches, and founded the societies which are the glory of the age. Their sepulchres are with us, their institutions are with us,

and their doctrines are with us to this day. O may their mantles rest upon us, and may we emulate the zeal and faithfulness with which they served their Lord ; they are gone to their last account—our brother has joined them, and we are rapidly following. The time is short. Whatever we do, we must do quickly. Soon we shall appear with our respective charges before the judgment-seat of Christ. How solemn the scene which then will open between a pastor and his flock ; when all his official conduct to them shall be scrutinized, and all their treatment of him and of his message shall be laid bare ; when it shall be discovered that an omniscient eye followed him into his study, and traced every motion of his heart, followed him into the pulpit, and watched every kindling desire, every drowsy feeling, every wandering thought, every reach after fame. Ah, my brethren, when we hear on the right hand the songs of bursting praise that we ever had an existence, and on the left a company of wretched spirits sending forth the loud and bitter lamentation that we had not warned them with a stronger, a more piercing voice—shall we not regret that all our sermons were not more impassioned, and all our prayers more agonizing ? On



the bare apprehension of such a scene, is not each of us ready to cry, Give me poverty, give me the reproaches of a wicked world, give me even the martyr's stake, but, O my God, save me from unfaithfulness to thee and to the souls of men !

S E R M O N S.



## SERMON I.

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*Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

JOHN I. 29.

THE character and official employment of John the Baptist, deserve peculiar regard. The greatness of his character has been given by one who was not liable to mistake, and who could not utter any thing false; it was thus expressed, "Of all who have been born of women, there hath not arisen a greater than John." As to his office, he was the harbinger of the glorious Messiah, and came to bear the most clear and full testimony to Him. "He came as a witness" both to the glory of his person, and his important work; part of his testimony is now before us. What claims to attention such a speaker possesses! View him surrounded with a multitude of sinful persons; his heart feels for them, he has to direct them to one "mighty to save," he does so with affection and warmth, probably pointing to Jesus while he uttered the language of the text, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." To whom can we look but to the same object? Can

any advice more suit our case as sinners? Can any truths more deeply interest our minds? We cannot indeed see him with our bodily eyes as the hearers of John could, yet he is presented to us in his word. The Spirit of God can open our eyes to view him in such a manner as shall be attended with the best effects, and answer the grandest purposes. May we, in dependence upon him, turn our eyes from the fascinating pleasures of the world, from the bewitching glare of present things, and from every thing vain and dangerous, that we may “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” Consider,

I. The representation—“the Lamb of God.”

II. His glorious work—“taketh away the sin of the world.”

III. The regard claimed—“Behold.”

I. The representation—“the Lamb of God.”

The Lord Jesus is often represented by the sacred writers as a lamb. Isaiah says, “He is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter.” Peter writing on redemption, asserts, that it was “with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” John in Revelation “saw a lamb as it had been slain, &c.” The frequency of this metaphor could not be from any poverty of ideas, but to intimate the necessity of our dwelling upon what it is intended to convey.

The lamb as the emblem of innocency sets forth the spotless purity of Jesus Christ.

That Christ, though the greatest sufferer, was with-

out sin, the inspired penmen sufficiently declare. "He was made sin (*i. e.* a sin offering) for us who knew no sin." "He suffered the just for the unjust." "He was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners," there was no guile found in his heart or lips. It may be said those are the expressions of his friends and followers; nevertheless, they are inspired and true; however, we fear not to make his enemies judges upon this occasion. Herod, what hast thou to say against him whom thou didst set at nought? point out what may justify thy reviling him; canst thou not fix upon any thing? "No," he says, "I find no fault in him." Pilate, thou wert not deterred from passing upon him a sentence of condemnation; no, not by the solemn adjuration of thy wife, "Have nothing to do with that just person." But whence did that sentence proceed? was it from an inflexible regard to justice, or from a consciousness of Christ's being criminal? Just the reverse: "Pilate called for water, washed his hands in the presence of the assembly, and said, I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye to it." Shall I call up the centurion who witnessed Jesus in the moments of his departure, and saw the events, and cried out, "Certainly this was a righteous man: truly this was the Son of God." Shall I subpoena the multitudes who went unconcerned to see him expire, but returned smiting upon their breasts? One, more particular than any of those I would notice, even Judas, who though a professed disciple, betrayed him, who valued him at no more

than thirty pieces of silver, about three pounds fifteen shillings of our money. Judas, you have seen him, if I may so speak, in the undress of life, you have witnessed his language and spirit when he receded from the public eye, but did you observe anything inconsistent either against God or man? Was there a difference between his private character and public appearance? Ah! Judas, I behold you utterly confounded with the inquiries; you cannot find any thing to answer the upbraidings of your conscience, you can no longer detain your ill-gotten pelf, you can no longer conceal your guilt, or bear your miserable existence; well, go throw down thy money before thy bloody employers, and vindicate my Saviour by confessing, "I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood." Thus, as on an immovable basis rests the purity of my Lord. Nor is this a subject for mere speculation, for if he had not been pure, how could he have atoned for my guilt? "Such a High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners."

The Lamb is the pattern of meekness. The meekness of Jesus was unparalleled, "he was meek and lowly of heart;" none ever heard unbecoming expressions drop from him,—he never adopted angry reproaches. "When he was reviled, he reviled not again." He, far from countenancing the warmth of Peter employed in his defence, restored the ear of Malchus which had been struck off by Peter's sword. When before Pilate, he said so

little in favour of himself, that his judge wondered, knowing that he could have said very much. And as the Lamb has been seen to lick the hand which points the blade to its throat, so while the sons of violence roared around the Saviour, and trifled with his dying pangs, he with amazing meekness poured out his prayers for them, crying, "Father, forgive them," and extenuating the guilt of his murderers as far as proper, adds, "they know not what they do."

"Such love, and meekness so divine,  
I would transcribe and make them mine."

There appears in the text an evident allusion to the lambs offered in sacrifice under the Mosaic economy or dispensation. It may be read, "Behold *that* Lamb of God;" that lamb predicted of by the prophets, and prefigured by the ancient sacrifices. For an account of the paschal lamb, see Exod. xii. 3—5; in reference to which, the apostle Paul observes, 1 Cor. v. 7, "For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." The analogy between the type and antitype is most striking, and might be pointed out in a great variety of particulars; suffice it to remark, it was to be a male of the first year: so Christ was crucified in the prime of his days. The blood was to be sprinkled upon the habitations of the Israelites: so the blood of Jesus, applied to the consciences of believers, is called the "blood of sprinkling." As the paschal lamb was to be eaten, wholly eaten, and that with bitter herbs, thus Christ must



be received by faith in all his offices and work ; and this faith is connected with repentance, or godly sorrow.

Safety was insured to those who partook of the sacrifice as above described. The destroying angel could not touch them. Salvation of the soul is also the end of true faith in the Lord Jesus ; “ he who believeth shall never perish,” but “ be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.” In the above-mentioned, and many other particulars, there is a clear agreement ; but the text teaches us the vast superiority of the sacrifice it exhibits.

This is said to be the Lamb of God, offered by divine appointment. “ He was verily fore-ordained before the foundation of the world,” 1 Pet. i. 20, and “ delivered according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,” Acts ii. 23. Herein was fulfilled what Abraham predicted to his son Isaac, “ God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering.” “ Abraham saw the day of Christ and was glad.” Agreeably to the will of the Father, this lamb was consecrated to him. When other sacrifices were offered, they were found incapable of removing guilt : to do this, there was not any thing in their nature or value, then Christ said, “ Lo, I come to do thy will, O God, a body hast thou prepared me :” so, “ through the Eternal Spirit, he offered himself without spot to God.”

That the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ was accepted of divine justice, hath been confirmed by his release from the prison of the grave, by an

angelic messenger rolling away the stone, though he could have done it with a word: by the glorious ascension to the majestic state on high; by the descent of the Holy Spirit; and, by the powerful effects of his mediation on the hearts of thousands, among which effects the removal of sin is one of the greatest. We are led to consider,

II. His glorious work—"He taketh away the sin of the world."

It is not my intention now to dwell upon the origin of evil, its removal is far more important. Nothing can be plainer than what the language before us intimates, that sin hath entered into our world; no part is exempt from this wide-spreading evil; every kingdom is under its baneful influence; nor are the smallest villages exempt; it hath extended to every heart, and found its way into every relation, duty, and enjoyment; not one of those has been preserved entire from its defiling nature, its debasing influence, or its disgusting stain. The grand inquiry of each should be, How can I obtain deliverance from this worst enemy? Where can I look for succour against its power, cleansing from its pollution, and redemption from its curse? Here is an answer,

Look to Jesus. "He taketh away the sin of the world." In Leviticus xvi. 21, we read of the scape-goat, on which "the high-priest was to lay both his hands, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their trans-

gressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and to send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness; and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited." Here was a ceremonial transfer of sins, from the people to the animal, and this imputation was in order to sin's removal, or being borne away. In like manner hath God the Father laid on his Son "the iniquity of all" his people, Isa. liii. 6. The New Testament assures us that "Jesus his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we being now dead to sin, should live unto righteousness." Delightful truth! the Lamb of God hath borne away the imputed guilt of his people,—hath removed it "as far from them as the east is from the west," and thus, "by his knowledge, (or, the knowledge of him,) he justifies many, having borne their iniquities," Isa. liii. 11. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus," who evidence this by walking not after the flesh, but after the spirit. Well might St. Paul say, (and ought not we to adopt the same language?) "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; that I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God, by faith." This is a deliverance suited to our state, as guilty criminals before God. It is not, however, confined here; it

is equally adapted to our condition, as we are enslaved by the power of sin, impelled to the practice, and what is worse, are pleased with the chains it forges, and with alacrity engage in its degrading servitude. The principles of education, the force of good example, the dictates of natural conscience, and afflictions of Providence unsanctified, are incapable of producing our emancipation. The grace and Spirit of the Redeemer only are sufficient. Let these be experienced through the medium of evangelical truth, and we who were once the servants of sin "become free, are made the servants of God, and have our fruit unto holiness." "Sin shall not have dominion over us," if we are under the influence of grace. Walking in the Spirit, we may feel, but shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Old things will pass away, and all things become new, when we become united to Christ Jesus. The pleasures and aversions, the pursuits and course, the desires and prospects will be changed, and such will become distinguished by their purity. The deliverance, indeed, is but partial at present, but Christ gradually takes away the influence, and will finally take away the very existence of sin from our nature. He will present his redeemed and believing people "faultless before his presence with exceeding joy." In the meantime, they groan under a sense of sin's continuance, they give all diligence in the use of means, and are dependent upon the Spirit and grace of the Redeemer, that they may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless; and are

looking with elevated expectations for his second coming, knowing that he will then fulfil his work within their spirits, and perfectly glorify their bodies, and so complete their eternal salvation. Do we possess such a glorious and blessed hope? Does our expectation extend beyond the boundary of present good? Are we looking for that world which cannot be circumscribed by the limit of many many ages? Has our blessed Lord given us some experience of his delivering grace already? Can we say, he hath taken away the love, power, and guilt of sin from us? For these great purposes he is exhibited; nor should we forget the extent of these benefits—the sin of the world; not confined to the Jewish church, but it reaches to the heathen world, to some of every tribe, kindred, and nation. We observe,

### III. The peculiar regard claimed—“Behold.”

Your attention must be turned from other objects set up in opposition to him:—the splendour of the world, the vain and dangerous amusements of the age, the temple of dissipation; nor less, the supposed excellency of our own doings, prayers, fastings, worship, and charitable acts, as working out our own righteousness: from these, which would conceal the dying Saviour, and the importance of his atonement, and draw the attention from the bleeding Lamb, our eyes must be withdrawn.

The attention should be fixed upon the crucified Saviour. Is this sight nothing to you? Will ye pass by without consideration? Is there no form

nor comeliness in him? Dwell upon his dignity. Reflect upon the cause and greatness of his sufferings, when he hung upon the cross for six hours in lingering pains, bleeding and dying; never lose sight of the necessity there was for his death, nor the mercy and grace then displayed toward man, vile man, toward rebels of the human race; it was for crimes, aggravated crimes,—he died, for us men and for our salvation. “Let me, O my Saviour! rather be fastened to thy cross than lose the sight of thee.” So far from being content with transient glances, we should behold him till our affections are sanctified and suitably excited. This event may awaken our admiration; to admire little things argues a grovelling mind; not to admire grand and sublime argues a stupidity disgraceful—this is the most grand and wonderful. While divine wisdom and love engage our admiration, it should be accompanied with humility; how low must we have fallen that no one could raise us but God incarnate! How deep those stains which nothing less than the blood of Jesus could remove! Proper views of these things will affect the heart, and suffuse blushes over the countenance, and constrain us to say,

“Well may I hide my blushing face  
While his dear cross appears.”

The love of Jesus demands in return our warmest affection. Let him possess thy heart without a rival, and manifest this by a cheerful, universal and persevering obedience to his revealed will. Are we

not bought with a price immense? Do we not belong to the Lord? Shall we alienate his purchased property? God forbid.

“Dear Jesus, take us for thine own,  
For we are doubly thine.”

The subject may lead me to address

Careless sinners. Such there are in all congregations, though professing Christianity. What a striking contrast!—a dying Lord, a thoughtless immortal. The rod of Moses smote the rock so that waters gushed out, but the gospel rod of God's strength hath not affected thine heart; still the Redeemer says, Behold me, Behold me! still are you called to “behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” May you have such a view of him by faith, as shall rend thy rocky heart in pieces, or dissolve it in tenderness. Here you may learn the worth of your soul which you have never considered: here you may behold the evil of sin with which you are in amity; and here the great salvation, the neglect of which will prove the damning sin of thousands.

Do others lament the hardness of their hearts? Visit mount Calvary and behold the expiring Lamb of God between two thieves as a vile malefactor, between heaven and earth, as unworthy a place in either; but it was his love, and not his desert, which placed him there. Should it be asked, What is there in this to soften the heart? I would refer you to the rocks which rent, the graves which

opened when he died. Shall I call to your remembrance the retirement of the sun from the view of those transactions as too shocking for the light? must I remind you of weeping multitudes retiring from that scene, or the general gloom that overspread nature? The world itself put on sackcloth. Methinks, the music of heaven was suspended, and hell trembled to its centre. Shall all things show signs of feeling but the heart of man? May the Holy Spirit lead your mind to this object whom you have pierced, then will your hardness give way; your sorrow will flow freely as the course of a river, and you will experience that "godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of."

To those who are dejected under a sense of sin, we propose the same object.

Ye mourners in Sion, who say, Our transgressions are numerous, long persevered in and attended with many aggravating circumstances, increasing the guilt and exposing to greater condemnation: ye are writing bitter things against yourselves, and think it is presumption to hope for forgiveness and eternal life. Those things call loudly for abasement before God, but they are no reasons why you should despair. The blood of this Lamb can cleanse from your every stain, and speak peace to your guilty conscience; depend then on him, plead this sacrifice as the ground of hope, and your "crimson" sins, your "scarlet" crimes will "be made white as snow."



Let such as have beheld him by faith, so as to produce humility, admiration, love, zeal, and obedience, continue looking to him ; that peace and joy may be maintained, and indulge the pleasing hope of that period when he shall be seen "as he is," and when they shall praise him for ever in glory.

## SERMON II.

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*Be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.—2 Cor. xiii. 11.*

PURE religion, as portrayed in the sacred volume, appears to resemble its divine Founder. It is altogether lovely. We are not, however, to confine our regard to the excellence it possesses, but extend it to that which it imparts. The real subjects of religion are “beautified” with salvation, although they were before “hateful and hating one another:” they have become the excellent of the earth. This appears in part, by their rising into delight, unmixed with envy, at the spiritual endowments and attainments of others, which they truly wish to improve by their prayer to God and endeavours among men.

This amiable spirit was greatly possessed by the apostles of our Lord; it was manifest by a series of pious and benevolent exertions, and breathes in every page they wrote. We need not go from the close of this epistle to see what life and interest it conveys. “Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: and I will very gladly

spend, and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved. Now I pray to God that ye do no evil; not that we should appear approved, but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates: and this also we wish, even your perfection. Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, &c." I have omitted to take the whole of the verse for a text, that we may do more justice to a part within the limits prescribed to this discourse: indeed, it was the less necessary that I should, for if this be enjoyed and practised, it will conduct us to the other. Are you truly desirous to fare well, to arrive at comparative perfection in religion, and to have strong consolations? you must then be of one mind, and live in peace, and have the God of love and peace with you. The words contain what I deem in your present circumstances to be a seasonable exhortation,—an enlivening promise. The first points out your path, the other is to awaken your hope; the one relates to a dignified consistency of spirit and conduct, the other to what constitutes real felicity.

First, a seasonable exhortation. "Be of one, or the same mind." The term is used of the same place, words, and things, and here of the mind; that is, the thoughts, volitions, and affections.

It inculcates unity of judgment. We cannot expect uniformity of sentiment among Christians in every particular, but in our leading tenets it is of consequence. Do not those doctrines which refer

to the object of our worship, the basis of our hope, and the spring of our acceptable obedience, appear fundamentals in religion? Are they not of that necessity which a good foundation is to the safety of an edifice? Are they not of equal importance in the spiritual life as the head, and heart, and lungs are in maintaining the animal life? If we hold that our sentiments have a corresponding influence upon us, and that it is important to be under a right influence, we must attribute an importance to right sentiments. As you, my brethren, are agreed in the principal articles of your creed, I shall only exhort to perseverance. Continue in the things which you have received from holy penmen. Hold fast what you already have of the truth as it is in Jesus. Stand fast in one spirit, striving together for the faith of the gospel. Contend not furiously, but earnestly, for the faith once delivered to the saints. Do not hold it with a loose hand. Never sell the truth for any modern system recommended by the charm of novelty, nor for all the tempting offers of a world.

The unity of mind recommended, may be considered as to the grand object of your religious regard. The Lord Jesus Christ is this great object. His person and work, his authority and grace, his mediation on earth and in heaven,—this was the alone object of St. Paul's glory, and this constituted his grand theme as a minister of the gospel, Gal. vi. 14; 1 Cor. ii. 2. The lines of doctrine and duty centre in Christ; and your minds should

be directed to him as the central point of Christians and Christianity.

You may have observed upon some very public exhibition, a vast multitude of spectators were present, and every eye turned toward one object. Widely different in other respects, they were all of one mind in that. So when the Saviour is set forth in the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the ordinances, may you all look to him!

When many run in a race, they are minded to keep in view the same mark, and hope to obtain the prize. What is the Christian's mark? what is the believer's prize? Christ is both. Those who lose sight of him lose sight of the mark; those who aim at any thing short of conformity to him, fix it too low, while to have the blessedness connected with his approbation is prize enough to the disciple. Yes! it is of value sufficient to crown his efforts and expectations, and to complete his happiness.

Was not Jesus lifted up as the serpent in the wilderness, that the dying may look and live? and is he not exalted in the preaching of the gospel, that he may draw all men unto him? Ever keep this gracious design in remembrance, that should it be inquired of you as you return from worship in this place, "What went ye out for to see?" you may reply, "We went to see Jesus;" and may you be able to add with pleasure, "He has manifested himself unto us as he doth not unto the world.

We have seen him crowned with glory and honour.”

This unity may also be referred to the state of your minds. It is highly proper to distinguish between the diversity of our mental circumstances, and that oneness of heart which marks a renewed state, and which God hath promised to his covenant people. Must not minds be kindred to enjoy the mutual delights of friendship? equally important is an affinity of spiritual dispositions to the sacred pleasure of Christian fellowship. Are not the proud pharisee and the contrite publican greatly divided? Can we expect the cold-hearted, insensible professor, and the warm, zealous disciple to walk together? they are as opposite as the heart of stone, and the heart of flesh.

Social worship supposes one mind. Should you not all be humble, as your general confessions import? Do not the devout petitions offered in public indicate that you should all aspire to heavenly-mindedness? Does not the voice of our great prophet say unto all, “Watch?” You have the same enemies, and are liable to similar attacks. You are required to have the same care, one for another, as members of the same body. Our religion is that of love, and surely we should display it as it is. By this you will be distinguished from the world. “Be then like-minded one toward another, according to Christ Jesus,” Rom. xv. 5. “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep; be of the same mind, one toward

another," Rom. xii. 16. I cannot dismiss this part of the text without adverting to the new relation into which you have entered with our reverend brother, nor without exhorting you to "be of one mind" with your minister and pastor. Could we suppose the contrary, we should fear a train of evils to him and to yourselves as the unavoidable consequences. Rather let us hope better things concerning you.

Does not your pastor come to you in the name of the Lord, with a message from God to be delivered unto you? Receive him then as a messenger from heaven, and as the gift of Christ, with all gladness. His work is, under God, to open the eyes of the blind, "to turn them from darkness unto light," &c. Acts xxvi. 18; for the perfecting of the saints, and to edify the body of Christ. Will you slight such an undertaking? rather esteem him highly in love for his work's sake. Has he not now entered into sacred engagements, to give diligence to know the state of this flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made him overseer? assist him in acquiring this knowledge, by speaking to him freely of your fears and hopes, your sorrows and joys, your difficulties and encouragements.

Your minister solicits your prayers. You have this day heard him make this request; you have witnessed that he has sought it with tears; can you turn a deaf ear to such a request? will you forget that he has made it? Oh, bear him daily upon your heart before God, and strive together in your prayers to

God for him. Your minister is not only to be honest in the sight of all men, but to show that he is given to hospitality and beneficence. Be ye of the same mind, and afford full ability by your continued liberality. Ye who are taught in the word are to communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. If this be general, it will be an excellency in all, a burden to none. In fine, in whatever plans he may submit to you, calculated for usefulness in the town or neighbourhood, in the tendency of his holy, exemplary life, and in the end of his exertions, may you co-operate. We beseech you be workers together with him.

Live in peace. I cannot suppress the rising desire of my heart. "Peace be unto this house!" we all devoutly say. "Peace be within thy walls!" Peace is sometimes used as a term of great extent, including all that is pleasant and profitable. It is opposed to those discordant passions, which disturb the domestic circle, which interrupt the harmony of society, and, introduce confusion even in the Church of the living God. Our apostle would have professors to let all bitterness and wrath, and anger and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from them; but he feared that he should not find the church at Corinth such as he would, lest there should be debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults. Ah, brethren, these things ministers fear as great evils, and are humbled under when they break out, or when working in the Church—keep at a distance



from these things, and be at peace among yourselves.

Live in peace with the neighbouring Churches. In this town and neighbourhood there are Churches of other denominations, with them endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit. While it is proper for you to exercise the right of private judgment, and firmly to abide by what you deem the truth; it will be proper for them also to do the same: this must be expected by all; but let none be angry, nor foment variance.

To live in peace is opposite to living in the spirit of a party; we must in one sense belong to a party, but this may be without that spirit which is hasty to censure, or eager to proselyte; never have your ear open to the insinuations of slander, nor countenance those busybodies whose element is defamation, and whose end separation among Christians—mark them which cause divisions, and avoid them. A turbulent professor is a torch, a fire-brand likely to kindle an unhallowed and devouring flame; you should therefore unite to quench it before any mischief be done.

We have considered the first part of our subject as a practical exhortation. To assist you in the performance, I take the liberty to add, you must be upon your guard, particularly against the undue influence of self love. This leads us to flatter ourselves, so that we lose sight of or diminish our own failings while we magnify those of others; it makes us overrate our own attainments and performances,

while we undervalue the excellences of our brethren, then we become highminded, and self-willed, nor care to avoid the occasions for offence in our spirit and conduct; therefore greatly watch, look diligently, first, to your own hearts, and then to your society, lest there be any such root of bitterness springing up to trouble and defile.

Be much with the Lord Jesus Christ. To live in the Spirit of our text is to live in conformity to Christ. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," is the weighty argument and impressive motive used by the apostle in exciting unity and peace among the Philippians, (ii. 5.) How can we imbibe his spirit and grow up in his moral likeness? must we not have fixed contemplations of his glory? a simple dependence upon his grace? I apprehend our real conformity to him will be in exact proportion to our connexion with him; we must then keep near to him to be like him.

In dependence upon the Holy Spirit, meditate upon the importance and excellence of our subject; animosities disgrace, and divisions weaken. "The Spirit, like the peaceful dove, flies from the realms of noise and strife," and we become an easy prey to the enemy; but to judge of its excellency, behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, Psalm cxxiii. Does not the great High Priest of our profession intercede that his redeemed may be one, to show to whom they belong, and to convince the world of the divinity of his mission and interest, John xvii. Have not the

apostles recommended it with the utmost warmth of affection and zeal? Philippians ii.

God beholds it with complacency; which introduces,

II. The enlivening promise. On this I shall not expatiate, not that the subject is confined, no, that is inexhaustible, but your time is short.

It engages for the presence of God to be with you; without this, what were a palace or any place? Moses preferred a wilderness with his God among the Israelites, to going to possess a land flowing with milk and honey without his presence.

However you may be surprised, and lost in admiration, God will in very deed dwell with you. It is the presence of the King which makes the court. The presence of the King of kings will make this one of his earthly courts.

What is it constitutes a temple but the residing Deity? "Ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them." The spiritual presence of God is light, and energy, and consolation; it is, in a word, every thing.

The manner in which he will be with them, as specified in the text, deserves our regard, as the God of love and peace, we stay not to inquire in what sense he may be styled the God of love and peace, but when thus dwelling with his people we understand that he will direct their hearts more fully into those blessings of his covenant. He will direct your hearts into his love, and afford you

copious communications of its effects; it shall be diffused or shed abroad in your hearts; he will cause his peace to rule in your hearts, and by it keep your minds as in a garrison from the invading foe. He will fill you with joy and peace in believing. Think, my dear brethren, what blessings are contained in this promise? To behold, and, in some measure, comprehend the height and depth, the length and breadth of the love of Christ; to enjoy the saving favour which God bears unto his people, and to possess a peace which passeth all understanding.

The promise may also intimate to us the complacency which God takes in such a people. God will dwell among those who are of one mind, and live in peace, as among his own children, who bear his image and seek to please him. He will afford to them intimations of his approbation, and favour them with an inward, delightful testimony, that they are acceptable in his sight.

The unity and peace we have recommended to-day are of a religious, spiritual nature: but there is also unity on earth among the wicked, and unity in hell. The kingdom of Satan is not divided. How dreadful is a hellish unity in wickedness! If those be present who are united in opposing truth and goodness, Christ and the gospel, and in promoting sin in themselves and each other, suffer me to address you with a warning voice. Though you join hand in hand you shall not go unpunished; the companions of your present depraved choice, without repentance, will be the witnesses of your

future misery, and their presence contribute to the vigour of those reflections on your folly and wickedness which will produce eternal remorse and misery. Oh, the horror of being like the tares bound in bundles to be burned! May you have grace to make a better choice, to be a companion of those who fear God, to be joined to the saints and near to him!

To conclude, should our text be fulfilled in this church, it will be heaven upon earth. We do not describe the heavenly state by its situation, or the splendour of the place, but as the residence of God, and the spirits of the just made perfect; as the happy place where there is perfect union, uninterrupted harmony, and where God dwells as the God of love and peace.

## SERMON III.

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*And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter ; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.—MATT. XVI. 18.*

THE excellency which attracts notice among the works of nature and art, is in its own nature perishable, and cannot long exist. View the “goodliness of flesh.” What shall we say of this? or rather, what hath the Scripture said? It is “as the flower of the field!” as a flower, a decorated leaf, a flower of the field, much exposed, more exposed than that in the garden. You see it in the morning, and it flourisheth; but look at it in the evening, it has been cut down, and is even withered. How frail and dying!

The natural endowments of the mind are by no means objects entitled to our boast and triumph. The wise man is not to glory in his wisdom, any more than the strong man in his might; or the rich man in his riches. Shall we direct our attention to works of art? Some of these have been found to exist for ages, and have been the admiration of successive generations; but, does not the tooth of time daily consume the gorgeous pa-

laces ? must they not crumble to dust ? Yes ; ere long they will pass away as “ the baseless fabric of a vision, and leave not a wreck behind.”

That permanent excellency which in vain we look for in sublunary objects, we behold in the light of divine revelation, and by the eye of faith. In the gospel we behold eternal wisdom, power, and grace shine in the salvation of man. Here, we see the durable riches of righteousness, and consolation given to true believers ; here, are promises of everlasting life, firm as the solid pillars of Jehovah’s throne, and the church of God is made secure as Omnipotency can effect. See how this object is exhibited in the light of our text—built upon a foundation which defies every assault ; it rises to our view as a “ palace built for God,” as a temple which possesses an eternal excellency. The temple at Jerusalem, like the Jewish dispensation of which it constituted a part, was “ to be done away, and not one stone to be left upon another ;” but this spiritual house of which our text treats, partakes of that glory which distinguishes the gospel, “ it is a glory which remaineth ;” here we have its defence and safety.

It is obvious, that the language before us is very figurative. Jesus, the speaker, was not speaking literally of any rock present to his bodily eyes ; nor can we suppose that hell is a city which has walls and gates. We propose to occupy the time and attention by cautiously explaining the figurative expressions ; thus open the way to the doctrines of

the passage, and the improvement these will naturally suggest.

The word rock is here used as a trope or figurative term expressive of solidity and duration ; it refers to Peter, or Christ, or both of them. A Roman Catholic would tell us, it refers to some particular authority and influence possessed by Peter and his successors. A Protestant, with more truth, says, whatever allusion there may be to Peter's name, it must, in fact, refer to the object of his confession, which is Christ. It would be highly improper at this time and place, for me to enlarge upon this controversy ; I shall, therefore, only briefly observe, that Peter had no peculiar authority over his brethren ; on the contrary, Christ said it should "not be so among them ;" nor had he any independent power. Though we were to be provided with a full refutation of so unfounded a claim, he was permitted grievously to backslide, awfully to fall, to cross his best resolutions, to manifest his weakness and insufficiency to support himself, much less to uphold the church of Christ. But what was the object of his confession ? "Christ the Son of God." And does not this truth lie as the foundation of the faith, hope, and comfort of Christians ? If he were not so, our faith would be vain, our hopes misplaced, and our comforts delusive. You, brethren, know, that Christ is spoken of as a rock, and the foundation of his people.

The gates of hell. In ancient times, the cities had gates ; over which, were places to keep arms



and hostile weapons used by warriors ; so, the term gates was used for the seat of power or force. At the gates of the city, the elders and wise men were accustomed to assemble to consult on the public good, and to deliberate on plans and measures of general utility ; from hence, the gates were considered as the seat of policy.

Further, At the gates was the seat of judgment ; and authority was exercised, by issuing and enforcing edicts. Now if we unite the above remarks, if we combine these ideas, we are led to reflect on the policy which insinuates, and entices ; on the power which alarms and terrifies ; with the authority which enforces. By the gates of hell, we understand, the combined power, policy, and usurped authority of the enemy.

The doctrines of the passage are :—

I. The Christian Church is founded upon Christ, as upon a rock.

II. The Influence of Christ is engaged for the advancement of his Church.

III. The Church of Christ shall finally prove victorious over the united power, policy, and authority of Satan.

I. The Christian Church is founded upon Christ as upon a rock.

The sacred edifice of which we discourse, is not a building composed of wood, stone, iron, or of gross materials, but of souls, quickened to a spiritual life by the Spirit of God : these are compared to “ lively stones,” not a Church composed of per-

sons as dwelling in the same parish, district, or nation, but of "the ransomed of the Lord," Acts xx. 28, whom he hath purchased by his own blood, true believers in Christ, called out of every kindred, tribe, nation, and tongue. This is a spiritual temple erected for the honour and worship of Jehovah, 1 Peter ii. 4, 5; Eph. iii. 21. Let us keep this in view; and permit me here to remark, although it should be deemed a digression, that if we employ our talents and influence to support any system, or mode of religion, which has not a spiritual tendency, or encourage persons to join the church, and enjoy her privileges, who are not spiritual persons, in doing so we act without any authority from Christ. The persons constituting this society being real converts, there is a peculiar force and propriety in the Redeemer's calling them his; "My Church." [At another time when addressing Peter, he said, "Feed my sheep, feed my lambs." The Church is the object of his peculiar love, the purchase of his blood, governed by his authority, and built upon him as the Foundation.

The Christian Church is founded upon Christ. In theology, a foundation is sometimes considered doctrinally. Do you not read of the foundation of the prophets and apostles? Eph. iii. 21. Rev. xxi. 14, speaks of twelve foundations, *i. e.* the inspired testimony, and successful labours, of the "twelve apostles of the Lamb." In this sense, St. Paul asserted, "I have laid the foundation." Every

faithful minister preaching the doctrines of grace, upon which he wishes the superstructure of practice to be raised, lays the "good foundation" doctrinally; from hence has arisen a distinction between some truths and others, by calling them fundamental doctrines: without particular regard to these, the whole fabric will be in danger. Far be it from me to assume, that I can fix upon what is essential in all cases, and what is not; but certainly we must include the work of Christ for his people, as their atoning sacrifice, and their righteousness; and the work of the Holy Spirit, to regenerate, and sanctify us. Destroy these foundations, and what can we do? "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

In the most natural and obvious use of language, a foundation is that upon which a building rests, and by which it is supported. The Church, and every part of it, *i. e.* all believers, rests upon Christ Jesus: they place their whole dependence here. Upon what he is to them, and done for them, they venture wholly, and would tremble to think of any other object intruding as the ground of their affiance. Shall we in part dismiss the metaphor? will you permit me, with the utmost affection and seriousness, to ask a few plain questions upon this subject? On what do you depend for pardon? Is it not on the blood of Christ, who offered himself as the Lamb of God to take away sin? Where doth your soul rest its hope for eter-

nal life? Is it not in the perfect righteousness of God our Saviour? Where do you look for support under the troubles of this mortal state, and for complete victory over difficulties, and spiritual enemies? Is not your eye directed to the fulness of power and grace in Christ Jesus? Into whose hands have you committed your dearest interests, and your eternal concerns? Can you not say with St. Paul, "I know in whom I have believed," &c. Here, here let all my trust be stayed, for ever stayed.

Christ supports the whole weight of the edifice. Who but a God can uphold the Church in its vast and weighty interests? This is the work of Christ: to have the mind established in this truth is truly desirable. To speak freely on this point; there are times of peculiar solemnity, when the weightiest affairs engross the thoughts of a Christian,—the prospect of eternity; an eternity of bliss or woe, fill his mind; the idea of a failure in his hopes, makes him shudder, and he cannot trust in himself or creatures; but faith in the name and work of Emmanuel, encourages his hope, and forbids his fear; he knows it to be impossible to sink, if on that foundation God has laid in Zion: he views the false foundations of the worldling, the hypocrite, and the formalist in religion, swept away: he looks to that dread period, when the foundations of the earth shall give way, and fail; still, he rejoices in the security afforded by the Redeemer; he finds his own hopes tried with the boisterous winds,

and swelling floods, which beat against his house ; but notwithstanding all, it is sustained,—“ it falls not, because it is founded upon a rock.” Yes,

The Church is founded upon Christ as upon a rock. The prophet Isaiah, xxviii. 16, spoke of him as a “ stone, a tried stone, a sure foundation,” a foundation of foundations, none like it ; and in other places, as the text, it is likened to a rock. In this appears a very happy allusion as addressed to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for they were surrounded with immense rocks, their temple was built upon one, as also were citadels : so the Christian Church. Has not the solidity of a rock become proverbial ? is it not the well known emblem of strength ? are not those who build on it considered perfectly safe ? Thus it is with the kingdom of God’s dear Son, “ a kingdom that cannot be moved ;” the enraged enemy, like angry waves, may beat himself to pieces, storms may wear a very threatening aspect, but they can neither shake nor overflow it, nor endanger those who are built thereon ; but of this more fully hereafter. We are to consider this “ city of our blest abode,” not only as fixed upon an immoveable basis, but having a Divine builder, and maker, who appears in his glory while he builds up Zion.

II. The influence of Christ is engaged for the advancement of his Church.

To him who asserts, “ I will build,” is it indebted for its progress ; he here makes known to us both his will, and his energy. The love which induced

the Lord Jesus to undertake the cause of his people, and to die for their redemption, is without variation, it continues to be exercised with undiminished activity; the affairs of his people lie so upon his very heart, as to engage his undeviating regard: "he waters his vineyard every moment, and lest any hurt it, he keeps it day and night;" but attending to his work in the progress of this holy temple, we are led to remark,

He will collect materials. Where are these to be found? are they in heaven among sinless angels? no. Oh the wonders of redemption! they are collected from the ruins of fallen man—from the general mass of human creatures, although that mass be so completely vile and wretched. As the stones intended for a palace to be erected must be dug from the quarry, thus separated from the general mass, to be hewn and squared; so souls, by regenerating grace, must be separated from "the world that lieth in wickedness," and by convictions of a spiritual nature be hewn and formed. May I not adopt the prophet's language when addressing some of you? "Look to the rock from whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit from whence ye were dug." You found convictions, when God hewed you by his word; (Hosea vi. 5;) rough work indeed, but it was a very necessary work. This is by Christ, the purpose of grace toward you was in him; this was effected "in the day of his power," and the convictions

and repentance by which you were brought from sin and the world, were by his truth and Spirit.

He prepares the materials for their allotted places. In a magnificent building, there are very different places, and as the materials are designed for places more or less conspicuous, so is the attention and preparation more or less necessary, but each is fitted to the part it is to occupy. Do we not meet with something analogous to this in Christian experience? Some of the materials designed to occupy a conspicuous part in the church of God, have been preparing by a long series of varied dispensations, and painful exercises; and in general we may remark, that he will previously fit, more or less, for the place to which he appoints any of his servants: to suppose the contrary, would be a reflection upon his perfect wisdom. Again,

He will unite them together. In this sense we may say of Christ, "he must increase," his work must go forward from age to age: delightful truth! "After the fathers shall be the children," brought to be one in the Lord: to this effect is the language of the good Shepherd in John x. 28, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring," &c. This work proceeds more rapidly at one time than another, according to the effusion of the Divine Spirit's influence, Zech. iv. 6: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Thus, in plain scripture

language, "The Lord adds unto the church," &c. To Him we are indebted for the conversion of souls, and "the prosperity of Zion." A representation of these things was given the Old Testament church, in the high priest Joshua, as a type of Christ, Zech. vi. 11, 13. The man who is the Branch, even he shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory. We may advert to the instruments he uses for carrying on this glorious work.

Ministers are raised up for this end; they are called builders; by office and exertions, we are to build up the church of Christ. The Jewish priests, although they rejected Christ the Lord, were called builders, being so by office.

Private Christians are also exhorted to build up each other. Would to God this was more fully practised, and not, as in too, too many cases, one denomination of Christians impeding another. After all, whether we consider ministers, or private Christians, they are only employed as the servants of Christ, by whom he works; to him are all indebted for light to discern, grace to dispose the heart, strength to act, and patience to persevere; and in vain will they all labour, except the Lord builds the house. He qualifies, and he succeeds.

III. The cause of Christ shall finally prove victorious, over the united power, policy, and usurped authority of Satan.



Stand still! behold this great sight! A mighty conflict, between the Prince of light, and the prince of darkness; the Lord of glory, and the god of this world. Our prince Michael and his angels, fighting against the dragon and his adherents. Satan uses his cruel policy, malicious power, and usurped authority, against the Redeemer and his interest; but the Lord frustrates his schemes, triumphs over his attempts, and extends the conquests of grace; more particularly the language implies—

That the cause of Christ is liable to assault. It takes for granted the certainty of this opposition. There exists a mutual enmity between “the seed of the woman” and the seed of the serpent. This was predicted, in the first age of man, in the first promise of grace; and every age has manifested the truth. Shall I remind you of its nature? It is opposition against the Lord and his grace, his power and work in the church; against the holy doctrines, the pure precepts, the simplicity of worship, the fidelity of preaching, and the energy of example, as those things by which the Lord Jesus works, and in which he is honoured.

Should I not be justified in asserting, that there is not one stone brought to this holy temple, that is, one soul brought into the church of God, but the enmity of hell is manifest; sometimes in one way, sometimes in another? From

hence arise the spiritual conflicts and fears of convinced, repenting souls.

Moreover, the opposition of the enemy may be artfully conducted, and violently maintained.

Has not Satan often transformed himself into an angel of light? Have not there been very artful attempts to infuse poison into the Christian church, and to sap the very foundation of hope and obedience? How many have attempted to disseminate error through the use of ambiguous expressions, an affected candour, or some flimsy pretext? There have been mysteries of iniquity to oppose mysteries of godliness. You, brethren, "are not ignorant of his devices," in which you have seen much of the old serpent, who is the devil. Plots of Rome have been hellish plots; the opposition Christianity hath met with from infidels has been under this serpentine wisdom. Voltaire and Rousseau, Hume and Bolingbroke, Gibbon and others, have, under the cloak of free investigation, and improvements of science falsely so called, concealed those daggers which they aimed at the vitals of Christianity. Power and force have not been wanting, to aid this corrupt policy. What were the persecutions of Jewish rulers, the rage of pagan emperors, the bloody edicts of Roman pontiffs, and the vast influence of wicked priests and wicked people? These were under the government of the great enemy, "who hates the doctrine of the Cross," the glory of the Redeemer, and the purity and felicity of man. Opposition has been like a deluge, but the ark has been preserved. Flames

have been kindled, but the church has not been consumed. We are assured, that it shall finally prove victorious.

This truth is written as with a sunbeam. "No weapon formed against thee shall prosper," Isa. liv. 17; "I will give unto my sheep eternal life, and none shall pluck them out of my hand," John x. 28; "Who shall separate us," &c., Rom. viii. 35. Did he not manifest his faithful care over his disciples, when, in a time of danger, and he asleep, they awoke him and cried out, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" He arose early enough to speak the storm into a calm, to quiet the minds of his servants, and conduct them safe into the desired haven. Those very means which had a tendency to destroy, and were used for this express purpose, were rendered subservient to advantage. The cause, the dispersion of the apostles, was the more to illumine a dark world, and the very blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church.

In the preceding remarks you may have observed, I have sometimes spoken of the church as a collective body, or the individual believer as a part; and for this reason, that what is applicable to the whole is also to each part. Were it possible that one soul among the redeemed and called might be overcome, on the same principle might one thousand or ten thousand be conquered; but he who affords victory will grant it to each and every one of them who trust in him, and are strong in his grace.

Further attempts to improve this subject follow : It may serve to warn persecutors. Perhaps there are none in this assembly openly such, but are there none who dislike the image of God in his people? none who are offended with their tenderness of conscience, and humble walk? none who are disposed to misrepresent their adherence to the purity of the gospel, and their strict regard to religion? none who secretly shoot at the upright in heart? The text tells you that thus to oppose is diabolical in its nature; a persecuting spirit is an infernal spirit; the arrows you shoot against the children of God will certainly recoil upon your own head, for God hath said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay."

Our subject may instruct the ignorant, and direct the perplexed. Are there not some present who are ignorant of God's righteousness, the foundation of a sinner's hope for present peace and eternal felicity? who think it sufficient that they have been educated religiously, and are ready to say, "We have Abraham to our father?" Some may think themselves the favourites of heaven, because they are attended with the smiles of providence. Others cry "Peace! peace!" unto themselves, because they have had transient convictions, and others who only take the lamp of profession. Alas! alas! these are sandy foundations; vain and dangerous too! You are awfully ignorant if you see not the Lord Jesus to be the only good foundation, or if you are

not desirous of building on his Rock. Should there be any among you, perplexed by the different sentiments of men, one preacher saying you must do this, and another you must do that, we answer, hear what the Lord says: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation;" Isa. xxviii. 16. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ," 1 Cor. iii. 11. Is there any subject equally serious with this? any which possesses so high a claim to your regard? You are building for eternity, and if you do neglect this rock, the gates of hell will prevail against you. "O my soul, how can I bear the thought of infernal furies completing my overthrow? hurrying me away as their captive, to bind me in chains of darkness, while they feel a horrid triumph in beholding the success of their mighty malice, and my never-ending misery?" We do not inquire whether you belong to this or the other particular society, but to the church of Christ; there is this awful distinction, you either belong to the church, or, in opposition to this, to the world. If you are a worldling, you have no evidence of interest in the redemption or intercession of the Lord. He died "to redeem his people from this present evil world," and he says, "I pray not for the world." In your present state you have to "look for a fiery indignation." As the child of this world will be condemned, and his idol consumed with the venge-

ful flames of the Almighty, "escape for thy life." May you have grace to flee to the refuge set before you in the gospel.

To those who are aiming at usefulness in the cause of the Redeemer. Such must expect opposition; the enemy will annoy. Our Nehemiahs and Zerubbabels employed in building the temple of the Lord may meet with a Tobiah and Sanballat to oppose the work. What though the gates of hell withstand, yet must this building rise. The work is of God, and so you are to consider the honour conferred upon you. "You are workers together with Christ;" engaged in the same design as the Governor of the universe; you are with him, and like him in your employment. This honour, to be engaged by him, and for him, and like him, comes indeed from above. Continually look to him for wisdom, otherwise you may build hay and stubble as doctrine and practice, which will be consumed, although yourselves be saved, as by fire; for a fire is appointed to try every man's work, and that day will declare it. Frequently dwell upon the encouragement held out in the text; the more to confirm our minds in the truth and faithfulness of our Lord, look back to the circumstances attending the church when the words were uttered. It was a day of small things, and to human eye there appeared no prospect of this little interest being able to maintain its ground. Since that time Christ has been crucified and slain, apostles have departed, miracles ceased, near two thousand years have elapsed, with them genera-

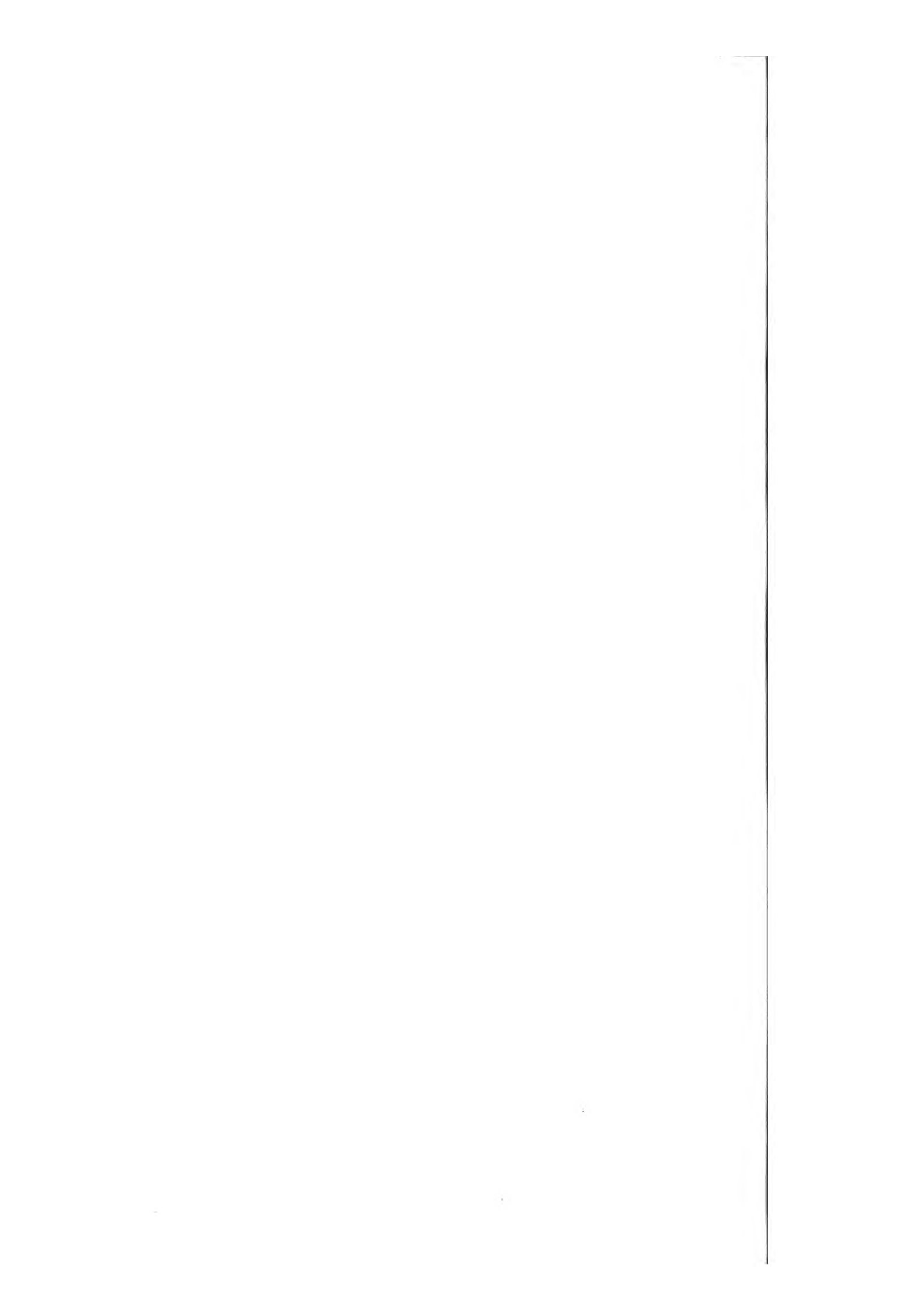
tions of the pious have passed away, yet Sion's stakes are strengthened; and more, her cords are lengthened, greatly lengthened. We see much, and hear of more. O blessed Jesus, "thy word is truth;" we are this day thy witnesses, "great is thy faithfulness;" we feel the encouragement of thy word, and say, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

We are furnished with some marks of the true Church. Christ is the foundation and the builder. Christ's power is its protection, and his presence its glory. This, this is the church that shall stand for ever; as for others, they must sooner or later fall and perish. A false church, as the church of Rome, may possess large revenues, and great worldly power. This enclosure may be fenced in by pains and penalties, and human laws may seek its establishment, but all will prove insufficient for its defence. We need not wonder if the members of such a society betray symptoms of fear and weakness; for every church destitute of Christ as its support, affecting to be independent of his grace, and deriving its support from sources short of his power, will give way to the machinations and energy of the great adversary to God and man.

Lastly, How glorious will the Redeemer's church appear when perfected. It had its plan in an infinite understanding; no expense, if I may so speak, has been spared to procure materials; the blood of Christ was the price. Millions in heaven and earth

have been employed as agents in this work under a Divine influence. It will be perfectly purified by fire, and shall stand as an eternal monument of what a Triune God can effect. In his celestial temple hallelujahs to him shall perpetually resound, and his presence fill it with unfading glory. It was said of Solomon's temple, that when the sun shone upon it, there was an effulgence too bright and dazzling for the eye to look upon; but the glory of this superior temple no mortal eye can see. We must have immortal eyes to behold it. We must die to know it.





## SERMON IV.

PREACHED JANUARY 16, 1803, ON COMMENCING THE  
EIGHTH YEAR OF PASTORAL LABOUR.

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*How I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you.*

ACTS xx. 20.

As we look into this book of the Acts, we see the apostle Paul busily and happily employed; like his divine Lord he was “going about doing good.” It appears that he spent a considerable part of his time in Asia, that he had visited the city of Ephesus more than once, and that the Lord had given great success to his ministrations in that place: there, souls had been converted, churches had been planted, and elders had been ordained to take “the oversight” of the Lord’s flock. Paul, at the time referred to in this chapter, was on his way from Greece to Jerusalem, being, with Barnabas, intrusted with the contributions raised by the churches in that part, for the poor, persecuted saints at Jerusalem. In his way he landed at Miletus, a sea-port some few miles distant from Ephesus; there, he sent for the elders of the church in Ephesus, (these were probably mentioned in chap.

xix. 7, presbyters, or pastors of distinct churches;) he sent for them to take his affectionate and final farewell of them. He knew they would never see his face any more, ver. 25. His parting discourse is before us, and the words I have selected are part of his public appeal to them; dictated, not by personal vanity, but by a consciousness of his fidelity and benevolence; not to set off himself, but to honour that divine grace which had been bestowed upon him, and not bestowed in vain. Let me request you to observe,

The tendency of the gospel. It tends to our good, to our profit. Is it not always represented as a great blessing wherever it comes? It consists of glad tidings of good things, producing great joy. It leads us to the knowledge of God, of ourselves, of the Saviour in his person and work, and of the eternal world, the resurrection, future judgment, and different destinies of men. Is it not intended "to open the eyes of the blind, to bring men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of their sins, and an inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith in Christ Jesus?" Acts xxvi. 18. It is the gospel of our salvation. The spiritual profit is a very extensive good, consisting of many branches, as is written of the Scriptures, 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17. It is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto all good works." If there be any advantage in possessing

true principles, salutary convictions, corrections of what is amiss, or wise directions for our walk with God and man, that we be matured in every thing excellent, then the gospel tends to our greatest advantage.

A persuasion of this, should induce us to inquire, Have I received any spiritual, abiding advantage, from an acquaintance with the gospel? It was preached unto some, "but the word did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them who heard it." I fear many are deceived in this case; it is one thing to be pleased, another to be profited.

The words of the text lead us to observe,

The desire of a gospel minister; and how it is manifested.

He has no desire to soothe the passions of his hearers by sacrificing to their humour, or by flattering their prejudices and conceits; this would prove injurious instead of profitable. His end is to do them good. He seeks "the profit of many;" and this is manifest by his studying what is most likely to benefit them, and by bringing those things forward to their view, for the enriching their experience, and the regulation of their conduct "I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you." In order to enter more fully into the subject, I shall in a few particulars endeavour to show,

What was included in this declaration of the apostle.

*First.* He had studiously avoided those things which were of no real service.

Doubtless he had refused what he terms “profane and old wives’ fables,” 1 Tim. iv. 7; senseless tales, opposite to the nourishing words of faith and sound doctrine. He avoided “profane and vain babblings,” 2 Tim. ii. 16; empty declamations which “increase ungodliness.” He guarded against “oppositions of science falsely so called,” 1 Tim. vi. 20, 21, which have caused some to err concerning the faith. He did not spend his time “in striving about words to no profit, but the subverting of the hearers,” 2 Tim. ii. 14; nor was he occupied with “foolish questions, endless genealogies and contentions which produce vain janglings,” 1 Tim. i. 4—6; Titus iii. 9. For it is worthy our remark in this place, that the apostle cautioned both the young evangelists, Timothy and Titus, against these things; and he strongly recommended it to, and urged it upon, the elders at Ephesus, that they should “feed the flock,” &c. Unless we admit, therefore, that Paul avoided those things, we cannot view him as a consistent character; and indeed, had he taught human traditions, had he played upon pompous words, had he brought forward empty criticisms or mere flourishes of oratory, he would have embarrassed rather than profited, and while he had presented flowers to amuse, the soul would have wanted fruit to satisfy.

*Second.* He had not concealed or withheld any truth important to them.

The apostle might have knowledge of some things which he might not be called upon to discourse, or which he might not deem sufficiently interesting to enlarge upon among them; but what appeared necessary or advantageous he declared. What was most calculated to improve their understandings in the knowledge of the divine will, to impress their consciences with holy fear, to engage their affections on the side of Christ and his cause, and to adorn their conversation with the beauty of holiness; these he brought forward, he kept them not back through shame or fear. Paul was "not ashamed of the Gospel." The Greeks, the proud reasoners and philosophers of that day, termed it "foolishness," as an irrational scheme to propose salvation through the crucifixion of another. The Jews also opposed him and his doctrine, ver. 19. Some doubtless might say then as is now said, that a "salvation" all "of grace" tends to licentiousness; others, by his enforcing repentance, good works, and holiness in all its branches, would, (to use the cant language of the present period,) assert it to be dry and legal; but he was not deterred through "the fear of man," nor through sinful shame of the cross; nor was he prevented by an unwarrantable partiality for some favourite topics; none of these things occasioned him to keep back that which was profitable to the souls of the people.

*Third.* It intimates that the apostle adapted his

discourses to the different states and circumstances of those whom he addressed.

There may be things very profitable to one class of hearers, but not interesting to another. We may suppose, that those among whom the apostle laboured were in different states of mind, different ages in life, different in their worldly circumstances, and exercised by various dispensations of Providence.

There were persons different as to the condition of their minds. As the apostle varied his discourses before Agrippa, and Felix, and Sergius Paulus, and the Jews, and the Gentiles; so he would adapt himself to the varied cases at Ephesus, not only in the general "preaching repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," but "warning every one, and teaching every one in all wisdom," ver. 31; he could "call God to record that he greatly longed after them all in the bowels of Christ Jesus." Were any ignorant? he was desirous to instruct them in the things which concerned their peace. Were any rebellious? with the most tender entreaties and strongest persuasives "in Christ's stead, he besought them to be reconciled unto God." Were they sunk in indolence and self-security? he endeavoured to arouse them by crying, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give thee light." "Flee from the wrath to come," for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness

and unrighteousness of men. Did he see any going astray from the way of holiness? he strove to reduce them into the right way. Were there self-righteous persons? he pointed out the dangerous defects in their foundation, and directed them to the all perfect righteousness of Christ as the sure basis of a divine hope. Were they presumptuous, saying, "Let us sin because grace abounds, let us do evil that good may come?" he boldly checked their impious proceedings, telling them their damnation would be just. So, also, he sought the confirmation of the wavering, the "comfort of the weak," and "to help all who believed through grace," that Christians might stand fast in their Christian liberty, and that, united in "the fellowship of the gospel," they might adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things," and the relation into which they had entered; hence, were given those lessons of meekness, and forbearance, of gentleness, and kindness, of truth, and religion, transmitted to us in such places as Phil. ii. 1, 2. Let these rays from the apostle's conduct be collected into a focus, that they may throw a strong light upon the end he proposed. Did he "warn the unruly," sharply reprove the deviating professor, direct the inquiring, seek the comfort of the distressed conscience, give milk to the babe in religion, or meat to the man in Christ? He was thus labouring for their edification. He could say to them as he asserted before Agrippa and his court, "I would to God that all who hear me were alto-



gether such as I am, except these bonds:" *i. e.* that you knew my present privileges and future hopes as a Christian, with an exemption from my persecution and imprisonment.

There were, also, persons of different ages in life. Each period of human existence has its peculiar duties and peculiar snares. Did the apostle address the young? He exhorted them to be "sober-minded," he warned them to "flee from youthful lusts," he urged them to "remember their Creator in the days of their youth," to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," and "to honour their parents in all things, as being right in the sight of the Lord." Were they aged persons? he spoke the things of "sound doctrine; that the aged men should be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that should be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things." Titus ii. 2, 3. Thus he taught them things profitable as suited to their ages, for he taught them what would be the glory of youth, and the chief consolation of age; what constitutes, also, the amiableness of the one, and the dignity of the other.

The apostle would not be unmindful of the difference which existed in their worldly circumstances. Relative duties were much, and frequently insisted on by St. Paul; what a compendium in Philip. iv. 8; what an enumeration in

Romans xii. He exhorted masters "to give unto their servants that which is just and equal; knowing that they also have a Master in heaven, who has no respect of persons," Col. iv. 1; Eph. iv. 9. Were they servants? he recommended them "to be obedient in all things, in singleness of heart, not with eye service, but with good will, doing service as to the Lord, and not unto men." Were they rich in this world? he "charged them not to be high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us all things richly to enjoy; that they do good; that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life," 2 Tim. vi. 17, 18. If they were poor, and in low estate, he preached to them contentment, diligence, and to seek a good hope of heaven, that they might be "rich in faith," and "heirs of the kingdom" God hath promised to his people.

Things profitable, are things which accord with the varied scenes which Providence opens to the people of God. Paul went from house to house, not to pry into their domestic affairs, or as an officious person, busy in what he ought not, but giving "diligence to know the state of the flock," and to aid his friends in the improvement of providential visitations. Did he find any of them in adversity and affliction? he directed their view to the hand of God, and their ear to the voice of the

rod; he told them, "whom the Lord loves, he chastens," that he deals thus with all his children, and they should therefore "neither despise his chastening, nor faint under his rebukes." "He wept with those who wept," nor was he backward to "rejoice with those who rejoiced" under the smiles of Providence; while he excited them to lively gratitude, and abounding obedience in the work of the "Lord."

Perhaps it may be said, To do all this you have mentioned, required of the apostle to spend much time with the people. You may recollect the apostle speaks of three years, ver. 31, (three years current) in which he was incessantly engaged; had Providence permitted him to have made a much longer stay, he might have found sufficient to have worthily engaged him, and tended to profit the people. Some think for a minister to be with them about so many weeks is enough. I think some churches are falling into this error, but I must magnify the office of the Christian Pastor, because it was appointed of Christ. It must not be kept back, being one of the things intended for the edification or profit of believers, Gal. iv. 11, 12.

We may naturally infer from what hath been said, that the work of the Christian Minister is arduous, and very solemn. Whether we consider the different characters of the hearers; the various services this ministry involves; the awful responsibility attached to it; or the inevitable

consequences which follow; being “a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death,” we may exclaim, “Who is sufficient for these things?” We must ever acknowledge, “our sufficiency is of God.” It is having “obtained mercy that we faint not.” Your unworthy pastor has great reason publicly to acknowledge his obligations to that mercy; and he this day feels the solemnity of his office. We are, brethren, much nearer to heaven, or hell, than when I entered into the relation of a pastor among you.

Very far be it from me, to indulge such abominable vanity, as to compare myself with the apostle; to place myself by his side, would at once betray a weakness, and folly, deserving contempt; nevertheless, as it is not genuine humility which induces us to deny or conceal the work of divine grace upon our hearts, I may to the honour of that grace say, my heart has not been altogether unacquainted with a desire of usefulness among you.

During seven years, which have rapidly passed away, I have been much with you in sacred services; in those services numerous imperfections attended me, sufficient to humble me in the sight of God, and to prove the sincerity of your love and candour; still, I have wished to keep in view, that you are my peculiar charge, for whom I must account unto the chief Shepherd. I have desired at least, to bring forward things tending to your real profit; and have endeavoured to cherish this

desire ; in my visits and prayers, in my studies and preaching ; in the admission of members into the Church, and the administration of the ordinances among you ; that the sinner might be converted, that the believer might live up to his privileges, and the honour of his sacred vocation.

As a Church, I have prayed, and endeavoured that you might be holy, stedfast, and harmonious ; that by holiness, you might show the divinity of your religion ; by stedfastness, you might afford me an encouraging evidence of your satisfaction ; and by your harmony appear as the habitation of the divine Spirit, who, as a peaceful dove, dwells among the children of peace, far from the realms of noise and strife.

My desire for your profit, hath been often attended with pleasure, when any have set their faces Sion-ward, and have inquired after God ; and united themselves unto his people. I have also been pleased when witnessing ministers occasionally preaching to you, who possess talents of the first rate ; hoping, and praying, you might get real good ; many kind services have I received from my brethren in the ministry, especially from my honoured father in the ministry, now present. I hope he will accept my grateful thanks, and that he will receive a gracious reward from his God and Saviour.

Now, my Christian friends, I enter upon the eighth year of my labours among you ; and devote myself afresh to the work of the Lord, and the

labour of love. Can I do better than take the great apostle for my model? and "this will I do, if God permit." Shall I freely ask, while I follow him, what may I expect from you? Surely not opposition, or neglect. Not opposition; it hath been slanderously affirmed of you that you dislike faithfulness and zeal in a minister. I have not found it so yet, and have no fear that I shall find it so. I am happy to bear a testimony on your behalf, that though you dislike noise when occupying the place of sense, and bold assertions when substituted for the "words of soberness and truth," yet the more pointed and searching the sermon, the more (as a congregation) you approve. I must confess I am not so entirely free from fear concerning the other particular. I fear there may be a degree of negligence in your attendance. Shall I, then, have occasion to say, on the Lord's-day, or on a lecture on the week-day evening—shall I have occasion then to say, "I have been studying for the good of this people, I thought the subject would prove profitable to that soul, or the passage suited to such a case, but they did not think it worth their while to come and hear it; a little cold, a little rain, a slight indisposition, or a trifling circumstance which occurred, was sufficient to prevent their attendance, and with respect to them frustrated my design?" This would prove every painful; let me rather hope you will co-operate with me. To this end I shall draw to a close by exhorting you, after the manner of the apostle in

Romans xv. 30, "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me." Strive together with me,—

1. By cultivating spirituality of mind. As Protestant Dissenters (a name I hope never to be ashamed of) it may be expected of you, your advantages are great, see these clearly, and piously set forth in Dr. Watts's "Humble Attempt," &c., a book deserving your regard.

2. By prayer for me and yourselves, in secret, in your family, at prayer meetings, and in public. "Brethren, pray for us;" the poorest believer may render essential service in this way.

3. By encouraging religious conversation.

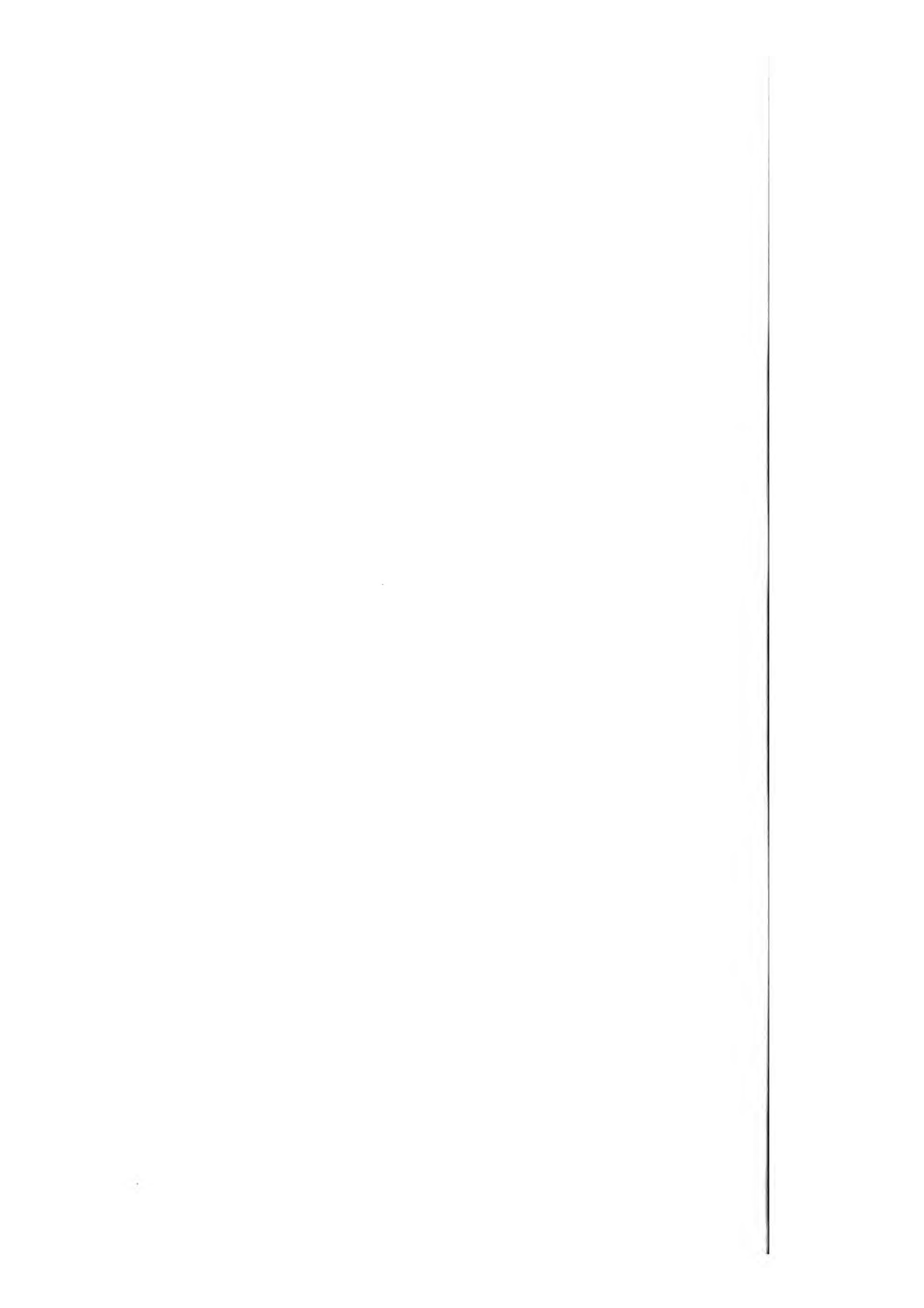
4. By early and constant attendance, upon the public ordinances, and more early than usual when sickness is in the family, that by letting me know the state of the afflicted, before I ascend the pulpit, I may be enabled to pray with the understanding. I have felt a defect here, which I hope will be remedied.

5. By promoting the attendance of others; most of you know I disdain the inviting persons from other places, where they hear the Gospel, but I mean those who would not go to any place of worship; endeavour to get such under the sound. God may meet with them, and command his "blessing, even life for evermore."

6. By parents training up their children in the admonition of the Lord; some of the dear children

will be old enough in the ensuing spring to be catechized, and to receive some plain explanation of their catechism, and I mean, God willing, to devote some time to this work; in this sense, I would seek yours, as well as you. And now, and from henceforth may great grace be upon us all. Amen.





## SERMON V.

PREACHED JANUARY 15, 1804, ON COMMENCING THE  
NINTH YEAR OF PASTORAL LABOUR.

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*I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up,  
by putting you in remembrance.—2 PETER I. 13.*

I HAVE been reviewing the time and circumstances attending my settling in this place; the engagements into which I entered with this Christian Church, were of the most sacred nature;—I then engaged to preach the word of life, and contend with simplicity and faithfulness for the faith once delivered to the saints; to promote the discipline of the Church, and regularly administer the ordinances of God; to warn the unruly, and comfort the feeble-minded; in short, to watch for souls, as one who must give an account unto God. When I considered what care, what wisdom, what affection, what zeal, what fidelity, what patience, are necessary to perform a work of such vast compass, to fulfil this ministry, I greatly felt my own insufficiency; and was ready to decline it, but considering I was called to it by Divine Providence, I entered upon the arduous undertaking,

“ looking unto Jesus;” nor have I looked unto him in vain. Blessed be his gracious name, having obtained help from his fulness, and success in his service, I continue unto this day, which begins the ninth year of my ministerial work among you.

The return of this day is always attended with a peculiarly solemn impression on my mind; I wish fully to cherish those sentiments, which, under God, may promote my diligence: that with the apostle, (ver. 12,) I may say, “I will not be negligent;” still, I cannot expect much prosperity in my work, without your co-operation; that our active exertions may be united, permit me to adopt the language of our text,

“ I think it meet to stir you up, by putting you in remembrance.” I propose,

I. To offer a few remarks upon the text, and

II. To imitate the apostle, upon the present occasion.

I. I shall offer a few remarks upon the text.

The term which the apostle uses, rendered “ stir up,” is very strong. The expression (*διεγείρω*) signifies, to raise, or rouse; to excite, or awaken; it is used in Matthew i. 24, for raising Joseph from his sleep; in Mark iv. 38, 39; the former, “they awoke him,” and the latter, “he arose.”

*First.* It appears that the word of God has a tendency to quicken and rouse us.

It never fails to effect this when accompanied by the influence of the Holy Spirit; but we now examine its native tendency and end. Does it

inform you that as sinners you are in a perishing condition ? it is to make you cry out for help, " Lord, save or I perish." Are the terrors of the Lord set before you ? this is to persuade you to flee to Christ the refuge. Is divine wrath revealed from heaven, as a tremendous storm ready to overwhelm you ? it is to quicken your flight to him, who is a covert from the storm, and the tempest. Shall we, in connexion with this, consider the word as a divine call to evangelical obedience ? the work itself is enlivening to an ingenuous mind ; the motives are all divine ; taken from the highest authority, the claim of boundless grace, and comprehending the truest interest of man. Have you a course to run ? your strength is from heaven, the examples are numerous and animating ; and on the goal is placed a splendid and eternal crown.

*Second.* To make and keep men lively and active in the things and ways of God, is a great object with a faithful minister. Unless you become decided and active for God, we fear the seed of the kingdom we have sown has been lost ; but, when we behold you lively in the way of holiness, we see a harvest to bless our eyes and gladden our hearts.

We are encouraged when we find any attainments in religion have been made, but still exhort, " walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing ;" and, with us, leave the things which are behind, and press forward to the mark, and for

the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

We are thankful when you walk without fainting ; more so, when you run without weariness ; but exceedingly joyful, when you fly as on eagles' wings, to take the prize ; then, indeed, are ye our glory and our joy.

*Third.* In order to this, ministers are frequently to insist upon the most important truths : “ putting you in remembrance,” *i. e.* bringing again to the mind.

A faithful minister will not occupy your time by theological speculations or trite tales, nor seek merely your amusement and applause by elaborate discussions or the studied arts of the orator, but, by the manifestation of the truth address himself to the conscience of every man, as in the sight of God : thus our apostle reminded them of the truth and divinity of our holy religion, “ We have not followed a cunningly devised fable,” &c., verse 16. He shows them the dreadful end of the ungodly, 1 Pet. iv. 18 ; the importance and glory of redemption by the blood of Christ, 1 Pet. i. 18, 19 ; the energy of the Holy Spirit making the gospel effectual to regeneration and sanctification ; and the final awful end of this lower world and all present things, that day of the Lord, which will come as a thief in the night &c., 2 Pet. iii. 10—14. These awful realities, these glorious objects, these interesting truths, the apostle would present frequently to view, urge upon their recol-

lection ; bring to their mind again and again, till they were powerfully impressed, deeply affected, and stirred up by them.

II. I proceed, having so good an example, to imitate the apostle, on the present occasion.

Desirous of doing good to all, I have chosen this subject as universally interesting.

*First.* It interests the young.

Will you, my dear young people, employ your youthful vigour in the service of sin and Satan ? Will you be active in running the road of disgrace and endless ruin ? Shall your godly parents and your best friends have to mourn over you as the prodigal once was, as lost and dead ? lost to a sense of your true interest, and as dead unto God ? God forbid ! You should remember your Creator in the days of your youth ; you should seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness ; you should seek him early. I would put you in remembrance of these things to stir you up, that you may now arise and return to your heavenly Father, confessing your sin and folly, and seeking mercy. I would urge you from this time, to cry unto him, " My Father, thou shalt be the guide of my youth." I call upon you, as you were dedicated unto God in baptism, that you confirm and renew the dedication, by your own personal engagements. May you this day commence a religious course, that the God of your fathers may be chosen as your own God, and that you may exalt him. You will never have greater advantages or opportunities than in the

present season of your youth, and never occasion to repent of being too soon, or being too unreserved.

Our subject concerns, also,

*Second.* The more matured in age and religion.

Ye advanced Christians—Many years have passed since ye first knew the Lord, or rather, were known of him. Yours is the mercy to be well acquainted with the holy Scriptures, and to have a great experience of divine things. Far be it from me to imagine, that I could afford you any information upon these subjects; but, although you know, and be established in the present truth, ver. 12, although you be discerning and solid Christians, it may be proper that I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance. Is it not meet that I put you in remembrance that now is your salvation much nearer than when you first believed? that the year of your release is at hand? that you are almost in sight of the desired haven? that the pearly gates of the city, where you are for ever to dwell, appear? These things may stir you up to maintain the conflict; God will shortly bruise Satan under your feet. Thus may you be excited to a continuance in well doing, and to abound in the praises of him who hath kept you unto this day, and who will not let you go.

*Third.* I would adopt the language of the text, as suited to the present state of my flock.

Attentively viewing your state, I find much to excite my pleasure and praise. We have had a

gradual increase to the congregation, and of additions to the church not a few. Your harmony, your liberality, and your general steadfastness, are worthy of praise; still, I fear that the great Head of the Church may say to us, as unto the church at Ephesus, "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee;" it appears to me most probable that it will apply to our defect in zeal.

Do we not too often consult our disposition rather than the prosperity of the interest at large? Does not this indicate, that in such instances, self-love prevails against the love of Zion? How little do we provoke one another unto love, and unto good works! Are we not often called to witness, that a little wet, or a little cold, or a little inconveniency in the family, thins the pews? that things which would not prevent our dining with a friend, prevent our waiting upon God, where he has even promised to meet us? Does it not appear from hence, that we are more under the influence of humour than conscience, in our regard to public worship? How many neglect the weekly lectures! they cannot find one hour for the service of God on these occasions: you say the business, the family, the world prevent you. I avail myself of your acknowledgment, and reply, If the world possesses so much of your time and attention, you must meet with much to stir up your depravity, and it is meet that I stir you up to vigilance, and prayer, and duty. It is far from a pleasant service I now perform, but it is meet to do so. In a congregation like this, there



are different characters to be addressed, and therefore,

I would rouse the insensible sinner, by reminding him of the importance of being a real christian, and what can constitute him one. You, who are persevering in a sinful course, are fighting against God, daily adding to your guilt, and thus treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath—you cry peace and safety to yourselves; but alas! while your security is imaginary, your danger is real and imminent. Were I to see you lie asleep among serpents, and exposed to beasts of prey, would it not be cruel to say, “sleep on,” and leave you in that state? Were I to behold your habitation seized with the devouring flame, and know you to be in a state of insensibility to your danger, would it not be cruel to suffer you to remain so without making an attempt to awaken you? Were I to see some impending evil, humanity would make me cry out to you, that you might escape. Is it not then an act of kindness, a part of benevolence, to rouse you to some thoughtfulness about your soul? that you may watch against sin, the world, and the old serpent? that you may escape the flames of hell? I would remind you that the slothful servant is a wicked and unprofitable servant, and such must be cast into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. I would remind you, that your transgressions are many, your guilt great, your days uncertain, death and judgment solemn, and the salvation of the soul the

most important concern. I would stir you up to escape for thy life, to inquire with the gaoler, "What must I do to be saved?" to look unto the Lord Jesus Christ as able and willing to save those who fly to him. Should you die without being a christian, it will be death indeed! To what lashes of conscience will you be exposed! What a fiery indignation awaits you! what devouring vengeance will fall upon you! If you are convinced of these things, you ask, What constitutes a christian? He is not one who is so outwardly only, but inwardly. We must receive of *his* Spirit. "For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Rom. viii. 9. You must become one with Christ by a vital, spiritual union, and then you will have a communication of the grace of the Holy Spirit, to make the Lord Jesus precious unto you, and to conform you in mind and conduct unto him.

I would endeavour to raise the backslider from his fallen state, by reminding him of the misery of his present condition, and his encouragement to return. You once set your face toward Zion and inquired the way thither; you looked for the footsteps of Christ's flock, and appeared desirous of following them; you said to your christian friends, as Ruth to Naomi, "Your God shall be my God, and your people my people;" and to the church, "I will go with you, for I have heard that God is with you." Like the Galatians, you ran well for a time; but like them, something has hindered you. Alas! your friends, your closet, your conscience, and your

God, say, thou hast gone backward, thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Your condition resembles that of a person who, having been exposed to a paralytic seizure, requires some severe shocks to recover him again to sensibility. I would stir you up by putting you in remembrance how much better it was with you formerly than now, how offensive is a state of lukewarmness to Christ, Rev. iii. 16. What he pronounces concerning such, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." God saith, "My soul hath no pleasure in him." Return then, O backslider! take with you words, and turn unto the Lord, say unto him, "Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously;" and he will heal your backsliding, and love you freely; he will be as the dew unto your soul, so will you grow beautiful as the lily, and firm as the deep-rooted cedar of Lebanon.

Those who are truly conscientious and watchful may be exhorted to greater diligence in cultivating christian graces. "Add to your faith virtue and knowledge," &c. ver. 5. These things require and are worthy your diligence. To maintain the dignity of your christian character and profession, that both may be unsullied, rather that they may be adorned, be fervent in prayer, unwearied in good works, abounding in praise, and aiming to promote the highest end of life and religion. To conclude,

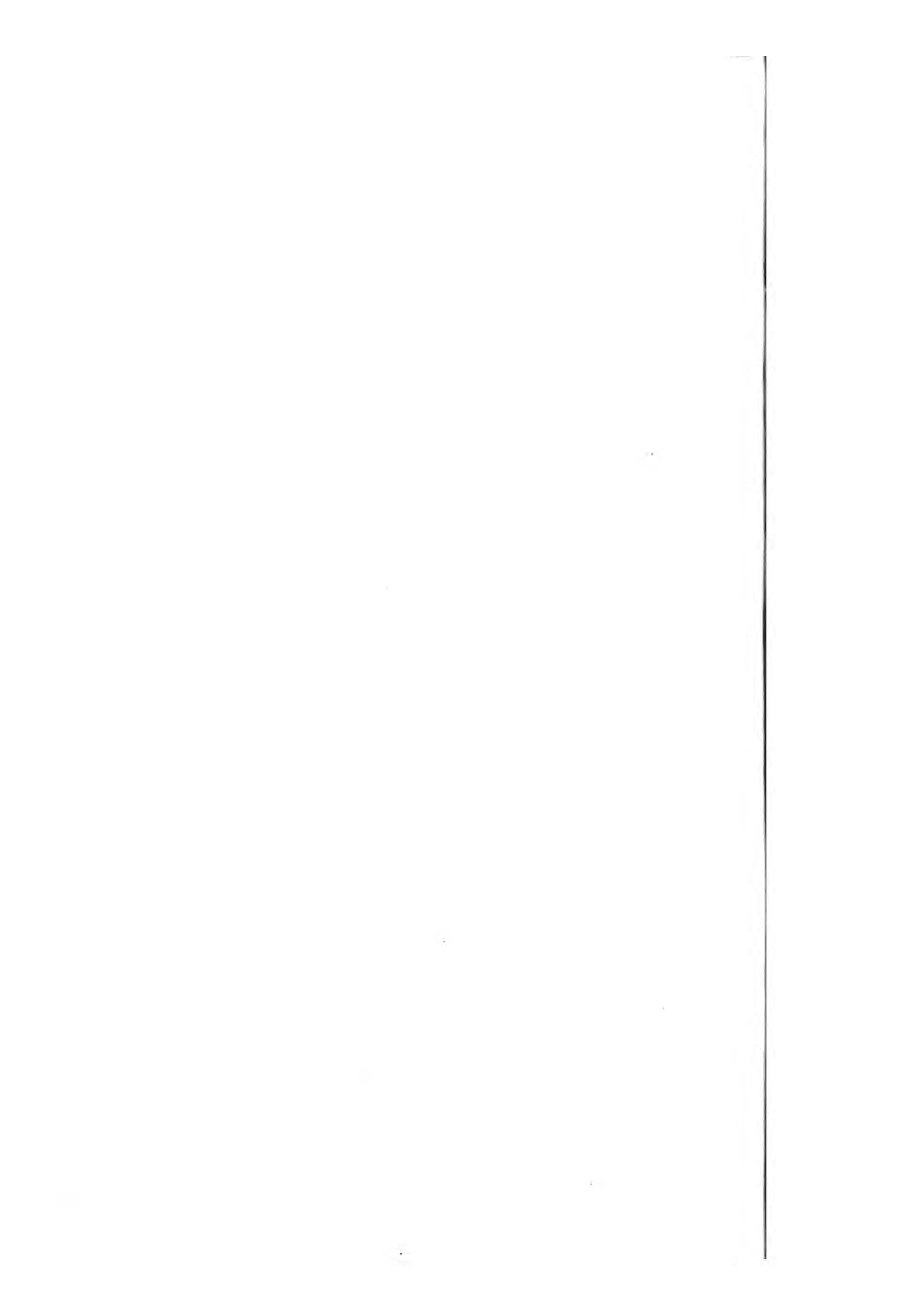
1. Here is a rule of duty for me. I am bound by duty and office to stir you up. I am inclined

by grace and affection; I renew my engagements to do so in dependence upon God, in his sight, and the presence of this assembly; better my tongue be silent, and my lips be sealed, than be unfaithful to your souls. I am in this tabernacle which must be put off, shortly put off. This the Lord hath shown me, not as he did Peter, but by his providence in the death of others, and in afflictions; and then, the soul, I hope, would go to the hands of a Saviour, I know it must to the bar of its Judge.

2. This should regulate your expectation in coming to hear; not to be charmed with novelty, not to have curiosity gratified, not to pass away an hour or conform to a custom, but to feel, to be impressed, to be quickened with the life of God, and to be active for his glory, and the promotion of his interest. This is to act agreeably to the design of providential dispensations sent to quicken us.

3. Inquiry. Is your knowledge connected with divine power? Has the gospel come to you in word only; or, do you know it to be the power of God unto salvation?

4. Let us unite in prayer. Brethren, pray for me, that I may not be negligent to put you in remembrance. Pray for yourselves, and each other, that my faithfulness may be received in love, and be made effectual of God; and now, unto him I commend this discourse, and you, and myself. Oh that it may appear, I have not run this day, nor laboured in this discourse, in vain!



## SERMON VI.

PREACHED JANUARY 20<sup>TH</sup>, 1805, ON COMMENCING THE  
TENTH YEAR OF PASTORAL LABOUR.

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*Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.—ROMANS XV. 30.*

I INTEND to dwell chiefly upon the latter part.

The good providence of God has brought us to that sabbath in the year which is the anniversary of my coming to settle in this place. On this occasion, I have been accustomed particularly to address myself to the congregation and church under my pastoral care in reference to the relation between us.

I hesitated for some time, whether to continue the course or not, because it naturally leads to say something of self; and to speak of ourselves, in general, lays us open to misrepresentation and unkind comments: but, as I pursued the subject, I thought, if any should feel such a disposition, I have no particular occasion to regard them; certainly, not to regard them so much, as to make me deviate from a course that has gratified those

I am most desirous to please. But above all, "God is my witness" that my design in this discourse corresponds with the request—the pious, sincere, repeated request of the holy apostle—to engage the prayers of his Christian friends.

The text affords us two observations suited to the present occasion.

I. The union of interest which subsists between ministers and their people.

II. The co-operation of efforts desirable.

We are led to consider,

I. The union of interest which subsists.

In every existing relation, the concerns it involves necessarily become mutual; inattention to these in either party forbodes evil to that connexion. When we consider the relation in which a pastor and his people stand to each other, we shall perceive that it enfolds concerns of no small moment, and interests of no short duration.

What say the Scriptures? In what light does the truth of God represent this matter? Are we "the ministers of God?" 2 Cor. vi. 4. It is "the ministry we have received of the Lord," the ministry of his truth and grace. We have received it for your good; both the truth and grace are proposed to your faith, reception, and enjoyment, that it may prove the ministry of your reconciliation, the word of your salvation, and eternal life.

Do we, in consequence of this office, sow "the seed of the kingdom?" Matt. xiii. This is to yield fruit, in some thirty, some sixty, and some an hun-

dred fold. But who reap the advantage? yourselves, with us; both he who sows, and you who reap, shall rejoice together.

We who are ministers lead the worship. It is your worship equally with our own. The confessions of sin are universal, we have all sinned. The supplications for mercy exclude none; we all need it, and this should be the errand of every one. So also, the grateful acknowledgments of favours from heaven. In public, the worship is not that of an individual only, but of the church and congregation. In your names, and on your behalf, we approach unto God.

Is our ministry a stewardship? You are the household of God, in which we sustain this office. The stores committed to us are not to enrich ourselves; but that with prudence and fidelity they may be so distributed, as "each may have a portion in due season."

When the Lord sets up lights in his church, that they may shine in the purity of their doctrine and example, the end is, that many may rejoice in the light of instruction and comfort they may impart.

Watchings and labours are part of our engagements. Have not these an immediate reference to yourselves? "We watch for your souls as those who must give an account." We labour for your benefit; you are the vineyard of the Lord we have to cultivate; you are the flock we are called to take the oversight of.

Our varied experiences are often for your sakes.



“Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation,” 2 Cor. i. 6.

Who can tell how many sorrows of mind a minister feels to qualify him to speak with sympathy to the weary in spirit? or, how many consolations to comfort others with the comforts he has himself received of God? Of the former, there may be many; of the latter, not a few.

The principles and prospects which excite to ministerial duty, and afford delight, are inseparable from their people.

“If we be sober, it is for your cause,” 2 Cor. v. 13. Do we “warn every man, and teach every man in all wisdom?” it is “that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus,” Col. i. 28. Here you have our work, our motive, our end. “Ye are our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming.” 1 Thess. ii. 19. Our hope is that of doing your souls some essential service. “We seek not yours, but you.” When this is in any measure answered, ye become our joy. We are greatly revived with such appearances. It is no common joy to us when we are successful in bringing souls to God. Is it not angelic? for those benevolent spirits rejoice over repenting, returning sinners.

We have no higher ambition than to win you to Christ; to form you (as instruments) for his ser-

vice and kingdom, is our crown. Who can fully conceive of the high delight we shall possess to see many of the jewels in Christ's mediatorial crown, souls who were born or nourished under our ministry?

The responsibility will be mutual, Heb. xiii. 17. Ministers must give an account. If with joy, it will be to both; if with grief to them, it will be unprofitable to you. Then it will be found that the word has been "a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death," 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

O that my heart may be more alive to this solemn, this interesting, this endearing union!

Every sabbath, and indeed every day, would I yield myself to the salutary impression, that blending itself with my best powers, and influencing me in my numerous services, I may be so "affectionately desirous of you, as willingly to impart, not the gospel of God only, but also my strength and my life." Let me then solicit your prayers to God for me.

## II. The co-operation of effort requested.

We may make a few general remarks upon the nature of the request, and how made.

*First.* There is a holy striving in prayer.

Prayer is not a cold, unmeaning ceremony, not a formality destitute of life and vigour. Our apostle uses a word expressive of energy, taken from the wrestling for a crown in the Grecian games. See, my brethren, how prayer wrought in Abraham, when interceding for Sodom.

Attend to the language of God to Moses, Exod. xxxii. 10. Sin had made a breach in the camp of Israel; at that breach, the displeasure of God was ready to enter, when Moses stands and pleads so successfully, that it is represented as effectually checking the divine wrath. "Let me alone," says God, "that my wrath may wax hot against them."

Behold Jacob calling upon God at Bethel. Urged with fear, and animated by faith, he pours out his prayers with strong cries. He exercises a princely power, and says with holy fervour, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me:" he prevailed with God. Let us never forget, that in the united fervent prayers of God's people, there is a mighty power.

*Second.* The prayers of the people of God are to be highly valued.

St. Paul had expressed himself in the former verse as having a strong confidence, and assured hope; nevertheless, he did not make light of the supplications of his christian friends; he did not think them unnecessary; he earnestly sought them. Is not his language strong? Are not his arguments weighty? "I beseech you, brethren," by or "for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake," by the authority of our common Lord and Master whom we all serve, by the concern you feel for his interest in which we are engaged, as you desire to see him glorified; and, by the love of the Spirit, by all the sacred love he has shed abroad in your hearts, or, as you would discover any grateful love to the good Spirit of God. What solemnity of exhortation!

what moving arguments ! how resistless to a mind in a right frame !

*Third.* Observe, The apostle requested, that his own person and case in particular might be remembered before God. In some places, he exhorted, “ Brethren, pray for us ;” in the passage before us, and in some others, “ for me.” The selection of a few passages from his epistles may show to what, prayer for ministers relates, and lead us more fully into the extent of the request.

In Heb. xiii. 18, it stands connected with a good conscience. In Col. iv. 3, 4, it has reference to a door of utterance ; *i. e.* speaking with liberty and fidelity as an ambassador ought. A door of entrance into a place will not avail unless a door of utterance be granted. In 2 Thess. iii. 1, it relates to success in his work, “ that the word may have free course,” as the current of a river unimpeded : and “ that it may be glorified,” by its manifest effects in the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints.

The text stands in connexion with the apostle’s preservation from unbelieving enemies, acceptance with the people of God in his labour of love, pleasure in his work, and the promotion of their joy, and this according to the will of God.

These subjects weigh with the mind of your minister ; he feels the importance of prayer ; he sets a value upon your supplications. I cannot have a better example than that of the apostle, nor advance a better or more suitable request. Permit

me then now to make it my own: "Now then, I beseech you, brethren, by the Lord Jesus Christ, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me."

Were you to hear me advance sentiments indefensible from Scripture, or see me attempt the introduction of rites and ceremonies opposite to the simplicity of the gospel; were you to witness in me a spirit of lordly ambition, aspiring to an authority over your faith, or any attempts to invade your Christian liberty, and to endanger your principles, then you would do right to strive against me. I bless God, that my conscience testifies I desire none of these things. I wish to keep as remote from them as possible; therefore, I do not hesitate to require, that you would strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.

1. I beseech you to do so, for the honour of the ministry.

May I not use the apostle's language with greater propriety than himself, "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach the unsearchable riches of Christ?" Nearly eighteen years, my tongue has been constantly employed in preaching the Lord Jesus. Fifteen years have I sustained the office of pastor in his church; during those years, I have delivered thousands of sermons, and have occasionally occupied more than a hundred pulpits. I have been favoured with as much respect and affection as I could have desired, (some individuals, in-

deed excepted,) and much more than I had any right to expect; I now thank you, my friends of this congregation, for the high degree of favour, you have manifested toward me.

Some success has attended my weak efforts in different places, in the regeneration of minds which were alienated from the life of God, the comfort of true believers, and the additions which have been made to the church of Christ. After all this, it is possible, in some awful sense, "to be cast away." In one fatal hour of temptation, if left of God to myself, and by one single act of rashness, intemperance, or wretched folly, I might grieve the Holy Spirit, blast my character, destroy my prospects of public usefulness, shut every pulpit against me, and make my best and warmest friends ashamed to own me: thus should I wound the cause of the dear Redeemer, and, as we read this morning, the ministry would be blamed. How dreadful would such an hour be! how shocking such effects! I beseech you, then, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, that he may help me. O my God! if thou wilt hold me up, then I shall be safe.

2. Conscience bids me ask your prayers.

Inward satisfaction is of consequence to every private Christian, but of primary importance to a public teacher of Christianity. I do not mean a satisfaction with the performance of the service, but with our governing motive, aim, and disposition. To have a conscience void of offence, much is required of the Christian pastor. He must not shun

to declare the whole counsel of God ; he must not corrupt the word of God, but as of sincerity and truth he must speak as in the sight of God. He is not allowed to trifle in the field of speculation, nor to indulge any wrathful passions in the delivery, but to aim at the glory of God and the Lamb ; in all, to speak from a heart of tenderness and love to man, and to cultivate love to all the brethren. Now, brethren, I am desirous of having a good conscience, and would exercise myself to have it void of offence toward God and you, that when I ascend this pulpit, or when I leave the place, this may be my constant companion and a source of pure delight. Now then, brethren, I beseech you to strive together with me in your prayers for me, that I may have grace, not to be among you with carnal policy, but in simplicity and godly sincerity, and my rejoicing be in the testimony of conscience, 2 Cor. i. 12.

3. My increasing services enforce the request. Very thankful would I be to God for the gradual and long continued increase of the church and congregation ; every addition of stated hearers to the one, and of members to the other, together with those who are growing up in the families, cause an increase of service. In this enlarging sphere, I am called to promote the purity, the liberty, the peace, and prosperity of this church, to cultivate and adorn the relation in which we stand to other churches of the Lord. To visit the sick. Visiting others is as convenient, rather a matter of social pleasure,

but I make it a point of conscience to visit the sick when I know they are so ; beside these, there are many other duties which devolve upon a minister, little thought of by hearers. For the performance of these duties, I need, I greatly need, wisdom, faith, hope, zeal, and patience : all these qualifications are from above ; they come from the Father of lights and the fulness of the Mediator ; they must be drawn down by prayer, and therefore, I beseech you to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.

4. I would request it by the hopes I indulge. I am now entering upon the tenth year of my pastoral labours amongst you. It is quite uncertain and unknown to mortals, whether we shall be carried through it, or only continue for a small portion of it. Perhaps, after this sabbath, it may be said to me, " Give an account of thy stewardship." However this may be, I enter upon the new year with a willing mind ; I renew the dedication of myself to God and your service ; I am ready to do any thing, and at all times, that may most subserve your interest, most promote your felicity. Hope inspires me. I cannot give way to despair while I have a praying people. The spirit of prayer among a people gives new vigour to hope in several ways. It is a proof of affection, and a mean of increasing it. To pray for a person in particular, whose circumstances you know, and whom you love, has a great influence upon our attachment to them, and the interest we feel in them. It is also calculated to prepare the



mind for uniting in public work. In prayer, we feel more reverence of God, more deadness to the world, more impression of eternal things. Can there be a more pleasing view than to see a Christian rising from his knees in secret, and saying, "Now will I go and hear what the Lord my God will say unto me." Whether rich or poor, young or old, this gives hope. Further, prayer is connected with all the great encouragement of heaven. It attaches itself to the all-sufficiency of God, his free and abundant grace in Christ Jesus, and all the promised aids and blessings of the Holy Spirit. Time would fail me to show what revivals of religion have been attendant upon the spirit of prayer. What great things prayer has done! It has a kind of omnipotency; for all things are possible to him that prayeth as to "him who believeth."

5. The end of all demands it. How solemn to go from the assembly below to the tribunal above! Must we not all appear? Are not we each to give an account? How pleasing to present many as the fruits of our ministry, as born to God in Zion, and trained up in his church for his courts above!

Although this is to be desired of all, it may be too much at present for me to expect. My heart's desire for every one of you is, that you may pray, and pray for me also; but, I fear some are present who have never yet sought after God, and earnestly engaged in seeking the good of their own souls. The state of such persons is indeed very bad; they are to be pitied, to be blamed, and I would address

myself once more to them. Who can tell? The Lord may give you repentance. It may be said from this time, "Behold, he prayeth." What, are you so lost to a sense of the divine authority and majesty of Jehovah, as that you can dare to oppose his high commands? What, are you so unmindful of the precept and example of a gracious Saviour, as knowingly to slight both, and that from one year to another year? What, are you so indifferent to the blessings of grace and glory, that you do not think them worthy your seeking for? What, are your soul and salvation of such little value, as to excite no serious concern? Have you heard so many preachers and sermons in this place, different and affectionate preachers, for year after year, and all in vain? How will your prayerless state be viewed on a deathbed, and in another world? Will it not be perfectly righteous in the Judge, to condemn you for such gross negligence, such unbelief, such contempt, and hardness of heart? May you now seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near; this is still an accepted time, and now is the day of salvation.

Let us, whose hearts now unite in prayer, look forward to the world of praise; and while we indulge a hope so divine, be grateful to him from whom we have derived it. Amen.



## SERMON VII.

A FUNERAL SERMON FOR MRS. M. TALFOURD, AGED 72,  
PREACHED JAN. 23, 1803.

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*O death, where is thy sting?—1 COR. xv. 55.*

BRETHREN, you have been often reminded that death is no respecter of ages ; persons of all ages die. This fact the providence of God fully demonstrates. We cannot fail to observe it in those recent breaches which have been made in this congregation. The last Lord's-day evening, we were called to improve the death of a young man, one just arrived to manhood, not having attained to the age of twenty-three ; now, we are desirous of improving the departure of an " old disciple," who had lived beyond her threescore years and ten.

Every considerate person will think frequently on the subject of death. History records of a monarch, that he appointed his herald to come morning after morning to proclaim in his hearing, " Remember thou art mortal!" and Joseph of Arimathea had a sepulchre hewn out in his garden. In the midst of our worldly possessions we should remem-

ber our mortality ; while surrounded with temporal enjoyments we should “ consider our latter end ;” that by such reflections, under God, we may be preserved from the snares and dangers of this state ; may possess security for the future world ; and from the knowledge of that, may be enabled, even in the prospect of our dissolution, to adopt the triumphant language of our apostle, “ O death, where is thy sting ?”

I. To inquire, wherein consists the sting of death ?

II. To show how he was disarmed of his terror.

III. To point out the persons interested in this deliverance. And,

IV. To consider what is necessary to qualify us for using this language, will contain the outlines of this discourse, and tend to the improvement both of the providence and the subject.

I. We are to inquire, wherein consists the sting of death ?

Death is indebted to sin both for its existence and sting. Man in his original state was perfectly holy. His nature and relation to God necessarily subjected him to the government of his Creator and Benefactor : he had, therefore, a law given him suited to his nature. This law was constituted a covenant to him and his seed, and it was attended with awful sanctions ;—life, in case of perfect obedience ; death, in consequence of a failure. While man remained innocent, he had access to the tree of life. Some have supposed, such was the quality

of its fruit that it could have preserved the human body from mortality, and in favour of this sentiment they have adduced Gen. iii. 22, "and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever : therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man ; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." But without assigning to the passage such extent of meaning, we may view that tree as a sacred type of perpetual life, and as the sacramental pledge of security to an innocent creature. When, therefore, he forfeited his right to life, then he lost his right of access to the symbolic tree, and was driven from the garden as one who had offended by rebellion against God. Thus, we must look upon Adam's transgression as the violation of a divine law and covenant ; this made a breach in our world, at which, the evils of suffering and death entered. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; and so death passed upon all men, for that (or rather, in whom,) all have sinned," Rom. v. 12. So in the chapter before us, verses 21, 22 ; "By man came death," "in Adam all die."

More particularly, let us regard what is meant by the sting of death. What is it which furnishes it with so much terror, or renders it so capable of injuring man ? We are informed in a few words,

ver. 56. It is sin; sin as deriving its strength, *i. e.* its authority or power, from the law of God, of which "sin is the transgression." The law condemns sin; the subjects of sin are therefore the subjects of guilt, or liableness to eternal condemnation; and it is this guilt of sin which gives to death so dreadful a form, and invests it with such great power to injure us. This makes it like a snake, or an adder, or those scorpions we read of in Rev. ix. 10; and their stings (*κέντρα*, same word in both places,) were "in their tails." These venomous animals which are furnished with a sting are capable of piercing the flesh, infusing their venom, and producing the most bitter anguish in the human frame: so the guilt of sin, as the sting of death, fastens in the conscience; there it deeply pierces, there it rankles like deadly poison, and the effect is unutterable distress, anguish insupportable. How terrible is death possessed of such a sting! But the text presents him to our view as dispossessed of it; and,

II. We are to show how death was disarmed.

Was this achieved by human wisdom, by an arm of flesh, or by creature holiness? No; these were inadequate to the mighty work. To effect this, it was necessary that human guilt should be expiated, and the divine law be honoured; these were brought to pass by the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Imagine for a moment, a venomous animal armed with a dreadful sting; it has long been the terror of numbers, and its very approach fills with horror.

A great philanthropist appears who engages to effect a deliverance from this dreadful enemy; he says, "I will even enter the cave to which it retreats, there I will pluck away its sting; this shall assuredly be done, although my own body receive it with all its malignity." Thus, in effect, Christ spake, and thus he did. He engaged to descend into the grave, to conflict with this enemy in his own retreat, to destroy his power, and to divest him of his terror. The conquest is ascribed to him in ver. 57, "victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." He became incarnate, partook of "our flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage; for, verily, he took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham."

For this, our "iniquities were laid upon him" by imputation, and he became exposed to the sufferings they deserved: by his bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, he received the sting of death in order to take it away. Heb. ix. 26—28. On the cross, "Jesus cried with a loud voice:" it was the shout of a conqueror, rather than the feeble voice of one expiring through weakness. In his resurrection, he clearly "triumphed over principalities and powers" of darkness; and now, by his gospel, it is proclaimed to nations, that "he hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light." In this way, our last great enemy was disarmed. The scriptures are so very clear upon it,



that were I not acquainted with the gross darkness of the human mind, and the great opposition of Satan against the glories of the Saviour's cross, I should feel astonished at every instance of a professing Christian denying or even doubting this truth. Blessed be God, the important information is clearly conveyed unto us, the cheering truth is written in our bibles as with a sunbeam.

We must now proceed,

III. To point out the persons who are interested in this deliverance.

The happy persons are believers in the Son of God. They who possess true faith become one with the Lord, as branches in the vine, and as members in the body; in consequence of this vital union, the Christian has fellowship with Christ; a participation in the fruit of his meritorious obedience and death; and in the victories he hath obtained. In Rom. viii. 1, we are assured, "there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus:" this implies, there is no guilt now imputed to them, for then there would be condemnation. As there is now no condemnation, there can be no justice to punish them; and if no justice to inflict punishment, then their death can have no sting.

"If sin be pardoned, I'm secure,  
Death has no sting beside."

The Divine Spirit hath pronounced them blessed who die in the Lord. Upon this part of our subject, it may be proper to remind you of a distinc-

tion of some importance to keep in our view. There is a wide difference between the stroke of death and the sting of death. Enoch and Elijah were the only persons exempted from its stroke ; all others have been subject to it, and believers must expect in common with others to feel it. "It is appointed unto all men once to die." But if by living faith we are in Christ, it cannot sting us, it cannot possibly do us any real hurt. We shall not be injured. The child of God by faith in Christ Jesus may put his hand without fear upon the den of this cockatrice. Isa. xi. 8. O believer, "death is yours." To die will be your gain; your last hour will be your best; your exit from this state will be your entrance into a better. But,

IV. Let us consider, what things are necessary to qualify us for using the language of the text.

Will natural courage thus inspire us? Have the heroes of the world thus triumphed? Numerous are the instances with which we are furnished to the contrary. Many of atheistic minds, who have uttered bold things against God, his existence, and government, have found their impious courage fail them upon the approach of death; and others, by a kind of infatuation, who have been insensible to danger in the field of battle, have trembled before death when entering their chamber.

This is the language of a triumphant faith; it is the exultation of a Christian in his happiest frame.

We must distinguish between the occasion of joy, and the things necessary to qualify us for bear-

ing a part in the triumph. The victory of the Redeemer is the only foundation of our hope and consolation ; and this is the same to all his believing people. In this respect, all real Christians are one in Christ, without any difference, however they may differ as to the degrees of their knowledge and experience. Nevertheless, we find many in this safe state, subject to doubts and fears, which operate strongly against their interest, and prevent their felicity ; as far as relates to present enjoyment, they attain not to the transport of mind which dictated the text. What things, then, are absolutely necessary ? In answering this, I would point out the two following, as arising from the very nature of the case :

*First.* The knowledge of Christ's victory over the enemy.

*Second.* An assured evidence of our interest in it.

Is it possible for me to rejoice in that which I know not ? Or, can I exult and triumph in that which promotes not my interest ? Impossible. But give me to behold the conquests of Christ, as the Captain of my salvation, and favour me with the assurance that he hath obtained victory and deliverance for me, and then, instead of betraying symptoms of fear, or backwardness to praise, I shall feel a sacred pleasure, indulge a holy rapture, and with a spirit almost divine, adopt the heroic language of the text, " O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ? "

Some Christians are favoured with clearer and more elevated views than others. God is to be honoured by us in dependence, and prayer, and circumspection, and we may hope he will honour us with much of this "joy in the Holy Ghost."

Happy souls, who have such assured hopes, and who depart hence in so truly a blessed state of mind!

#### IMPROVEMENT.

1. We may discover much of the evil of sin from this subject.

Sufferings and death could have had no power against us, but in consequence of sin. I wish you to behold its evil. Could I lead you into the chamber of the dying, show you that pale face, those dim and sunk eyes, that heaving breast, that panting for breath, that cold clammy sweat upon the brows, and those convulsive struggles which are sometimes the harbingers of death, I would say, "Ah! see what sin has done!" Could I attend you to the tombs of the dead, where they lie and decay, and moulder away; or, rather, could I open to your view that awful pit which has no bottom, and tell you there to look at the torment and endless agonies of those who suffer the sting of death, I would say, "Ah! see what sin has done!" In the sufferings of the dying, in the ashes of the dead, and in the miseries of condemned spirits, are written the evil of sin; also, in the sufferings of our Lord, which he endured to deliver us from that "wrath to come." So may we be led to notice,

2. What a great friend Christ is to his people.

Will not this appear upon a reflection on what he has done ? He has removed sin, and so taken away the sting of death. If he had not done this for us, death would have fastened its sting in us for ever. The law, after being once broken, could never have been satisfied by the transgressor. We had no power to make atonement ; it would, therefore, always have remained a condemning law, and while that continues to condemn, death has power to sting. We should enter as fully as possible into a view of our danger, to appreciate more justly our great deliverance ; and by seeing more clearly the terror of the enemy, we may feel the greatness of our obligation to the Saviour.

Beside this, we should recollect how he delivered. The way in which it was procured demonstrates the highest love : “ Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” Jesus Christ hath so loved his people as to lay down his life for them ; and the deliverance he bestows, was obtained by his own agony, sufferings, and death. He fell, that we might arise, he died that we might live. Oh what a friend is Christ to all his people !

Our departed sister knew much of his grace in life and in death. Mrs. Talfourd entered into fellowship with this church in April, 1776. From what she wrote upon that occasion, she appears to have had very clear views of sin and the Gospel method of salvation. On the righteousness and strength of the Redeemer, she firmly relied for par-

don and acceptance. So evident was the change which grace made in her state, that she found, as herself expressed it, as great a difference between the state of nature and of grace, as between darkness and light. Grace was to her at times reviving as the light, while her mind was refreshed with a sense of pardoning love. During the space of nearly twenty-seven years she was related to this church, I never heard of the garments of her profession being stained: this was no small mercy to her, and no inconsiderable occasion of praise from us. It is a great thing "to be kept" thus "from falling;" for such have been the backslidings of some professors, and so foully have they fallen into sin, that pious ministers, and friends, and Christian relatives have had to say, "We should rather have heard of their death; we could sooner have followed them to the grave." The life of our departed friend was a life of little variety, and her regard to religion was very uniform. It did not consist in those things which most attract human observation; it was more the hidden "life of God in the soul." This spiritual life was nourished by devout retirement, where the soul converses most intimately with its best Friend, grows in the knowledge of his will, and becomes more assimilated into his image. From my first acquaintance with her, I regarded her as a person of unfeigned devotion, who esteemed the Bible as her delight, and God as her chosen portion; and all I have seen in her or heard of her have tended to confirm this sentiment. Most of you know, that

her constitution was much shaken by the paralytic seizures, to which of late she had been subject ; but though her frame was shattered, her natural powers were impaired, and her recollection failed, it was pleasing to behold her sense of religion was undiminished, and her best, her sacred feelings were easily wrought upon by reading to her the Scriptures, or by conversation on divine subjects. At length, after she had waited the Lord's time, she literally "fell asleep in Jesus." The suddenness of her departure prevented her from leaving a dying testimony with her friends ; nor was this at all necessary. She had spoken so clearly, and said so much while living. Some stranger to her may ask, Did she then talk much about religion ? No ; she was not one of many words, but she spoke in that way, I truly wish we may all constantly speak, by her Christian spirit and conduct. A recollection of her faith and holiness may comfort her mourning relatives, and excite all of us, who knew her, to the diligent imitation of her virtues. Let us "not be slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

3. Let us inquire, How does death appear to ourselves ?

Some may say, I do not like the sight at all, and I strive to avoid not only the appearance, but also the thoughts of it. You may strive to avoid the thought, and fly from place to place, and from thing to thing in rapid succession ; but, can you by this conduct, defend yourselves against the stroke ? or

can you thus avoid the dreadful sting? No, sirs, you cannot; and a moment's reflection will be enough to convince you of this. Go then, O young man, set upon thy pleasures! Go, take thy fill of carnal joy; give a loose to the vain desires of thy heart, and withhold not thyself from any gratification; drown reflection, and put the evil day far from thy thoughts! But, "remember, for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." Then, thou wilt find death has an awful sting to an unpardoned soul. Go, thou covetous worldly man! lay up much goods for many years, and say to thy soul, "Soul, eat, drink, and be merry, for thou hast much goods laid up for many years." Still, death may cut thee down at one stroke, place his sting in thy soul, and then, where art thou? Undone for ever. May these awakening considerations rouse sinners to a sense of their danger, and may they now fly to Christ as the only Saviour from sin and misery!

4. Let the believer in Jesus look forward to the blessed morning of the resurrection.

Now you should look more to Christ than at death, and to the resurrection morn rather than to the night of our departure. You may express your joy and exultation in the language of the text; your gratitude in the following words, "Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." This you should do now; but when "this mortal shall have put on immortality, and this corruptible shall have put on incorrup-



tion," and that saying is most gloriously and fully accomplished—"death is swallowed up in victory;" then—then—what a grand burst of joy and praise will sound through the universe of Jehovah, when millions of tongues on the bright hills of heavenly day shall shout, Victory! and swell the chorus of praises to God and the Lamb! May all present hail the glories and aid the triumphs of that endless day. Amen.

## SERMON VIII.

DISCOURSE ON AFFLICTIONS, AUGUST 26, 1796.

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*Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth : therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.—JOB v. 17.*

DISCOURSES on affliction are generally seasonable, for this obvious reason, sin and sorrow are inseparable. Previous to the existence of moral evil, man was an inhabitant of paradise, a place of perfect pleasure, but since his apostasy from God, succeeding generations have found the path of human life strewn with briars; and pricking thorns grow in connexion with the roses we would assume.

Troubles, considered as the effect of sin, are part of the curse denounced against transgressors of the divine law; but “those who are in Christ Jesus,” are delivered “from condemnation;” those “who fear the Lord,” have freedom from the curse in all its parts; their afflictions are therefore to be differently viewed, to be considered as blessings in disguise, and productive of great advantages; agreeable to which sentiments, is the language of

the text, "Happy is the man whom God correcteth : therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty."

The words lead us naturally to consider,

I. Afflictions in their author and nature. "The Lord," "correcteth."

II. The felicity of those who are corrected. "Happy is the man."

III. The attention bespoke, and improvement specified. "Behold," &c.

I. Afflictions in their author and nature.

*First.* God is here represented as the author of our trials, or the appointer of our afflictions.

The frequent recurrence of events is apt to draw the attention from the first cause ; we are ready to suppose, they are matters of course, without considering the continued influence which produces them, or the end they have to answer : thus are we prone to act in reference to afflictions, refer them to second causes, and forget to acknowledge God. Job was better taught, and better disposed ; he was taught that "Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground ;" his disposition appears, in that after numerous and very sore trials, he said, "The Lord hath taken away ;" not the wind, nor the Sabeans, nor the Chaldeans, but the Lord ; to an unwise speech he replied, "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?" they come from the same hand. The Holy Spirit speaking by David teaches us, that all "our times are in God's hand," and, by the prophet

Micah (vi. 9) not only requires us to “hear the rod, and him who hath appointed it,” but assures, it is part of the truest wisdom so to do. We may address ourselves to afflictions and death, as Jesus Christ addressed himself to Pilate, “Thou couldst have no power against me, except it were given thee from above;” let us then always view the unavoidable trials of life, as appointed in their nature, number, degree and duration by a wise and gracious God.

We proceed to notice, as here set before us,

*Second.* Afflictions in their nature. “Whom the Lord correcteth;” the word signifies, to rectify, as the effect of correction.

Observe, It supposes something amiss.

The press which hath not any error, standeth not in need of any corrections. Wherefore doth the parent or tutor correct? because he discerneth something faulty. This is implied in the corrections of our heavenly Father: whether we behold our errors in times of chastening, our consciences must determine. Job took it for granted there were such in him, therefore, in approaching his Maker, adopted that very full and expressive language recorded in chap. x. 2: “Do not condemn me: show me wherefore thou contendest with me.” David confessed, “Before I was afflicted I went astray,” astray from God, the society of his people, and his appointed ways. Upon inquiry, (and sure we ought to inquire into the state of our hearts, and our ways,) upon inquiry it is highly

probable we shall find, that much has been amiss in our minds and ways ; much amiss in our confidence, having depended too much on created good for happiness ; not a little has been wrong in our affections, directed to improper objects, or exercised improperly as to the degree toward others ; how defective our worship, how languid our devotion, and at times, ready to expire. Nor are imperfections in attainments and character trifles ; in all those, and many more things, do we discover much dross remaining, from which affliction as “ a refiner’s fire,” is intended to purify. In order to that end, convictions must be produced. The original, as used in Job xxxii. 12, is translated “ to convince ;” “ none of you convinced Job,” *i. e.* so taught him as to produce full conviction. Sanctified troubles are very powerful teachers. Are we sent to the school of affliction ? it is that we may be taught effectually, taught our frailty, the insufficiency of present things to make us happy ; taught the necessity of sacrificing sinful pleasures and follies to the will of God ; we are taught the importance of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and dependence upon the Holy Spirit to remove our guilt, to purify our hearts, to save us from the power of temptations, to support and comfort our minds, and afford us a bright and animating hope of future and everlasting felicity. Connected with that, we observe,

II. Sanctified corrections are attended with present felicity to those who are thus visited. “ Happy

is the man whom the Lord correcteth," &c. The original term is plural, the blessednesses, or felicities, referring probably to the various sources of his happiness; not that afflictions are in themselves blessings, but when sanctified to the subject are evidences of a happy state, and are attended with the most blessed effects; consider, what they evince. Are they not proofs of God's relation to us as a father? "He dealeth with us as with sons." They are demonstrations of his love and care, "for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth;" they manifest his concern for our improvement. Nor are they less satisfactory evidences of our union to Jesus Christ. If we are branches who bring forth good fruit, and through afflictions are made more fruitful in the way of godliness and righteousness, it is because we "are in him," who is the living vine, John xv. 2, 4. In him who is the source of life, and strength, and fruitfulness to all true believers who are living "branches in the true vine."

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is ascertained in this way, as the perfecter of the good work begun in Christians; he makes our very trials work for good, and shows us how to extract good from that we term evil. We must not forget they are one pledge of our safety, "Ye are chastened of the Lord that ye might not be condemned with the world." May we not say, "Happy is the man who by having his afflictions blessed possesses the evidence of his dignified relation to God; of an in-

dissoluble union to his Saviour, of his body being 'the temple of the Holy Ghost,' and of his soul being safe for eternity?" To evince our claim, to earth's highest honours, or give full evidence of our title to earth's fairest possession, must not be named in competition with what have been briefly touched upon; to which we add,

The effects of sanctified corrections.

Let us look unto the end of things. Should it be asked, "What good can be expected from disappointments, indisposition, troubles, and pain?" we answer, God has made them productive of great good; many have had to say with David, "It has been good for me that I have been afflicted." Affliction leads us to the attainment of knowledge, and that of the best kind. It takes off the disguise which the things of the world have assumed, and shows us what they really are; we attain by this means the truest knowledge of the world, without being exposed to the danger which attends other ways of procuring that knowledge. To know ourselves is of acknowledged importance. "Know thyself," was a dictate represented by the ancients, as having descended from heaven, was engraven in letters of gold, and placed over a temple. Who hath made the greatest proficiency herein? The man who hath been frequently taken into his chamber to converse with himself, and attentively behold himself in different points of view through affliction. If we have never viewed the ocean but when calm, our acquaintance with it is very super-

fiel. Having attained to a just acquaintance with the world and self he becomes more dead to them, from the vanities of time he turns with disgust, saying, "What have I to do any more with idols?" Upon a review of the sins and wants he discerns in himself, he forms the resolution of the prodigal, "I will arise, and go to my father. I will go to him as a penitent. I will go as a guilty, necessitous creature, altogether and at all times dependent upon him. I will go to enjoy pure delight in his favour and salvation, and devote myself with unreservedness to his service." Hence the Christian more values his Bible, the throne of grace is more prized and frequented, and the graces of the Spirit, as faith, hope, zeal, patience, &c., are more powerfully exercised, and more pleasingly displayed: as some spices must be bruised to emit their odour, and as stars which shine in the night season, so some graces show themselves most in their nature and worth, in afflictive seasons. As to the effects, in short, the mind "grows in grace;" the conduct presents "the peaceable fruit of righteousness," the character becomes more consistent and instructive, and the whole man is more meetened for the inheritance of the saints. James i. 12; Colos. i. 12. As the materials of Solomon's temple were hewn, and carved, and adorned, previous to filling their allotted place, so that there was no sound of the hammer, nor noise in the temple; so in a spiritual sense shall it be of every true believer, called "a living stone," and intended



as part of the temple in glory. What remains but that we should comply,

III. With the attention bespoke, and the improvement specified—"Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth."

Attentively consider—this will guard us against a general mistake. We ask the children of dissipation and the men of this world, "Who is the happy man?" They lead us to the "house of mirth," and to scenes of gay life; where fashionable diversions are followed, by which many "kill time" without one thought of its resurrection and the circumstances attendant. They point us to the man "who dresses in purple and fine linen, who fares sumptuously every day," and exhibits the greatest splendour. Added to this appearance, his estate is most flourishing, his worldly affairs correspond with the most enlarged desires of his heart; he "has much goods laid up for many years," and the prospect of continued and growing greatness is such as to make his joy abound. Here we have man set before us in his best earthly estate. What then? Is it a state of felicity? Hear Jehovah speak, and bow to his decision. He says, "Man in his best estate is altogether vanity." The things which constitute the worldling's greatness and joy, are "vanity of vanities;" and making them his god, disappointment, vexation, and misery of spirit must ensue. We must, then, look elsewhere. Behold, then the upright even in his afflicted state, for, "happy is the man whom the Lord correcteth."

We dwell upon this truth, we see the fallacy of judging by appearance, we form our sentiments upon the word of divine truth and faith, and thus are secured against a general but dangerous mistake.

“Behold!”—let it awaken surprise. Consider (*enosh* is the Hebrew word,) a calamitous man, and yet happy; a Lazarus, and yet a favourite of heaven and heir of glory. To have peace within, while afflictions abound without, to possess joy unspeakable and full of glory amid many disquieting occurrences of life, are wonderful effects of the grace of God, and afford matter for devout admiration. Surely, we should much guard against despising these corrections, “Despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.” We are in danger of doing thus, and it may be done in various ways. “Pharaoh’s heart was more hardened.” Jeremiah (v. 3) complained of many “who refused to receive correction, but made their faces harder than a rock; they refused to return from sin unto God.” Indeed with some there was a feigned repentance, but when the affliction was removed, they returned to former courses, and sank into their former indifference to the will of God. Psa. cvi. 8—13; “They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel.” I knew a person so hardened, who said, “If God ever intends to make me repent, it shall not be by afflictions.” Would we avoid the sin of despising the chastenings of the Almighty, we must not think afflictions unnecessary; we must not entertain hard thoughts of God; we must not indulge murmur-

ings; we must not apply to those things and that company which divert the attention from the lessons we have to learn; on the contrary, "set God before us;" "commune with our own hearts;" be more solicitous for the sanctification of afflictions than their removal; and, upon deliverance, we ought to devote ourselves more fully to God, that we may show "we are the living to praise him." These practical hints might be enforced by considerations taken from the author of our visitations, the Almighty, to obey whom, is our duty, our wisdom, our interest; and from their end, to rectify things amiss, and form us for more extensive usefulness in this world, and happiness immortal in the world to come.

I conclude the whole with earnestly praying that we may not only behold in others the sentiments advanced, but especially know in ourselves that "happy is the man whom the Lord correcteth;" and to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be ascriptions of majesty by all on earth and in heaven, for ever and ever, Amen.

## SERMON IX.

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*For I was alive without the law once.*—ROMANS VII. 9.

MANY things which in their own nature are excellent, are nevertheless subject to abuse. Among these, is the law of God. The apostle Paul writing to Timothy, remarks, “ We know that the law is good if a man use it lawfully.” This implies that it is liable to be misused, that with such an improper use danger is connected ; and hence arises the truth which he wished to inculcate upon the mind of the young evangelist, that it is of considerable importance to distinguish between its proper use and its abuse. If we apply to it as a covenant of works, we greatly err. To seek our justification from it before God, is opposite to the direct tenor of this epistle, and I trust will fully appear to you in the sequel of this discourse ; but it is right and proper to use it in subserviency to the Gospel. It is calculated to convince us of our sin and demerit ; to humble us before God, being conscious of our guilt in his sight, and so to show us the need of a better righteousness than our own, and thus to prepare the way of the Lord to our hearts in order to a vital union between Christ and our souls ; for

these purposes, I now call your attention to our present subject. I have long thought there is not any subject in theology more important to know and enjoy than a real living union with Christ: this I propose more largely to treat upon; but as some experience appears preparatory, and in order to this, I must request you to view this as an introductory discourse, in which I am to consider the legal workings of an unregenerate mind, or the unrenewed man, as "alive to the law of God." Such was Paul before his conversion; for speaking of his state then, he says, "I was alive, but without the law." By the term law, various things are signified in the scriptures of truth. The sense in any one particular place must be sought from the connexion in which it stands. In order to ascertain its meaning in the text, let us examine the context. From this we learn, it is the code of morals contained in the Ten Commandments; for it is asserted to be spiritual, taking cognizance of, and condemning, the inordinate desire. That law, a part of which runs in these words, "Thou shalt not covet," that, in which the man, being regenerated, "delights after the inner man." Having ascertained the meaning of this term, it clearly appears to be that which was delivered to man in his original and pure state as a covenant of works, and which in Scripture stands opposed to grace. Now, when the apostle says he was alive, he doubtless means, that he was once alive to it in his own apprehension as a covenant.

I propose, then, to consider,

I. What it is to be alive to the law. And then to inquire,

II. In what sense the apostle was without the law, and to show that his being alive to the law was a consequence of this, for when the commandment came, sin revived, and he died.

I. What is included in being alive to the law.

*First.* The apostle does not consider himself exposed to the sentence of death. Paul doubtless thought himself, while under the law, as perfectly safe, that all was well for eternity, and viewed himself as an object of the Divine approbation. Far from realizing himself as ruined, miserable, and utterly undone by sin, and exposed to the curse of the law, he thinks all to be peace and quietness; he looks to the objects of sense which divert his attention from the wrath suspended over him. Let facts drawn from the conduct of the self-righteous speak to this proposition, and confirm this humiliating fact. Suppose we had broken the law of the land, had been placed before the seat of judgment, and upon conviction, the sentence of death had passed upon us, how should we act? What would be our chief concern and solicitude? Should we not be anxious to escape the impending evil? Should we not earnestly and impatiently inquire, Who can show me the path by which I may pass from death unto life? Other things would so give way to this as to occupy but an indifferent portion of our minds, or a moderate part of our time. But is it not the

reverse with the carnal and self-righteous?—they are as still and unconcerned as though there were no danger. They give the preference to a thousand vain objects rather than escaping the curse of a broken law. Any attempt to alarm them is considered as an insult; any momentary fear as quite needless. They dread not, because they believe not, nor see the hand-writing against them.

*Second.* Being alive to the law involves an opinion that they are able to answer its demands, and work in order to this. The covenant of works has a commanding language to all who are under it. Hear its voice, “Continue ye in all things written in this law.” “Do this, and ye shall live.” Even as “Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.” Now the self-righteous say, “We are able to do this.” Those who think and speak differently, they consider as inferior in goodness, as the pharisee who could say, “I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican, (looking for mercy,) no, I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess:” or, see this same spirit and conduct in the young man who came to Christ, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Answering him upon the foot of doing, says Christ, “Keep the commandments.” He again inquires, “Which?” Jesus replies, “Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and,

Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The young man rejoins, "All these have I kept from my youth up. I have kept all these, and persevered in the practice even from my youth. What lack I yet? Only tell me if there be any defect, let me know what remains, and I will straightway put the finishing hand to that work by which I hope to satisfy the demands of the divine law." Thus the Jews of old sought the righteousness required in the law by their own works, Rom. ix. 31. Thus they went about to establish their own righteousness which is of the law, instead of submitting to the righteousness of God which is by faith. From the same high opinion of their personal goodness and self-sufficiency, you find them cry out for morality in opposition to free grace through the redemption of Christ; and if conscience reproves them for some known failures, they propose redoubling their diligent application, and say, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all," instead of acknowledging they have nothing wherewith to pay. This legal spirit generally appears in a striking manner under a first sense of sin. The inquiry "What shall I do to be saved?" is attended with a flying to duties; resolutions to perform them more carefully, more punctually, more exactly as to their number, and thus at least to make ourselves more worthy the notice of God, and more welcome in our application to Christ. Many, under the first awakening of the Spirit, have been long in this state of bondage, till the same Spirit deepens his work,



brings them to make Christ all in merit and influence, and then sets them upon his work from a new principle, connexion, and end. Again,

*Third.* To be alive to the law supposes the expectation of eternal life from our obedience to the law. The self-righteous view God as a great King, whose subjects they are by creation, and whom they must serve according to his law; and doing this, (though not quite so well as they ought,) they shall be entitled to a reward of their services, and acknowledgment of their merits. Hence their avoidance of gross sins, and discharge of some duties as their gain of this great prize. When the apostle was alive once, "he counted those things his gain," which afterward he counted but dung and loss for a better righteousness. Viewing their righteousness "blameless" in their own sight and in the sight of their fellow-creatures, they think it must appear so before God; or if defective, he is very merciful, far from severe, and he will let it pass. As to the length this will carry men, Christ has conducted us to the gate of heaven to see the issue of the claim. Behold them knock at the celestial gate with daring hand and boldly ask admittance. Upon what do they found so high a claim? "We have prophesied in thy name, we have eaten and drunk in thy presence;" yea, moreover, "we have done many wonderful works." No doubt of the reward, we have so much goodness and merit. But hold—there is a grand defect, they never had a purifying faith in Christ, they never

“submitted themselves to the righteousness of God which is by faith.” They never washed their robes and made them white in the atoning, cleansing blood of the spotless Lamb. They must “depart.” You will find that this vain hope, this proud confidence, occasions these persons to reject the doctrines of salvation by grace, and justification through the blood and righteousness of Christ. The preaching of the crucified Emmanuel is folly in their esteem, and so becomes a fatal stumbling-block to their souls.

It is time to inquire,

II. In what sense the apostle was without the law, and to show that his being alive to the law was a consequence of this.

The apostle was never without the letter of the law. It was written long before his birth, and carefully handed down among the Jews from generation to generation. Remember the birth of Paul, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, either on both sides or from generation to generation, and these were under divine orders to teach their children clearly in the law of God: add to this his pupilage under the tutorship of Gamaliel, a man of great reputation, and a teacher of the law; beside what he asserts of his own conduct when writing to the Philippians, “as touching the law, blameless,” in the sight of men. How then was he without the law, without the sense and proper use of the law? as the miser who may have bags full of gold, and yet possesses not; as the young man in the gospel

before alluded to, who supposed he had kept the law from his youth, that law which first requires supreme love to God, and yet the world had been all the time the idol of his heart. Paul was “without the law,” as many professors of Christianity among us are without the gospel; you have Bibles in your houses, know a great part of religion as a theory, but know it not as your salvation; you are without any knowledge of its beauty, or glory, without any enjoyment of its fulness, or feeling of its power.

In endeavouring to prove that the security and pleasure of a righteous person are owing to his being unacquainted with the law of God, let me set before you its spiritual and extensive requirements.

In substance, it demands, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself.” It proceeds upon the principle that we are what we ought to be, as man was when the covenant of works was made with him, and what we ought to do. It requires truth in the inward parts, it claims the whole heart for God, every faculty of the soul to be under the government of supreme love to him, and all the powers of the mind employed actively for his glory; this at all times, in all circumstances, and changing periods. And ever to love thy neighbour equally and constantly as thyself, the least deviation in thy thoughts, affections, pursuits, aims, conversation

and conduct, is considered as a violation of this covenant, and exposes to its fearful curse, for thus it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the law to do them." It knows nothing of allowance for defects, it admits of no passing by a transgression; he who offends in one point is guilty of all; there is no such distinction as sins into mortal and venial—the soul that sinneth it shall die—the wages of sin, any sin, every sin, is death. Now, can a man understand this, and be alive to the law notwithstanding? Bring yourselves to this balance, and you must find yourselves "wanting." Say not, you have attended public worship, you have fasted, you have prayed, you have given alms, you have been sincere, you have done your duty better than many others. Are you perfect in your nature and your conduct? did you ever indulge a wandering thought, a wrong desire, a carnal affection, a disposition to love the creature too much, and God too little? You cannot say this before a heart-searching God; that his law has never found any thing within your hearts and in your conduct to blame; that your inward movements, conversation and conduct, have at all times been without blame; then your mouths must be stopped, under a conviction of guilt produced by this law. "In many things we have all offended;" "we have all sinned and come short of his glory." We will talk no more of having done our duty, but for ever despair of getting to heaven by our own righteousness, and look for it as a

“ free gift of grace through the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

To this we add,

The immutable obligation of this law as a covenant. It must be fulfilled, Matt. v. 18. “ Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Like Moses, by whom under God it was given, age diminishes not its vigour either of discernment, or power, all must be fulfilled : it cannot undergo any diminution of its strict injunctions, as though it were ever too severe ; nor any abatement of its penalty, as though it were too great. The substance of the first covenant, this covenant of works, does not appear to be the effect of an arbitrary judgment, but resulting from the high perfections of the Creator, his character as moral governor of the universe, the relation of man to his Maker and his fellow creature. As, therefore, the perfections of God must not be dishonoured with impunity, as the government of God cannot be subverted, as the subjection proper to the relation between the Creator and creature must be maintained, the law, as a covenant between God and man, must be fulfilled ; if not by a reception of Christ as the end of the law for us, it is immutably binding upon ourselves, and therefore we can have no hope of its relaxation, or of availing ourselves by any proposed repentance.

Consider, further, the end and manner of its promulgation from mount Sinai. It was promul-

gated to give the knowledge of sin; it entered "that the offence might abound," that we might have an abounding sense of our guilt, "that every mouth might be stopped," and all the world become sensible of their guilt before God: in this sense it is called a law of sin, and the ministration of death: agreeably to this end was the manner of its delivery, it was from a flaming summit, it was attended with a display of terrific majesty, it awakened fear and dread in the minds of those who beheld, "and Moses," the favourite and minister of Heaven, "said, I exceedingly fear and quake;" and the people felt their absolute need of one to stand between them and the great Legislator to act as mediator. This shows that no one can presume to appear before God by the deeds of the law, as the plea for his justification, or the ground of his hope, unless he remain in awful ignorance. When, instead of being thus unacquainted with the law, it comes home to his understanding and conscience, he will feel a very different conviction; then, as Paul felt, he will say, "sin revived, and I died:" This death will be our next subject.

But some may object, How is it consistent with the justice and goodness of God to deliver a law so spiritual and immutable, if man be not able to fulfil it? You must remember that man was created perfectly holy, he had ability to perform it in his original state, and being equitable in its demands, and beneficial in its tendency, it demonstrated the justice and goodness of God's govern-

ment ; man giving himself up to the service of sin rendered himself incapable afterwards, but that did not alter the rights of Jehovah, nor lessen the obligations of his creature to glorify him continually.

It may be inquired, How is it that men having the written law can be so unacquainted with it? Is it not clearly made known? has it been duly explained? Yes, witness the exposition of the law contained in the discourse of Christ, Matthew v. But it is prejudice and sin which blind the mind; it is our natural pride of heart, our unbelief and legality; the man affects independence of free mercy; wants to have some claim, and something of which he may boast; he does not believe what God says of his state, and weakness; thinks his heart better than the word says it is, and that he is not so helpless as there stated to be. Thus slighting evidence, neglecting the word and Spirit of God, he becomes the dupe of his prejudice, and is blinded by Satan and sin.

This subject would admit of great improvement. I shall address myself to those who are now, as Paul "once was" before his conversion, "alive to the law." You, sirs, are the children of the bond-woman, Gal. iv. 24, 25; far from being made free, you remain in awful bondage until now, &c. your condition is that of the blind; blind to the divine law, blind to your real state, and your best interest, and also to your real friends, who would instruct and faithfully warn you; you avoid the

light, therefore “ your blindness remains,” and is evidently criminal ; remember, also, your hope will prove delusive. Can any thing be more irrational and absurd than for a polluted creature to think of rendering services perfectly pure, an imperfect creature work out a perfect righteousness, or one both condemned and helpless make full atonement to offended Deity ? moreover, it is directly opposite to the Scriptures of eternal truth ; see Acts xiii. 39. You cannot be justified by the law of Moses, Rom. viii. 4 ; “ for what the law could not do ;” and many other passages declare the same truth. Now can you cherish a hope so destitute of reason, so opposite to Scripture ? you may as soon expect God to prove false ; Christ to be degraded, and heaven to admit of discord, as to expect safety and glory in your present state. Can I, then, “ cry peace, peace,” to you ? I will not be so guilty, nor so cruel ; the higher your hopes, if no better founded, the more will hell surprise you, and the greater will be your condemnation and misery ; your state is dreadful, “ you have a fearful looking for of fiery indignation,” unless you look from the law to the gospel, of which Christ and him crucified is the substance.

2. To the self-despairing : You have had the commandment brought home in its convincing power ; have felt it reviving your sense of sin, and producing a sense of your being ruined by guilt, now you find nothing to rest upon in yourselves, nor to rely upon in your works. What a mercy



to be awakened from the sleep of sin, to have this conviction produced! it is the first work of the Spirit; he kills ere he makes alive, and wounds previous to his healing. May you cherish the conviction, and by the Spirit be led to Jesus as your friend, to heal your broken heart!

## SERMON X.

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*Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that ye should bring forth fruit unto God.—ROMANS VII. 4.*

WE are about to take another step in the path which we marked out last Lord's day. We then considered man, while ignorant of the moral law in its spirituality and penal curse, as a self-righteous creature, in his own apprehension "alive." Now, previous to his actual union with Christ, he must become dead to the covenant of works. This is our present subject.

The apostle wrote to those who were well acquainted with the Jewish appointment or law concerning marriage, and therefore, by the connexion subsisting between the parties so united, and the consequence of that union being dissolved, he illustrates the connexion between the natural man and the legal covenant, together with the consequence of being dissolved from that relation, in order to his entering into one with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Read the 3rd verse, and view the text as the application.

I. Wherein this death to the law consists.

II. How it is effected.

III. What it is preparatory to, in Christian experience.

I. Wherein consists a "being dead to the law."

The law is here considered as a covenant; and it is in this light only that we contend for the necessity of becoming dead to it. As it is a fair transcript of the Divine mind, as it is in the hands of the Mediator a rule of a holy life and beneficial conduct, we ought to delight in it, and cannot be too observant of it. But as a covenant of works, or the condition of our justification before God, we must die unto it.

By the marriage contract, a relation subsists, an obligation results, and a hope is excited. The death which is its opposite consists,

*First*, In having the relation dissolved. Death is a separation either natural or civil, *i. e.* in a law sense; in a natural sense, it is the dissolution between the body and soul; in a law sense, it is the separation which arises from dissolving some relation in which the person previously stood, as in the case before us between a man and his wife. While they thus exist, it is not merely as man and woman, but as husband and wife; but if a divorce take place, although their natural lives be prolonged, yet the relation being dissolved which previously existed, they are now considered in point of

law as dead to each other. The man has nothing to do with the woman as his wife, nor the woman any interest in the man as a husband. No more in this relation, than though one of the parties was naturally dead. This legal death therefore includes,

*Second.* A freedom from its power. The relation once dissolved, the man has no more power over the woman, 1 Cor. vii. 39; thus it is when we are separated from the law, it has no power over us as a covenant, either to command, to condemn, or to excite our fears: hence the Holy Scriptures speak of this death as a freedom, verse 3; "she is free from that law:" chap. viii. 2, "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Does it, as a covenant, command perfect obedience? Christ's righteousness answers for me, and so becomes the end of the law for a believer; he is free.

Has it, as a violated covenant, power to condemn? it had; but "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." I am therefore freed from its penalty.

Is its tendency to produce fear and bondage? a believer is not of Mount Sinai which genders fear, but of Mount Zion, the mother of the free born, therefore, such have not any cause to fear from the covenant of works.

*Third.* We have no hope of good from it; what encouragement can a fallen creature have from this source? none; we cannot derive any strength,

nothing of present consolation, nor delight by anticipation for the future.

*Fourth.* This may be termed a death also, as it is generally preceded with much uneasiness and pain: such feelings may be expected to attend death in both the views we have taken of it; if we think of natural death, the pains and pangs of the dying rise at once to our sight; or if of dissolving such a relation, the wife must be much tried and feel not a little, ere she can consent to its taking place; and what are the workings of the human mind in reference to dying to the law? How unwilling are we to give up all idea of personal merit—to have boasting entirely excluded! What painful efforts have some made to maintain a good opinion of their own righteousness! How backward to admit that they are totally ruined and undone in themselves, that they must be wholly indebted to free mercy and sovereign grace, imparted through a better covenant, made with the second Adam, the Lord from heaven!

We proceed to consider.

II. How this is effected: the text says, “by the body of Christ;” in the epistle to the Galatians ii. 19, it is stated to be “by the law;” and in John xvi. to be rightly convinced of sin is said to be by the influence of the Holy Spirit. Let us touch upon each as distinct branches, and then show how they unite in producing this great effect.

*First.* “By the body of Christ;” by the actions he performed, and the sufferings he submitted to, in

the flesh: these things tend to make us die to the law, in what they exhibit, and to what they answer. When in the light of faith, we look upon the obedience and death of Christ as our surety, acting, and dying for us, we have an awful and grand display of the righteous government of Jehovah. How pure, how strict, he maintains the honour of his law, the rights of his throne! Beholding his wrath revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, we can no longer remain "ignorant of God's righteousness," in his government, and therefore no longer go about to establish our own righteousness by the deeds of the law; but, die to the law, and trust to a perfect righteousness provided. In the body of Christ we see the law answered for every true believer: he has magnified it, and made it honourable, and so is the end of it; he has blotted out the hand-writing which was against us, he has nailed the curse to the tree; if so, what has it to do with the Christian? I receive Christ as he is set forth in the gospel. I rely upon what he did and suffered, that I might be delivered. I die to the law through the body of Christ, for in that body he obeyed and died for me.

*Second.* The law itself is used for this purpose, Gal. ii. 19; Rom. vii. 9, "When the commandment came, sin revived and I died." How did the commandment come? with light and power. The law comes into the understanding with light, this light makes manifest; what does it reveal? it shows

the exceeding sinfulness of sin, committed against the most high God; opposed to his glorious perfections, his righteous government, and his pure nature; this light shows how the deadly pollution and poison has affected the soul and spread through every power; how sin has broken forth in actual transgressions from day to day, and that in instances innumerable; shall we not then acknowledge, "by the law is the knowledge of sin?" It is attended also with a divine power and authority, by which the conscience, which was as a sleeping lion, is now awakened, and begins to roar: its voice to the guilty sinner produces alarm, and becomes terrible, as ready to seize on its prey. Are not these scriptural views? is not the law termed the law of sin and death? does it not "work wrath?" is it not a ministration of condemnation? As, then, it is instrumental to open our eyes that we may see how false, though fair, our former hopes were; as it thus convinces us of our helpless misery, and rouses conscience into activity to condemn, so that we have the very sentence of death in ourselves, we become dead to this covenant of works.

*Third.* The Divine Spirit is the efficient. You may place arguments in the clearest light, use persuasives the most moving, and entreaties the most conciliating, yet will they fail of themselves. Preachers the most popular, and modes of address the most impressive, are inefficient without the grace of the Holy Spirit. Paul may plant, Apollos

water, (it is right they should,) but God must give the increase.

By the Holy Spirit the law comes home with proper effect ; by his leading we are conducted to Calvary, and take heart-affecting views of an incarnate and dying Saviour. While Peter preached, the Holy Spirit descended in his rich grace, and convinced and converted the hearers. While Paul preached, the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, and it is still by “the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” that any are made free from the law of sin and death. It may be proper to remark here, that although the operations of God are sovereign, and various as to degrees, in christian experience, still the things we have noticed harmonize in effecting this spiritual change. By the body of Christ, I see the law in its spirituality, extent, and end ; by the knowledge of the law, the Spirit also works to “convince” me of my wretched condition as a sinner, and produces a separation from it, as the condition of life, or the ground of my justification.

III. View the preparatory place this occupies in Christian experience—“That ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that ye should bring forth fruit unto God.”

We may gather the particular observations following.

*First.* There is a right to marry another, verse 3 ; this admits of no controversy as a matter of right. If indeed you are alive to the old covenant,



you have no right to Christ and the benefits of his mediation; you, in effect, make his incarnation, obedience, and death, vain, (Gal. v. 4,) but no legal objection can be brought against your receiving Christ and the blessings he brings near to you in the gospel, if you give up the law.

*Second.* It is in order to union with Christ. When the convinced and self-condemned sinner has been brought thus far, he cannot rest without actual union to Christ as his living head. What is his language? Is it not, "The law is holy and just, eternal death is my desert. God would be righteous were he to take vengeance. O for mercy! 'Lord, save me!' Jesus can save, this is his gracious work, he encourages me, he invites me to himself. I will go to him. O that I may be found in him! 'Lord, I believe, help my unbelief.' I look to thee, O Lamb of God, give me to dwell in thee, and take up thy gracious and spiritual abode with me. I can seek nothing to be compared with this; but less than this will not satisfy me."

*Third.* Then he brings forth fruit unto God. Once he was an empty vine, bringing forth fruit unto himself, (Hosea x. 1,) self-pleasing, and self-glory, spoiled all; but now, it is to God. These fruits, produced by such an union, and for such an end, are obviously godly in their nature; but passing this for the present, I will dwell upon the connexion here pointed out.

A person cannot bring forth fruit unto God until he lives to God; and this in a sinful creature, is by

the quickening of the second Adam. A man cannot be active in holiness till he is strengthened in the inner man; but the law communicates no such power. In Christ, the believer has strength as well as righteousness. We shall not seek the divine honour previous to our loving God; for that is the fruit of love. We have before shown that the covenant of works genders slavish fear and bondage; but the love of God is in Christ Jesus, and the love of Christ constrains us, 2 Cor. v. 14.

“Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasing to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the school-authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.”—*13th Article of the Church of England.*

These sentiments will receive additional confirmation by an examination of sacred passages; “But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter,” Rom. vii. 6. “For I through the law, am dead to the law, that I might live unto God . . . Christ liveth in me . . . . It is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me,” Gal. ii. 19. “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit,” Gal. v. 25. By this meditation we are instructed on several points, which

are important in their place, and have a connexion with each other. These we shall add:

1. That man by nature is not only at a distance from Christ, but united to objects very opposite to him. Do not the vain imaginations, proud reasonings, and carnal hopes of the sinner exalt themselves against the Lord? 2 Cor. x. 5. The fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind is a course of disobedience. In what state does the Lord find the human heart, when first he approaches it by his Gospel? He finds it occupied by an enemy; the door is shut and barred against himself; grace and salvation are resisted till the soul is made willing in the day of divine power. "No man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him."

2. The importance of Christ's resurrection. We must be united to a living Saviour in order to our being saved by him, and influenced to holy fruits.

3. Spiritual convictions are to be much prized. Convictions are not conversion, nor are they to be looked upon as the earnest of salvation; but to oppose and slight convictions is both unwise and hazardous. Let us value them, and cherish them in dependence upon heaven; for all genuine experience begins in light and conviction. We know not how much mercy may be connected with the first salutary alarm, nor what gracious and all important purposes are to be answered, by that which begins in a humbling impression upon the heart.

Our subject relating to the experience of genuine Christians may,

4. Help us in forming a judgment of our real state toward God. Believers "are not under the law, but under grace;" *i. e.* in a gracious, not in a legal state. Their principles and motives are gracious and not carnal. They live upon the grace of Christ, not upon self-sufficiency. They ascribe the whole of salvation to grace, and exclude all works of their own in the point of justification with God. Boasting is no article in their creed, and they oppose its intrusion into their hearts and conversation. "Not unto us." Is it then thus with ourselves? What is our state? What our principles and aims? Upon what resources do we live? What is our glory? Does grace reign within us and by us? If we are under the law, we are under sin, and exposed to the curse, Gal. iii. 10; but if under grace, sin shall have no dominion over us, nor wrath fall upon us, for he who has the Son has life, and because he lives such shall live also.

5. How glorious the freedom of the children of God! They are no longer in bondage to the law; no longer prisoners of justice; no longer the servants of sin; being made free by the Son of God, they are free indeed. Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free, and be not entangled with any yoke of bondage. Ye have been called unto liberty, only use it not as a cloak of lasciviousness, but by love serve one another.



## SERMON XI.

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*For he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.—1 COR. VI. 17.*

IN treating upon the doctrine of unions, that is, the relations subsisting between two or more objects, if we would proceed accurately, we must distinguish between that which is virtual and that which is actual. By a virtual union is meant, that which consists rather in effects, than in the consent and the formal uniting of the parties interested. This we may illustrate by things natural, civil, and theological.

By things natural: we enter a field, and see a hundred grains of corn growing on one stem, and we are told that these were all in one single grain which was sown. This could not be the case formally considered, as there was no one ear then existing. How then are we to understand it? They were, virtually considered, in the grain sown.

Politically, representatives or delegates virtually represent the parties on whose behalf they appear, or by whom they are delegated; insomuch, that what they do is considered as the act and engage-

ments of the others, though so far from real union in any particular act or resolution, they may entertain different views and dispositions.

In theology, examine Heb. vii. 9, 10, where the apostle is proving the abolition of the Aaronical priesthood, and the succession of a superior order. How does he proceed? By remarking that Levi, who received tithes under the Mosaic dispensation, paid tithes in Abraham, for he was in the loins of his father when Melchisedek met him. Now Levi, who was the third son of Jacob, did not actually exist till 162 years after that transaction. How then could he pay tithes to Melchisedek? by a virtual union with his great-grandfather Abraham. It is in this view we all have sinned in Adam.

“A thousand new-born babes are dead,  
By fatal union to their head.”

It is in this view all the heirs of salvation (embracing distant generations) were viewed in Christ, and so true believers are said to be “seated with him in the heavenly places,” Ephes. ii. 6. He, as their head, forerunner, and representative, being in the possession of bliss and glory. We apprehend such passages of the holy word cannot receive a just explanation without adverting to this virtual union. Moreover, this also obviates an objection which has been raised against being injured by the sin of Adam, or being benefited by the obedience of Christ. This virtual and covenant union with Christ makes way for that actual union which is

our present subject. Our Lord says, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring," John x. 16. His, before bringing, by virtue of the covenant of grace or redemption, and therefore he must really bring them to himself, and his fold; they must actually be united to him, and every one so joined to the Lord is one spirit. I shall consider,

I. The reality of such a union.

II. Notice its nature and properties.

I. The truth or reality of such an union.

It may be proper for me to premise, and for you to remember, that our admission of any thing as a fact must be in consequence of satisfactory evidence, and that the sources of evidence vary according to the nature of the thing to be confirmed; consequently, as the doctrine before us is peculiar to revelation, the evidence must be sought in the sacred writings. The light of nature and human science cannot conduct us beyond the possibility; but Divine truth is the source of satisfaction. With this blessed book of God open before us, we shall nourish our faith in this doctrine, by considering its plain declarations, its metaphorical representations, and the practical exhortations founded upon the admission of this truth.

Among the plain declarations, consult 1 Cor. i. 30, "But of him, are ye in Christ Jesus." John xvii. 23, "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." 2 Cor. xiii. 5, "Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates." 1 John iii. 24,



“ He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and He in him ; and hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us.” 1 John iv. 15, “ Whosoever shall confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.” 1 John v. 20, “ We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.” Can any doctrine be stated with greater clearness ? or expressions be more conclusive ?

It appears also, from those relative characters in which Christ is represented, and therefore sustains. The “ second Adam,” a public head and representative to his spiritual seed, as the first was to his natural descendants.

He is “ meat and drink ;” that which is to be received, and by which we are nourished and supported : this is interpreted of union and communion with Christ, John vi. 56.

He is “ the Bridegroom,” the Church, his bride. He “ the foundation,” the living stones form the superstructure. He is “ the first fruits,” his people the after fruits of the same harvest or vintage. He is “ the head,” they are his members, of his flesh and of his bones, Eph. v. 30. He is “ the king,” they are his subjects. He is a shepherd, they are his sheep. He is a vine, they are branches. They are called his seed ; they have the Son ; their sufferings are called his ; if they are persecuted, he considers himself as persecuted ; “ Why persecutest thou me ? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.” Were they visited and relieved ; even the least of

them? he will say, you did it unto me, Matthew xxv. 40.

Do any object, "Many of the expressions are highly figurative." What then? are they to pass for mere cyphers? do they form part of a baseless fabric? can we think they are representations devoid of truth? let us yield to the evidence, and admit the truth: besides, there are interesting exhortations, founded upon the admission of this truth: we are to examine our state, knowing, that Christ is in us, except we are reprobates.

We are to cultivate unity of spirit with all Christians, as being one in Christ Jesus.

To maintain gospel separation from sin, "shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid."

What is the hope of a Christian; or, what his consolation? Christ in you is the hope of glory, Rom, viii. 11; Col. i. 27; and this is consolation, that "all is yours, for ye are Christ's," 1 Cor. iii. 24.

Under the firm persuasion of the doctrine as one of the great truths of revelation, we proceed,

II. To the consideration of the nature and properties of this union.

That it is most intimate, the words of the text fully show, for *κολλημενος* from *κολλα*, "joined," is, glued together; it is used, for soldering brass or iron; also, by medical men, to conglutinate, or reunite the divided parts of a wound; there is no word in the language to express a nearer conjunction, a cleaving to, or adhering with the strongest affection and ardour.

Observe further, it is by “one Spirit:” this serves to express its spiritual nature, and the divine operation by which it is effected. It does not originate in merely possessing the same nature, for in this sense, every human being participates with Christ, for “he was made flesh,” &c. It is more than a sentimental union; persons may have many scriptural ideas of doctrine, while destitute of the life of God in the soul. It is spiritual, “one Spirit,” as though two bodies were actuated by the same soul; the same Holy Spirit, who was imparted to our nature in the person of Emmanuel without measure, is in a measure communicated from Christ to every believer; we do not mean, the person of the Spirit; but, his operations and influence have an abiding, governing influence on our hearts and lives: thus we see, it is more than resemblance or similarity, it is, oneness or union, agreeably to which the apostle, writing to the Romans on the work of the Spirit, states, that the Spirit of God, of Christ, “dwells” in believers; “leads” them; “witnesses” with their spirits; and in other passages, that he “works mightily” in them, that they “pray in the Holy Spirit, and walk after the Spirit.”

It is the same Spirit which actuates the head and the members, and by whose communication every good thing derived from Christ is conveyed; and who also produces in us those graces of faith and love by which we cleave to the Redeemer; and he is in us, as a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The glorious properties of this union are numerous, as may be gathered from the rich variety of metaphors used to shadow it forth; for as one simile is not sufficient, the deficiency is supplied by another, and another; and thus by the variety employed, we obtain a clearer and more comprehensive discovery—among its properties, we notice,

*First.* It is mysterious. Mysteries are of two kinds, one of secret things which may be divulged, as what is termed the mystery of an art or trade, and such were the mysteries of heathenism, into which there was an initiation; and in this sense it is used in reference to some things revealed by Christianity, as the calling of the Gentiles, &c.; these things being revealed, the mystery has ceased, they are no longer secrets; this is one sense in which the word *μυστηριον*, mystery, is frequently used. Another class of objects, is such, as are in their own nature, above our comprehension; after all that can be thought, and said, there will remain something hidden, unexplored, and inexplicable; of this latter kind is the subject before us. That Christ the head should be in the full splendour of eternal glory, and the full bliss of heaven, and yet be really united to a poor, sinful, contemned people; united to them, amid all their languors, and weaknesses, and temptations; that through changes of body, of mind, of situations, and ever varying circumstances, they yet

are to be viewed as one with him ; may well cause an apostle to write, " It is a great mystery," Eph. v. 21, 30 ; it is, however, a mystery " according to godliness." Men of ungodly minds may reject it, as they do other things mysterious ; but such will not only have a small defective creed, but they act in a way very irrational and absurd ; for, if a grain of sand, or the divisibility of matter, may confound the wisest philosopher ; if we are at a loss to conceive of, and explain the union, and seat, and operations of our mind with the body ; shall we affect to wonder, that we meet with an equal difficulty, in attempting to explain things supernatural ? What can be plainer, than that we must admit many things as facts, although they be attended with circumstances not to be fully developed ? So let us hold fast this truth, though we cannot satisfy every captious mind, or sceptical opposer ; though we cannot answer every cavil that may be raised, nor expect fully to understand every thing connected with it, yet we retain it as one of the mysteries in our holy religion.

*Second.* It is voluntary. It were needless to use any arguments to show this on the part of the Redeemer ; his life is full of the expressions of his love and condescension ; it is the history of his gracious readiness to receive sinners. On the part of the Church, it was engaged, that they should be a " willing" people in the day of heavenly

power; when that is felt, it produces a voluntary surrender to the Lord, and a fixed adherence to him, John vi. 68. "Will ye also go away? Lord, to whom should we go?" "We are with thee by necessity, indeed, but no less by choice. Leave thee, Lord! Oh! whither could we go? we cannot bear the thought of such a thing; upon no account; we are thy willing subjects; we would cleave to thee with the fixed purpose and determination of our whole hearts."

*Third.* It is indissoluble; that which subsists between kings and subjects, parents and children, husband and wife, &c., shall be dissolved; even the constituent parts of our nature, body and soul, must be separated; but, this, this shall "survive the wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds." There are various ways by which the evidence of its existence may be obscured, and we may fail of the comfort; such as unbelief, a worldly spirit, levity of conduct, carelessness in our walk, backsliding from the ways of God, &c.; God will visit these things in his own people with the rod, and they shall feel the evil of their own doings; yet, his loving kindness is unalterable. "I am persuaded, that neither death," in any form, "nor life," with its trials and changes, "nor angels," those fallen spirits who seek to destroy, "nor principalities, nor powers," neither the rulers of this world; nor the civil power they exercise to suppress the cause of Christ; "nor things present," the objects of sense which influence so powerfully; or, what has

often a greater influence, "things" expected "to come;" neither the "height of honour," nor the "depth" of disgrace, nor "any other creature," you can mention, or think of, "shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus;" to the love of God in Christ Jesus, my faith, my hope, my soul, are all united, and blessed be the God of my salvation, it is indissoluble.

Previous to our entering on another distinct part of our general subject, let us make a few remarks :

*First.* The glory of the gospel, and its superiority to every other system of religion, appears. It finds man at a distance from God, and in the character of an enemy against him; and, behold! it brings him nigh in his moral state and disposition. How is this? in the person of the Redeemer, and through his righteousness; but the gospel only can produce this.

*Second.* The divinity of the blessed Spirit. Were he not divine, how could he actuate every distant member, and dwell in every place at the same time? This is an infinite influence, the Spirit must therefore be infinite in his person and operations.

*Third.* Christ is the centre of union to all his people; the eye, and the foot, are at a local distance from each other, but as really united to the same head; so in Christ, there is much diversity and distance among the members, but they are all one in him; we should remember, how as Mediator, he had authority to collect these once scat-

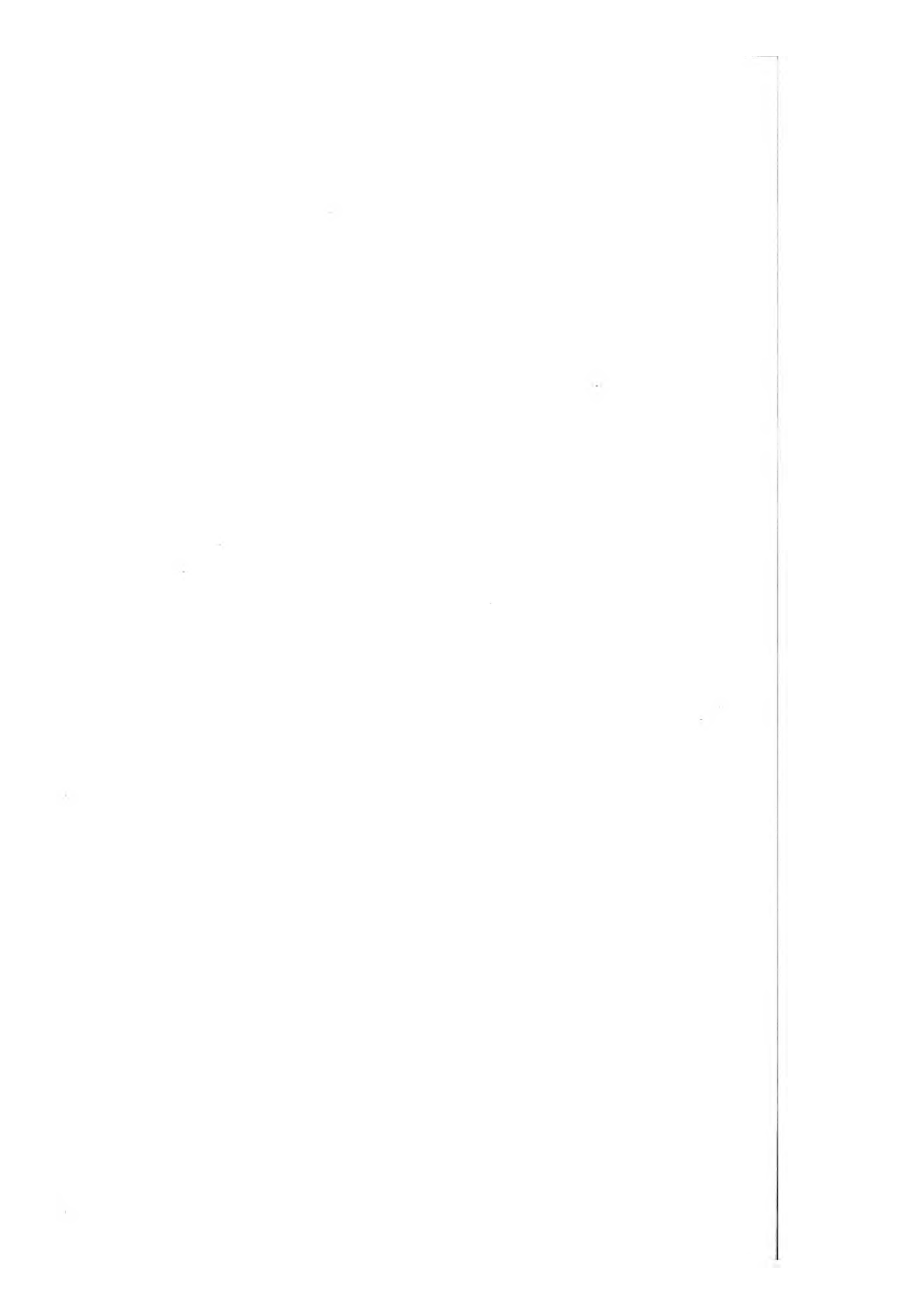
tered children ; he actually removed every intervening obstacle ; he employed an ability to render providences effectual, and give the gospel success, and thus, bring those nigh to himself, and to one another, who were in both respects afar off.

*Fourth.* This may account for the great things said of true believers ; in themselves, they are weak, and imperfect, yet are they said to be complete, heirs of God, and possessing all things.

*Fifth.* Real Christians having the same Spirit, must have a uniformity of experience ; this relates to the great constituent parts, not the minutiae.

*Sixth.* We are furnished with evidences by which we may prove our own selves. Are we dead to the law ? Do we depend on Christ ? have we exalted views of him ? conformity to him ? Such as say they are in him, so walk as he also walked ! 1 John ii. 6. Amen !





## SERMON XII.

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*That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.*—EPHES. III. 17.

THIS is part of an apostle's prayer, on behalf of the Ephesians. It will sooner or later be found that our praying friends are our best friends. As ministers and Christians are connected by the Gospel, they are influenced to mutual prayer. Paul desired to be remembered in this way by the saints, and, in return, he remembers them. The apostle informed the Ephesians for what he prayed: he might wish them to recollect the importance of those blessings; he might intend hereby to intimate, what great things they were encouraged to hope for, and so to seek; for we are too apt, even in prayer, to have low thoughts, and very confined desires; and further, he might hope to promote greater union in the object of their desires.

When Paul prayed, "that Christ may dwell in your hearts," it was suited to his office, and character, as a christian minister. What is our ardent

desire but that Christ may be formed in you? Gal. iv. 19. What the end of our ministry? that you may be espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ. We preach not only repentance toward God, but also faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; that faith by which he dwells in the heart. On this union we have advanced some ideas—on its nature, and properties; but every union supposes bands, or bonds, by which the parties are united, and it is maintained. The union subsisting between men in civil society, is dependent on relations, friendship, subordination, or mutual advantages: these are the links of connexion in the social bond. A material building has its bond-timbers, corner-stones, and cement, by which the different parts are united, and preserved from flying off each other; also, in the structure of the human body, there are the arteries, veins, nerves, sinews, joints, and ligaments, by which it is “compact together,” and the union of its different parts maintained. The apostle, in chapter iv. verses 11, 12, notices these, and uses them, as serving to illustrate the union subsisting between the Redeemer and his people. These bands appear to be, the influence of the Spirit on Christ’s part, this we have noticed; and, on our part, it is faith. When we say on our part, it is not meant, that faith is produced by our own exertions, or continued in exercise by our native powers—no—it is of divine origin, the gift of God, wrought in the soul by the operations of grace, and exercised under the influence of the Holy Spirit; for the

soul must be quickened previous to vital acts ; and gracious principles must precede gracious exercises ; but on our part, we intend that the regenerated mind becomes active in choosing Christ, and willingly acts faith in cleaving to the Redeemer ; this is according to the Divine plan ; not that there is any merit in faith as a condition, but as inseparably connected with the other parts of an invariable and gracious counsel.

We propose to consider, The important influence which faith has in regard to our union with Christ.

I. Faith has an important influence, as by it, the soul realizes the possibility of this union, and what God has done toward effecting it.

Had not the Spirit of God revealed this truth, the heart of man could never have conceived of it : it originated in the gracious purpose of Jehovah, and was long kept secret from man, till at length disclosed by the light of his word ; and there brought near unto us. “ Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his 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,” Ephes. i. 9, 10. Sin divided man from his Creator, and things on earth became disunited, and jarring with things in heaven ; but God determined to unite men and angels as one great, glorious, and eternal family, and this in Christ ; in

order to effect which, he made a covenant with him; prepared a body for him, and Christ appeared as made of God unto his people, “wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;” he has sent his servants to proclaim these things to the world, and by this Gospel, to bring them nigh unto him; this is called “the word of faith:” it is not submitted to our comprehension, proposed to our taste, but claims, upon the authority of God, to be received by faith; now, when the Spirit works faith in the heart, we at once see the possibility of being made one with Christ—we know this is the grand design of God in sending his Gospel—we are led to desire that we may experience this, and in order to it, faith mixes with the word, or incorporates with it, that it may prove our salvation, thus:

II. Faith induces the mind to open its powers to Christ. The immortal powers of the mind, like “the everlasting gates,” are thrown wide open to the King of Glory. When God works the work of faith in the heart, he works in us to will that Jesus may take the throne and sway his sceptre; the soul consents to be the Lord’s, and to take him as Lord and Saviour, Friend and Bridegroom; the soul opposes the objects which usurped his seat, which robbed him of his glory, or which would tempt her to withdraw her allegiance, trust, affection, or delight, from him; it feels strongly inclined to resist the world, Satan, sin, and self; the former idols are now detested; “What have I to do any

more with idols?" is now its language, and its resolution is connected both with confession and dependence; as of old in Isaiah xxvi. "Other lords besides thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name." Further,

III. Faith conveys a power into the soul, by which it is enabled actually to apprehend Christ, to live upon him, and to cleave to him. Believers are those who receive Christ: John i. 12, "to as many as received him," &c. Col. ii. 6, "As ye have received the Lord, so walk ye in him." Phil. iii. 12, 13, treats of a mutual apprehension between Christ and the soul; the latter is a consequence of the former, the mind takes hold by faith as its hand: eats also of the bread which came down from heaven. "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst. I am the living bread; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever," John vi. 35, 51. It is then plain, that coming, believing, eating, are represented in such passages as of the same import in spiritual things; and are they not also connected with the peculiar advantages of satisfaction, and eternal life? We stated, that faith enables the soul to live upon Christ, as the apostle in his epistle to the Gal. ii. 20, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." He is its object, from him it derives all its spiritual energies, and the more this is

experienced, the stronger will be the adherence, more settled the purpose of the heart to cleave to him, and there will be more intense affection, and ardour of zeal; we shall count every thing but dung and dross for the excellency of this knowledge, and this high honour of being found in him; nothing in heaven or earth will appear comparable with him; if he should hide his face we shall be in trouble; but, when he manifests himself, it will be a paradise, or heaven begun below. Thus by the Spirit on the part of the Lord Jesus, and by our being enabled to act faith, he enters into the heart, and “dwells” there to restore and beautify the temple which had been ruined; for originally the heart of man was a sacred temple for Deity, the sacred fire burned on the altar; the whole was consecrated, and sacrifices were offered up with acceptance; but Satan was permitted (through sin) to defile, to deface, to destroy, and to build up “strong holds,” for his own kingdom; these, however, the Son of God came to destroy: “for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, to destroy the works of the devil,” and raise the fallen sinner to God, to renew the divine image, to consecrate another temple, to rekindle the lost fire from heaven, and make every believer a priest and king unto God. He “dwells” there, in the will and affections of a regenerated mind; he maintains his authority, and promotes order and peace within. He dwells there, to enrich the soul with his divine treasures, communicating light and

grace, power and comfort. To this, the verses following the text apply, and mark some of the unspeakable advantages which attend: "that you may become rooted and grounded in love," as a tree which takes deep root, or an edifice well founded, so will your love to Christ become established; you will know more and more of the Saviour's love in its height and depth, its length and breadth, "and be filled with all the fulness of God." Let us review what has been stated on this part of our subject, and draw a conclusion or two.

*First.* We learn, why the Scriptures treat so much on faith; here we are assured, that "without faith we cannot please God;" that "he who believeth shall be saved, and he who believeth not shall be damned;" that "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and unto salvation." Christ put such honour upon this grace, that he inquired, previously to his performing miracles, "Believest thou I am able to do this?" "canst thou believe?" and he told them, to have it according to their faith; others, he assured, that their "faith had saved them." Who is there acquainted with the holy word, but must admit that it treats largely of faith, in its nature, properties, fruits, importance, and advantages? We shall not wonder at this, when we view it in its proper place, the place it occupies in the gospel scheme of salvation. What will it avail us, to hear of Christ on his cross, or, on his throne, except we believe? Since the apostasy of man no good can come to him but through



a Mediator, nor be received from him but by believing. Salvation is represented to be not of works, but through faith, that thus it may manifestly be of grace. Justification comes in a way of faith, Rom. v. 1. &c. Sanctification is in a way of faith, Acts xv. 9. Stability in religion is attained in the way of faith, Rom. iv. 20. Consolation is in the way of faith; "joy and peace in believing:" in short, a Christian lives, and walks, and conquers, and triumphs, by faith.

*Second.* The great importance of possessing, and exercising the faith of the gospel.

"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" John ix. 35. Interesting, momentous inquiry! every one should propose it to his own soul; nor propose it only, but wait for an answer. Is this divine principle wrought within me? Have I received the Lord Jesus? Do I rest solely upon him? Cleave to him? Is he truly and unspeakably precious to me? Do I act from this principle? Have you doubts on this subject? let me recommend that you often meditate on its importance, and seek to have the heart affected with the consideration; attend to the holy word, as testifying of Jesus, and as proposing him to your highest, and constant regard and confidence; pray for the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of faith, for by him every good in us is produced. What encouragement to pray, Luke ii. 5—13?

If you have received the Lord, "walk" also "in him;" you know in whom you have believed, seek

the increase of faith ; that, holding the head, in duty, in affliction, in temptation, you may possess increasing stedfastness, and growing comfort ; yea, that you may rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory ; till your joy shall be consummated in the presence of your God and Saviour. Amen.



## SERMON XIII.

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*Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.—1 COR. III. 11.*

THE Lord speaking by Hosea says, “I have multiplied visions, I have used similitudes,” that is, parables, likenesses, or comparisons drawn from other things; this is in condescension to our weakness of capacity, and to aid our minds in forming proper conceptions of his truth. The similes which God uses, are assuredly well selected, as apt and expressive; and when we find many used to illustrate one subject, it is natural to infer, that the subject is important and highly interesting, and consequently possesses very peculiar claims on our attention. These remarks will forcibly apply to the subject of a believer’s union with Christ. The Holy Scriptures present us with numerous comparisons to set it forth, nor can we do justice to the subject, without meditating upon some of the most expressive: we propose therefore, to view those which exhibit Christ as the Bridegroom, and his Church as the Bride. Christ as the Head, &c. &c., and at this time, the Church as a building

for God; ver. 9, "ye are God's building;" Christ is the foundation, according to the text: "Other foundation," &c.

A foundation may be considered, either in regard to a system of truth, or in reference to an institution for the welfare and improvement of man. In regard to a system, by the foundation we mean, those principles upon which the whole is raised. What then are those fundamental truths, upon which the system of evangelical truth and holiness is erected? are they not the doctrines of Christianity? Do not these relate to, and centre in the sufferings and glory of Christ? View the doctrines as the inspired statement of facts; these facts have respect to one chief object, the Lord Jesus, in his person and mediation: hence preaching the gospel and preaching Christ are synonymous expressions; and the whole of doctrine, precept, promise, and institution, are so interwoven with him, that to get rid of the one, the other must be utterly destroyed.

A foundation may be considered in reference to an institution, and then, it signifies its support. Do you not often hear of institutions supported by charitable contributions? They originate in, and are maintained by benevolence; this principle, though invisible, is the foundation; the gifts or benefactions are its visible support: so is Christ the foundation of his Church and people. We begin with his love: "Unto him who hath loved us;" "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;" "He hath

loved me and given himself for me." The visible support is the communication of himself, his power and grace; thus is Christ the foundation, the properties of which are most excellent, Isa. xxviii. 16. A stone, solid and firm, a tried stone, tried by his Father, by enemies, human and angelic; and by thousands and thousands of his people. What a recommendation! he is set before us as "tried, elect and precious," chosen and highly valued, and greatly endeared, a sure foundation, or, "foundation of foundations," no one like this; and he who believes shall not make haste, never have occasion to abandon it in disorder, or fly away in the wildness of fear and dismay, shall "never be ashamed," or left to confusion. He is called "the foundation of the prophets and apostles," because they laid it ministerially, agreeably to the context. Were you to search from Genesis to Revelations, you would not find any other proposed for the safety or hope of a sinner. This glorious Mediator is "God's foundation:" "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation;" it is the effect of infinite wisdom and immense goodness. Waiving further remarks of this nature, we are now to consider, the union which exists between a foundation and superstructure, as serving to illustrate the union between Christ and believers.

I. The superstructure depends on the foundation.

II. The foundation supports and bears up the edifice.

I. The first idea is, the dependence of the building ; every part of it is more or less thus dependent for security ; remove the foundation, and the fall is certain. Do not the Christian Church, and every member of it, rest upon the Saviour ? Shall I ask the Christian, whether he can rest upon the orthodoxy of his creed, or the profession of his faith ? Whether, upon any resolutions he has formed, any grace he hath received, or any attainments he has made ? He renounces them all, and says, “ God forbid I should place my hope any where but on him who died on the cross.” Methinks on this subject, you are even forward to speak, and zealous to confirm this point of Christian doctrine and experience. Doubtless, you will say, “ I rest upon his blood, as my atonement and ransom. I rest upon his all perfect righteousness for my acceptance with God. I depend upon his wisdom to guide me, upon his power to defend and preserve me, till I am made completely victorious over foes and difficulties. I trust to his ability, grace, and faithfulness, for the full accomplishment of those precious promises which now strengthen my faith, enliven my hope, and excite a holy desire after heaven. I rest on his prevailing intercession, that I shall be preserved from evil, advance in sanctification, and at length be ‘ where he is, to behold his glory.’ Yes, I see God in human flesh, I behold him incarnate, obeying, suffering, dying, rising, and governing, for all who believe, and not only ‘ love the incarnate mystery,’ but there,

‘ there I fix my trust ;’ were it possible to remove this, I should at once sink, sink into an abyss of despair, a region of woe too horrible to describe ; a gulf of damnation from whence there can be no recovery ; but, ‘ I know in whom I have believed,’ and he is able to support and save me.”

II. The second idea, is that of support. Christ bears up his Church. No other can support this interest, or even the weighty concerns and interests of a single soul. If we suppose him deficient, either in ability or willingness, we reflect upon the wisdom and grace of the Father, and deny the glory and grace of the Mediator ; this is to oppose the tendency of the Gospel, and militate against the security of all the saints. Blessed be God, here is no ground for fear, no cause of suspicion, nor any room to sow the seeds of distrust. It is true, the false foundations which error lays, shall pass away like a vision ; it is true, the foundations of many buildings may be undermined, may be blown up, or the tooth of time shall consume them ; the time is approaching when the very foundations of the earth shall not only shake, but be entirely removed—what then ! Why should you care, O Christian ? are you not founded upon a rock ? are you not satisfied it is of God’s providing ? You may indeed expect it will be attacked ; the power and policy of hell will unite to oppose, but “ the gates of hell” shall not, cannot prevail ; let the storm arise, let the wind blow, and the tempest beat, it shall never give way ; give way ? no ; not



even shake ; opposition, like angry waves, shall dash itself in pieces ; we, placed on the rock, shall see it die away, while our tranquil souls, preserved from fear and dread, shall sing, “ He hath placed my feet on a rock, and put a new song into my mouth ; salvation unto the Lord. He is my strength and song.” This subject must not be dismissed, till we advert to the security of believers, and the importance of inquiring into our own personal interest herein.

The security of those who are built upon God’s foundation is obvious. Such security have all the saints, every true believer. It was laid by Jehovah, infinite in wisdom, everlasting in his love, and inviolable in truth ; his counsel and his oath confirm the hopes of those who rely on Christ ; to imagine that such may perish, is a reflection upon divine wisdom, grace, and truth, and strikes a deadly blow at the Christian’s comfort ; rather may we say, “ Happy are the people who are in such a case ! ” their building will sustain every shock, and survive every trial, it shall not fall, being founded upon a rock. Matt. vii. 24—27.

Let us, however, be sure, that Christ is our foundation. Are we possessed with this divine, everlasting security ? Is our best interest safe, for ever safe ? for let me beg of you to observe, “ other foundation can no man lay.” In fact, many others are proposed, and built upon by the sons of men ; some rely upon the mercy of God independent of redeeming blood ; and while they neglect the ex-

piatory atoning sacrifice, yet, vainly think, God will be merciful to them; thus setting the attributes of mercy and justice in opposition to each other, and goodness at variance with truth. Others there are, who found their hopes upon the favour which has been shown them in the course of Providence; having had ease and prosperity, friends and health and affluence, they view them as pledges of their eternal security. Who could think, they had ever heard of a rich man going to hell and lifting up his eyes in torments, and seeing the blessed afar off? or, that they had even known of men having plenty, and yet surprised by death, and driven away to misery? Some plead their performances as meritorious, and by works of duty are furnished with a claim to bliss; but the depravity of our nature defiles our services, and our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Could we save ourselves by what we have done, or may do, what need of grace? Why did Christ come? this is to make his death void, as to its most grand effect, and to lay a foundation for human boasting, all which are directly opposite to the nature and end of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. No other foundation can any man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. No one has either ability to do it for himself, nor authority to propose it to another; this is the only good foundation, all others are like the sand, and will, sooner or later, be certainly removed; then these expectations which have been built upon them will fall. How great will be the fall of hopes raised

so high, and towering to heaven! How dreadful the confusion, the loss, the misery! Think upon these things. "Look to your ownelves;" guard against every thing fallacious in religion; may we build on this good foundation, and finally experience in all its fulness, that he who believeth shall be saved. Amen.

## SERMON XIV.

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*“But I speak concerning Christ and the Church.”—EPHES. v. 32.*

THESE words are in connexion with some observations on the institution of marriage; the preceding verse contains a quotation from Gen. ii. 23, 24; and sets forth the very near union which takes place between the parties who enter into this civil contract; and this the apostle applies to the internal, spiritual union betwixt the Lord Jesus and believers in him. “It is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and his Church.” Some have supposed this refers to a tradition among the Jews, that the union between Adam and Eve was typical of that on which we discourse. This was long hidden, a “mystery,” and now when partially understood excited wonder; upon the admission of this sentiment, it has been observed, that Adam was a figure of Christ, and Eve of the Church; that the sleep of Adam was typical of the Saviour’s death, that the one was to give existence to Eve, the other to the Church; that the bone was taken from the side of the first Adam, that blood issued from the side of the second Adam; besides these, other

allusions have been made. Whether the text be referred to the original pair, the primogenitors of the human race, or more generally to the marriage contract, and the union it introduces, is not at all material to our present design; either sentiment will afford a basis upon which we may place this doctrinal proposition :—

That the conjugal union is used by the inspired writers to set forth the union between Christ and his people.

We have considered the image borrowed from the artificial union between an edifice and its foundation; we proceed in Scripture representations, and have one before us of a more endearing nature.

The nuptial union is frequently referred to for this purpose; “For thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called;” Isaiah liv. 5. The prophet Jeremiah (iii. 14) uses it, to recover the alienated affections of a backsliding people: “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.” We have a gracious promise and prediction to this effect in Hosea ii. 16, 17; “And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali;” my husband, rather than my Lord; or, if the latter expression be translated husband, it is rather under the idea of authority, and government; whereas “Ishi” is

expressive of love and delight. Does not the New Testament confirm this? and at the same time show of whom the prophets wrote? certainly. Hear John the Baptist, how plainly he speaks of Christ, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, and as the friend of the bridegroom rejoiceth, so I (John) as the friend of Christ, the bridegroom of his Church, rejoice greatly, my joy is fulfilled," John iii. 29. Again, "Ye have become dead unto the law, that ye might be married unto another, even unto him who is raised from the dead," Romans vii. 4; and, as we proceed further in the holy word, the Church is spoken of as the Bride, the Lamb's wife. It is not my design to treat on relative duties, so much as to offer some remarks on the things taught by this comparison; among which I present you with the following:

A mutual choice—peculiar interest—and, reciprocal complacency.

I dare not say, these are to be met with in every marriage, many have known the contrary by painful experience; you must therefore exclude from your thoughts those disgraceful matches which originate in motives of worldly interest, entered upon for mere convenience, or, are effected by compulsory methods; these, not pure in their source, may admit of clashing interests, and mutual broils; and instead of leading to complacency, are attended with indifference and disgust; often turn to adultery and divorce, and prove rather a curse than a blessing; but in a proper light.

I. A mutual choice ; this is more than a consent gained by importunity, it includes a preference of its object, and hence, a choice of that object before others. The Lord Jesus has fixed his peculiar love upon his people, he has chosen them from the world, and they are indebted to his sovereign grace ; he has proposed himself in his word to them. If we view the choice among human beings, one with another, there is a wonderful method which God at times takes to honour his own institution, and secure the ends he has fixed ; for instance, here is a person, who, perhaps, a little while since, was a stranger, but being introduced to him or her, and conversing with them, and viewing them, an attachment peculiar, delicate, and strong, is formed ; to consummate the desire, there is a willingness to abandon a father's house, to leave tried friends and dear relatives, even father and mother, to cleave to that object. Is there not something analogous to this, in the choice a believer makes of Christ ? he was once a stranger to you, but you heard of him ; you had a view of him in the light of truth, and with the eye of faith ; and believing, you loved him, you chose him as "altogether lovely ;" you said, "All the vain objects I once loved, I contemn for him ; mention the world to me no more ; I fix my choice upon Christ ; I would deny all, for the beloved of my soul." Do any inquire, "How is this effected ?" we have in part already replied, but more particularly, it is in a general way, by the preaching of the Gospel. Ministers act between the Lord

and the souls of men, as Eliezer (the servant of Abraham) did between Isaac and Rebecca ; see Gen. xxiv. 34, 35, 49. We tell you whose servants we are ; how greatly our Master is blessed ; what he is, and in some measure, what he has ; and, what our design in coming to you, in the language of St. Paul ; “ Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled unto God ;” in accepting this Jesus, and giving up yourselves unto him. Now when the sinner hears of Christ, and the good Spirit produces the work of faith with power in his heart ; receiving these tidings, he opens his heart ; enmity being removed, and his mind disposed to the dear Redeemer, the choice becomes mutual ; the day of his conversion is “ the day of his espousal.” Happy ! thrice happy ! that minister, who can say of many, I have “ espoused you as a chaste virgin to Christ,” 2 Cor. xi. 2.

II. It supposes a peculiar interest. The husband and the wife have a peculiar interest in the persons, possessions, and trials of each other ; all our neighbours, and the state to which we belong, have an interest in us ; but the partner of our life has a peculiar one ; the parties give themselves to each other, and so their interests are no longer divided, but one. Should the bridegroom have married a person insolvent, he becomes answerable for the just demands upon her ; and whatever wisdom or honour, influence or wealth, he possesses, she participates in the same. It is thus with Christians in their Sa-



viour; they have an interest in him; he satisfies the demands of the law; he found them insolvent, and he satisfied Divine justice; they were in bondage, he paid their ransom and sets them free; in him, they have wisdom and power, righteousness and grace; they share in his honour and influence, "all is theirs." He says in effect, "All which I have is thine, as far as conducive to thy good;" while they, in return, (a poor, but grateful return,) feeling the constraint of his redeeming love, devote themselves to his service, honour, and glory. "For me to live is Christ," "whether living or dying we are the Lord's;" "may his glory and interest be promoted by all we have and are, and in all we do and suffer." This is indeed an inadequate return; still, it manifests the truth of their grateful affections; and the Lord in condescension, accepts what a man hath, where there is a willing mind; amidst all our imperfections, unallowed and unapproved of, he says, "the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

III. It is attended with delight and complacency. In all civilized nations, the bridal day has been observed as a season of gladness; the sacred writers notice the "joy of the bridegroom;" "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride," &c. Isa. lxii. 5. He finds complacency in the excellences she possesses, or which he imagines her to possess. As to spiritual excellences, we have none but what Christ imparts, but being rendered comely by the comeliness he puts upon us, he delights in us, and says, "that he rejoices over his Church with sing-

ing :” and whereas, “ the wife careth to please her husband,” and finds a pleasure in his favour, so true Christians delight greatly in the Lord Jesus. Shall we ask of them, “ what is there in your beloved ?” Shall we call them, afresh, to view his excellences, and to expatiate on the endearments they find in him ? They know not where to begin, or when they have begun, how to close ; see Sol. Song v. 9. The Church appears overcome with his matchless glory ; having exhausted the glowing colours of nature, and feeling her powers of description fall far beneath the fair original, she closes with stating, “ that he is altogether lovely,” or desirable, and with joyful triumph, boasts of him, “ This is my Friend, this is my beloved.”

A few closing remarks follow :

1. The honour God has put upon marriage. From its first appointment we may say, with the apostle, “ it is honourable.” God was its author ; he not only formed Eve, but brought her unto Adam, as a valuable gift from his own hand ; the place was paradise, as though the bliss of an earthly paradise was defective without Eve, it was coeval with, or rather, the commencement and source of human society and friendship. The Son of God also honoured it by his own presence, by exerting his miraculous powers upon such an occasion, and by frequently making use of it to illustrate his union with his people. Such an honourable institution should be vindicated, be entered upon with proper views, and be preserved in its purity.

2. The blessedness of those who are one with Christ. The wife of a prince, the consort of a king, share in their honours, but how superior those who are united to Christ! Such are "heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." The highest honour of our nature is its union with divinity in the person of Emmanuel, and the highest honour of our persons is our being thus united to Christ. Such may look forward to the blissful period when their fellowship shall be consummated. The glorious celebration is reserved, reserved for another, a brighter world; among the Jews, there was an espousal previous to the complete union; so it is in this case; in the resurrection, the queen shall be fully arrayed in her glorious garments, her beauty will be perfect, she shall be attended with a glorious train, and with inconceivable splendour take her seat at the right hand of Zion's King; the whole shall be accompanied with gladness, and joy, and triumph, unutterable and endless; see Psalm xlv. 9. 15; Rev. xix. 7, 9. Amen and Amen.

## SERMON XV.

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*I am the Vine, ye are the branches.*—JOHN XV. 5.

THE spirituality of the Saviour's mind was discovered in various ways; among other ways, by taking occasion from common objects and occurrences to teach the most important truths, and to raise the affections of men from things earthly to those which are spiritual and eternal. The passage before us is of this nature, probably arising either from his having dispensed the fruit of the vine to his disciples, or from the sight of one, as vines were abundant in that country. He begins, "I am the true vine," as opposed to one who deceives expectation (such have been called lying trees,) or to express the excellency of that fruit which he bears. Were I to pursue the metaphor, I should dwell upon the meanness of his external appearance; the vine not being a stately tree. The spreading nature of his kingdom; the vine being very luxuriant, and shooting its branches far and wide, Psalm lxxx. 8—10. Jesus, the true vine, "must increase," till he fills the whole earth. The excellency of its fruit; how delicious the juice of the vine! It is said

to make glad the heart of God and man, Judges ix. 13. The fruit which grows on the tree of life is most excellent in its nature and effects, it has no deleterious quality, nor can it be enjoyed in excess. Other points of resemblance there are ; other traces of analogy might be noticed, but they do not fall within my present plan and design. We have viewed the union between Christ and his people, as exhibited by the artificial one of a foundation and the superstructure, and the civil one between the bridegroom and the bride, but now we have a vital one between the vine and branches. We make a few observations.

I. All the supplies are treasured up in the root. It has pleased God, in the natural and vegetable world, to make the root the source of life and vigour ; all necessary for the branches is first possessed by the root. So in the spiritual world, the method of his grace is analogous with this natural process ; it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell in Christ : this is spoken of his mediatorial fulness ; it is deposited in him as the root to supply all the vital branches ; whether life or power, grace or consolation, all are in him.

II. There is a communication open between the root and the branches. The vital juice which the root contains is exhaled or drawn up by the influence of the sun, or heat, and the tree being porous, it flows through those passages in order to supply the branches or ramifications with sap ; and hence the necessity there is of its

being so really united as to open this communication; it would not do to take a branch and bind it on the tree, but there must be a grafting on the stock. In every believer, there is by the Holy Spirit and faith, a communication open to the fulness of the Lord Jesus; such derive from him what is spiritual; "out of his fulness have all we received, and grace upon grace;" gracious supplies in rich abundance; but this can only be by such as are really one with him, living branches; others may profess him, while Christians only by external adherence; whereas these are as the scion upon the stock, or branches growing upon the root, incorporated. Rom. xi. 25.

III. That which the branches receive they expend. It has been thought, that in winter, the succus possessed by the branches retreats again to the root, but I believe it will be found that it spends itself in leaves and fruit. The Bible represents our profession by leaves, and holiness by fruit, and as we receive supplies of wisdom and power from the Lord, our profession and course of good works are maintained; under this influence the good man's "leaf shall not wither, or die away; he shall also bring forth his fruit in his season," Psalm i. He who abideth in Christ, and Christ in him, bringeth forth much fruit; this leads us to observe,

IV. That the quality of the fruit will correspond with the nature of the sap. You will remember we are speaking of the natural course of things in

the vegetable world; men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles; by the fruit is the tree known: so the fruit of these branches in Christ will correspond with the influences of his grace; consult Titus ii. 11, 12. "For the grace of God which bringeth salvation," &c. If our fruits are by Jesus Christ, they are fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God. If they are by the Spirit, they stand opposed to those of the flesh, Gal. v. 21, 22, love, peace, joy, long-suffering, &c. All united to Christ are fruitful in all goodness; these fruits agree with the nature of his gracious influence, and bear some conformity to him on whom they depend, and upon whom they live; the life of Christ will be manifested in and by them,

V. As to the degree of fruitfulness, the branches may greatly differ; on one branch of a vine you shall perceive but one cluster; on another more; and others will present you many. In a Christian society, to advert to a parable, some bring forth thirty, some sixty, some an hundred-fold; in some believers, one particular grace is more conspicuous, humility, open simplicity, affection, or zeal; others are more fruitful in their families and the house of God; while in others, living much upon Christ, and deriving large supplies from him, they present you with a beautiful assemblage of graces, and their spirit, temper, conversation, conduct, influence and example, all tend to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, and to glorify our heavenly

Father. Happy indeed are such; this is really honour and glory. Oh, to be more like them!

VI. All are under the care of the husbandman. The branches want dressing or pruning; their luxuriant shoots, especially in the heat of the sun, (which answers to worldly prosperity) would otherwise hinder the fruit: thus, "the Father, who is the husbandman, purges the fruitful branches, that they may bring forth more;" this is the light in which we are to view afflictions, pruning the branches. I have seen the operation, and thought the vine-dresser cut away more than was necessary; that was my ignorance; he, with a superior judgment, knew it was right and beneficial. In affliction we are too apt to think this was unnecessarily severe, or that unnecessarily lengthened out, this or the other taken away, surely might have been spared; but the Divine Husbandman knows best; these prunings are the effect of his care, and are intended to increase our fruitfulness in the ways and work of God.

Are we living branches in the true vine? The context speaks of fruitless branches in Christ; in him by profession, and not by vital union; these shall the husbandman "take away." Some by the allotments of Providence are taken from the means they have rested in; some by being suffered to fall into temptation, thus to act out their real character, and so cut off from the visible church; then "they wither," their impressions wear off,



their gifts decline, and their profession dies away, till at length, "they are cast into the fire and consumed." Awful the state! awful to be thus exposed! dreadful, beyond description, such an end! These solemn truths are taught us in other places beside the passage before us: see Matt. iii. 10. Hebrews vi. 8. Surely, surely then, we should enter on the investigation of our state, of our character and prospects, with great seriousness, impartiality, diligence, and prayer; "lest any man fail of the grace of God." May we be one with Christ, and possess the delightful, animating hope, that, united to this true vine, we shall, as branches, flourish with vigour, and yield celestial fruit to all eternity!

## SERMON XVI.

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*And he is the Head of the body, the church.—COL. 1. 18.*

THE dignity of the Son of God is clearly stated in this chapter. The glory of his nature and perfection, as the image of the invisible God, and the head of every creature by his work as the Creator, and Preserver of all things seen and unseen, and also from the relation to his church, and the benefits flowing thence to his people. His relation is spoken of as that of a head to the body. It is sometimes considered politically, at other times naturally.

Political bodies have their head, chief, or president. As the king is the head of a monarchy, as the general is the head of his army, whoever holds the supreme power, or possesses the chief dignity in any society, is considered as the head : in this view, Christ having "all power in heaven and earth," universal government and influence, is the head over all. "Head over all things unto his church," Ephes. i. 22. "He is the head of every man," 1 Cor. xi. 3.

But it is used also in a natural sense ; that, as the other expresses power, this latter is more expressive of union, or more intimate relations ; such a head is Christ to his church, that alone is spoken of as his body, and he is represented not only as a head *over*, but *unto* his people. It appears, therefore, to be a metaphor taken from the human body, and shows us that what the head is to our body, that Christ is to his people.

I. I shall offer some remarks upon Christ as such a head to his people.

II. Consider the Christian church as his body.

I. Remarks upon Christ as a head to his people.

*First.* The head is sometimes representative of the whole. In anointing persons, the consecrated oil was poured upon the head. So in Scripture, "blessings are upon the head of the just : " &c., Prov. x. 6. In this view, Christ the head represents the whole body. What he received, what he performed, what he endured, in what he now possesses as Mediator, he must be considered as our representative.

*Second.* The head possesses peculiar excellency. It is the most excellent in order, in perfection and power. Hence in danger, there appears a natural tendency to guard, or defend that ; there, is the brain, the organ of sensation and thought ; the eye, the ear, the taste, the smell, have their seat in the head ; so the Lord Jesus "has in all things the pre-eminence : " to compare ourselves with him as God, would border upon blasphemy ; and to do

so if we consider him as Mediator, would be too bold, presumptuous, and absurd ; rather say,

“ O'er all the sons of human race  
He shines with a superior grace,” &c.

or with the psalmist, “ Thou art fairer than the children of men.” Psa. xlv.

*Third.* The head exercises a diffusive and universal influence upon the body. The head may be considered as the source of sensation, activity, and nourishment to the body ; for anatomists tell us, that the nerves descend from the brain by the spina dorsi, and from the vertebræ they branch out over the whole body, and this is necessary to the growth and prosperity, for where the vertebræ are displaced the growth is prevented, as in deformed persons, &c. So in the church of God, the members may be compact together, &c. but it is from the head, that the effectual working in every member proceeds, and maketh increase of the body, as in Eph. iv. 15, 16 ; and look at the verse following the text, where, speaking of some who were departed from Christ and his cause, it is observed, “ they did not hold the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God ;” as one writes : “ Here Christ is the head, and believers the body ; here the body is fitly joined together and compacted, there is in all the members a congruity, and a close conjunction unto the head, and unto one another ; here are joints

and bands; here is an effectual working in the measure of every part, the Holy Spirit stirs up the principles of grace in believers, the principles of grace stir up the soul, the soul in the virtue of those principles stirs up itself, all is set in motion from Christ the head; lastly, here is an edifying of the body, an increase with the increase of God, believers grow up into Christ in all things, their faith is more radicated, their love is more inflamed, their union with Christ becomes closer, their likeness to him grows more lively than before, in every part of the new creature there is a divine increase, and all is because they are united to the head. Oh what a head is Christ, how happy are believers who are in conjunction with him!"

*Fourth.* The head consults the welfare of the body. As the body depends upon its care, for preservation, and prosperity, so its thoughts are employed for these purposes; and you know the gracious regard of the Lord Jesus for the members of his mystical body, and how tenderly and daily he provides for their safety, support, and comfort; surely it may be said, "He careth for us."

II. Let us view the church as his body.

It is not my design upon this part of the subject, to run the parallel in many particulars, nor to enlarge upon those we may notice, but just to hint at such as most naturally present themselves to our view; as,

*First.* It is composed of many members; as in the human body we have many members, "so we

(Christians) being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another," Rom. xii. 4. How numerous the believers under the Old Testament dispensation, and more numerous under the New! When Jew and Greek, barbarian and Scythian, bond and free, young and old, male and female, who believe in the Lord, shall be collected together, and form a multitude which "no man can number," then will it fully appear that the mystical body is composed of many members; they are not only numerous; but have,

*Second.* Their particular offices and distinct services. "All members have not the same office;" there is in this sense "a diversity of operations." One member is therefore to supply the deficiency of another, and all mutually to depend upon, and harmonize with each other; see this beautifully set forth in 1 Cor. xii. 14. "For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?" So on to verse 27. Thus in the church of Christ as his body, there are particular offices; some more public and solemn, others of a subordinate nature. The distinct services of pastors, deacons, parents, or fathers in Christ, young men, and children, are to be studied, and regularly discharged. The observing that order which Christ has appointed maintains harmony, increases benefit, and advances

the beauty of a society ; and “ this we wish, even your perfection ;” but the contrary conducts to confusion, weakness, and ruin. But however many the members, and distinct their services, they are,

*Third.* All united to the head. They not only agree with each other, or are fitted for union as joints in the human body, but also by bands or ligatures to the head. If it be not united to the head, it cannot be considered as belonging to the body ; nor can they who do not hold the head, Christ Jesus, be considered of this spiritual body, the church. This body in the present state is to be viewed,

*Fourth.* As growing to perfection. There is in the human body a regular advance through the stages of childhood and youth till it arrive at its perfect stature, and so by the influence of the Redeemer, his church grows till it shall arrive at its perfection, and attain that stature which will constitute the fulness of Christ, Eph. iv. 13. Glorious church ! the body of Christ redeemed, and actuated by him.

Thus I have set before you some of the most beautiful and expressive metaphors used in the Scriptures to set forth the actual union between the Lord Jesus and his believing people. On a review of the whole,

1. It appears that the spiritual union leads to a moral union ; this has been before hinted at, but it deserves a fuller consideration, and to occupy in

these discourses a more conspicuous part. A moral union is that which consists in the same views of moral truth, in a harmony of wills, in a reciprocal delight, and oneness of design ; this is necessarily connected with, but distinct from the spiritual : as we say of regeneration and reformation, they are distinct, yet the former always will produce the latter ; or as in the union of Adam and Eve, she partook of his nature previous to the union of their affection. This shows that all pretensions to this spiritual union are vain if we do not agree with the mind of Christ in our views, dispositions, and pursuits.

2. What grace and condescension in our heavenly Father ! He hath laid him to be the Foundation ; he hath proposed him as the Bridegroom of the church ; he hath planted this Divine Root ; and he hath appointed him as the Head. Eph. i. 22. Nor can we think lightly of this gracious appointment, for we could never have been thus united to him, had not the Father given him for this grand purpose.

3. The divinity of Christ appears from this subject. If he had not been man there could not have been a sameness of nature with his church, it must therefore have been a heterogeneous union ; the head of one nature the body of another ; but there was also a necessity for his being God, in order to the ability necessary to preserve, influence, and bless a body so numerous in its members, and so far apart in their local distances. Could a crea-



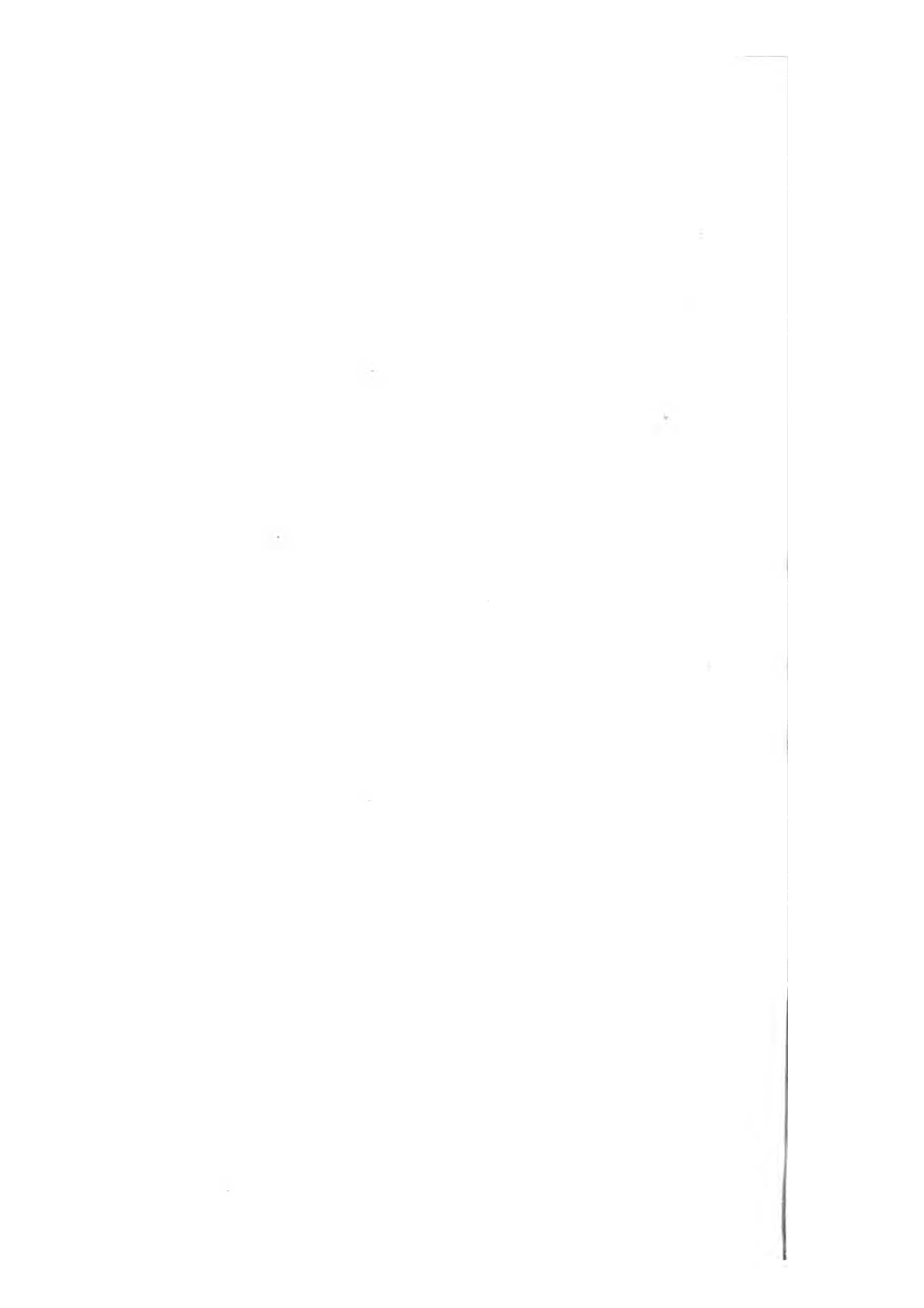
ture however exalted preserve and influence believers in Africa, America, Asia, and Europe, at the same time? Could a creature diffuse blessings so great, so numerous, so seasonable and constant? No, these things require a head both omnipresent, omniscient, and almighty, and he who is head of the body, is "God over all," "God manifest in the flesh;" may we with Thomas own him, "My Lord and my God!"

4. We are on this subject reminded of one distinguishing mark of the true church, and who are the proper subjects of this fellowship. The true church is distinguished as holding the head; there is but one head, for upon the supposition of two it is monstrous; some have contended for the importance of a visible head, and one church sets up a pope, and another a king as head of the church; but this authority is not from above, is therefore to be considered as an usurpation, and as totally unnecessary, because Christ is present as a spiritual head, wherever two or three assemble in his name, and faith well supplies the want of bodily sight, for by it "we see him who is" otherwise "invisible;" and those who are proper subjects for fellowship with the church must be members of the same body, and hold the head.

5. A word to the drooping Christian. Perhaps you do not find those communications from the Head which you once so fully received, and you are ready to say, "Oh that it were with me as in months past." Inquire what it is obstructs; although in

the natural body the head is the source of animal spirits, yet there may be obstructions in the body so as greatly to deprive it of the communications necessary for its prosperity: so in spiritual things; if there be a disregard to the divine will, presuming upon self, some mental disease, grieving the Spirit, &c. Therefore, inquire into the cause, seek the removal, and honour that Spirit who glorifies Christ.

In the further pursuit of this great subject, we shall proceed to point out some of the distinguished blessings which flow to the people of God.



## SERMON XVII.

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*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.—ROMANS VIII. 1.*

THESE words may be considered as an inference drawn from the close of the former chapter: the contents of that chapter are like a dark cloud which casts a gloom, but the beginning of this, is like the breaking forth of the sun, to shed a lustre, and to afford hope and felicity. The text is the language of holy gratitude, and of divine triumph, for although the Christian finds cause of sorrow in himself, yet in Christ he has a spring of perpetual joy. The passage before us, will lead to a view of the nature and extent of that privilege it exhibits, the present enjoyment of it, and to a consideration of those who are interested therein.

I. The nature and extent of the great privilege here mentioned. Condemnation signifies “to find guilty,” or “to doom to punishment.” It is a law term, pronounced by the judge, and stands opposed to acquittal, or justification; hence, in Rom. viii. 33, 34, “It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?” God is the judge, all the

human race must appear at his tribunal; the law and gospel will be the rules of judgment; the impenitent and unbelieving will be condemned, and the real Christian pronounced justified. However secret some of the characters, and circumstances, the day will declare it. In confirming this definition of the word, I would refer you to John v. 24, and Rom. v. 16, 18. To be condemned, then, is to be treated as guilty, to be doomed to misery, to be exposed to the just displeasure of God, and banished from his presence, kingdom, and bliss; but freedom from this, is to be treated as a just person, to be delivered from wrath and misery, and as more is implied than expressed, it is to have a title to eternal safety and boundless glory. This partly leads us to a view of its extent, “no condemnation.” I am not partial to the way of treating subjects negatively, but sometimes it may be proper, and I think it so upon this subject; permit me therefore to remark,

*First.* It does not intimate, that they are exempted from the heavy censures of their fellow-creatures; through the ignorance, carnality, and malice of others, Christians may have many sit in judgment upon them, and many tongues rise up against them to condemn; they may be condemned as unwise, and designing, as superstitious, and hypocritical. We are not to marvel if the world hate them, and proceed to condemn them without cause; in this they become conformed to their Lord and Head; nor,

*Second.* Are we to understand, that every part of the Christian's conduct is faultless. They do not in every thing obtain the approbation of God. We cannot too much avoid that antinomian tenet, that God is not displeased with the sins of his people, yea, that he does not in any sense see sin in them; this sentiment opposes the perfection of Deity; either his omniscience, or his purity; for if omniscient he must see, and if pure he must detest moral evil, in every place or degree. Consider, also, the scriptural representations of affliction to the people of God. 2 Sam. xii. 14. Witness Moses, Eli, David, Jonah, and Peter; they are represented as being corrected, which implies that God beheld that which is amiss; not that these will affect their everlasting safety, for Christ atones, and intercedes, 1 John ii. 1, and the Spirit gives penitence; hence, they return from their backslidings, knowing it to be both foolish and sinful to depart from God and his ways, and confess the truth we are now establishing, in the words of David, Psalm li., we have sinned and done evil in thy sight. But positively we,

*Third.* Consider them as exempt from the penal consequence of sin, and preserved from every part of the curse pronounced by the broken law, the violated covenant of works. Now as to the extent of this mercy, it may be considered in reference to their persons, their enjoyments, and their afflictions. Their persons are "delivered from the wrath to come," both the body, and the mind;

their enjoyments also are free from the curse, their habitation is blessed, they are blessed in the basket and store, Deuteronomy xxviii. 2. 6 ; and although many are their afflictions, yet they are not to be viewed as the effects of anger and wrath, but of parental care, and beneficial discipline. See Heb. xii. 5. 11. Happy state! to be justified in our persons, sanctified in our enjoyments, and even our sorrows blest, and thus all things “ working together for our good.”

II. This is a present enjoyment ; “ there is therefore *now* no condemnation.” The manner in which this is exhibited may be represented,

*First.* In opposition to a former state. The believer was once “ under the law,” and so under the curse ; “ he was a sinner before God, and exposed to that denunciation, “ the soul that sinneth shall die ;” he was once a child of wrath even as others ; without admitting this, he could not acknowledge Christ as his “ deliverer from the wrath to come,” nor sing of recovering grace ; but, “ where sin reigned unto death grace has abounded,” and the soul has passed from its former state of “ death unto eternal life.” But,

*Second.* In distinction from futurity. In the great day of God the absolving sentence will pass upon the people of God, in the presence of an assembled world ; but they are now in possession of the safety then more fully to be known, and this is not only declared in the divine word, but they often receive gracious intimations of the same, by

the enjoyment of inward peace, divine love shed abroad in their hearts, and joy in the Holy Ghost, all the effects of forgiving love, and the privileges of a justified state. Let us notice,

III. Who are interested in this high privilege. They who are "in Christ," and who make this known, by walking "after the Spirit." The former is the thought we now dwell upon, that this freedom from condemnation is peculiar to those who are in Christ. Your thoughts will naturally revert to the intimate, important, and inseparable union between Christ and his people, and this is immediately united with their salvation. In him they are interested in the love of God, for that is in Christ Jesus as the source of pardon. In him they are as their refuge, where they enjoy bliss flowing through channels of atoning blood; they are clothed with his righteousness, and sanctified by his Spirit. In him they have the removal of sin, the cause of condemnation, and being clothed with his righteousness they are without blame; see 2 Cor. v. ult., compared with the prediction of Isaiah xxx. 7; Col. ii. 4, "he hath blotted out the hand writing, taking it away from us." Interested in him they are furnished with an availing plea, Isaiah xiv. 24; Rom. v. 17. Who then, or what, can condemn such as are in Christ? Is not the law fulfilled by Christ, the end thereof, for justification? Is not the accuser cast down by him who has triumphed over the prince of darkness? Is not the conscience at peace through the peace-speaking



blood of the Lamb? Does not the Father show himself to be the just God even while he justifies the believer? Shall it be said we have transgressed? Jesus our Lord hath atoned. Shall it be said we were without righteousness, perfect righteousness? This is in Jesus imputed. Shall it be asked, how are we cleansed? in the blood of the Lamb we have an open fountain. In short “we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace.” “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!”

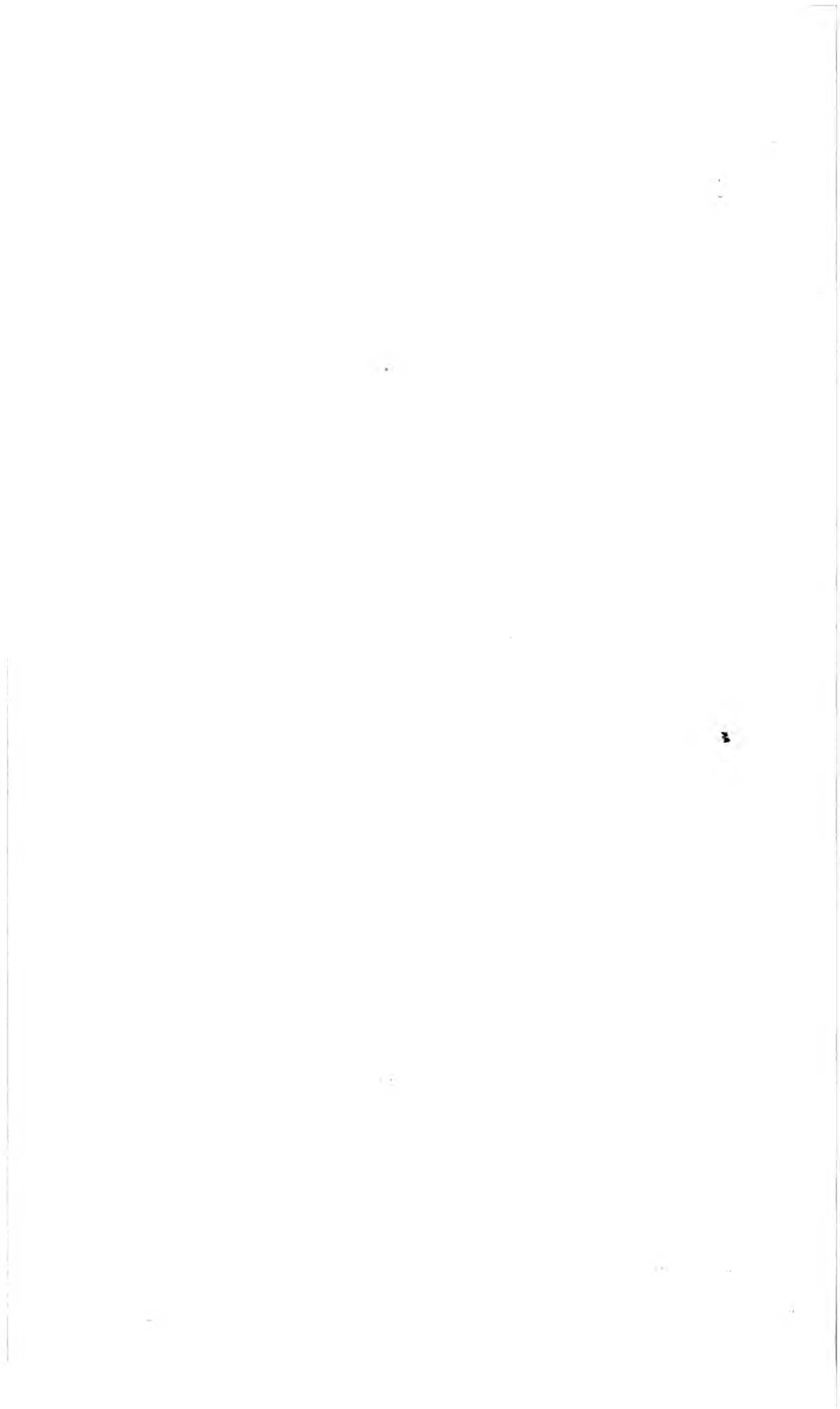
As we draw to a close we must:—

1. Observe, this passage has a dark side toward all unbelievers. The words must be considered exclusively concerning such as are not in Christ; see John iii. 18, 36. It must be so, for you unbelievers neglect the only refuge from the tempest; you reject the only price of pardon, and the only expiation of human guilt; “there remains no other sacrifice for sin,” no other name is given whereby you can be saved from eternal condemnation. Condemnation! O word big with terror, and of unfathomable import! think of this ye who have been hitherto careless, and, ye sinners, dwell upon your awful state. I have seen a stout hardened sinner at the bar of an earthly judge unmoved till the close, when the black cap has been put on by the judge, and the awful sentence has proceeded from his lips; and then the firmness of the criminal has forsaken him, his delusive hopes have been succeeded with painful apprehensions,

and his flattering dream has been followed with real horror; and so will it be finally with you, if you awake not before, from your long sleep of sin, then you must, but to behold a fiery lake, and remediless woe.

2. Let the true Christian, while happy in this deliverance, remember the source and channel. I say, while happy in this deliverance; for who that has felt the weight of his guilt, realized the importance of safety, or felt oppressing fears of ruin, but must know, that blessedness consists in "having sin forgiven, and transgressions covered;" the mind sanctified, and the prospect bright and clear? but remember, not for your works of duty, your attempts at reformation, nor your flowing tears; but it takes its rise from grace, and flows through a Saviour's mediation, and is enjoyed by faith, a faith which unites to the second Adam, receives his righteousness, and rejoices in its imputation.

3. Let me add, the gospel checks presumption. The gospel tells of glorious benefits, but shows their connexion with the believing character. What God hath thus joined let none separate.



## SERMON XVIII.

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*To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.—EPHES. I. 6.*

INGRATITUDE argues the want of every thing generous and amiable, which we cannot too much avoid, nay, from which we should flee as from a destructive pit; on the contrary, gratitude is one of the most pure, noble, and pleasant parts of religion. Paul, who was the writer of the epistle before us, appears to have abounded in this reasonable and delightful exercise. See how the holy flame bursts forth in verse 3, “Blessed be the God,” &c. Here is an excellent example for us; a model worthy our imitation both as to his spirit and manner; like him, we should acknowledge God to be the author and source “of every good and every perfect gift;” and if we have received spiritual blessings, to trace them back to the first cause, which is electing love; and view them in their medium, which is Christ the beloved. Among the blessings enumerated, is that of the divine accept-

ance; another privilege, flowing from union to Christ, wherein we shall notice,

I. What it involves.

II. How it is enjoyed.

III. We may glance at the end to be answered.

I. What is included in divine acceptance.

Is it not asserted, that God accepteth no man's person? Gal. ii. 6; how then can we reconcile these passages? In order to this we must remember, the term "accepted" has different senses, and therefore is used in a bad sense, as Prov. xviii. 5; "It is not good to accept the person of the wicked, to overthrow the righteous in judgment." In this view it is as a bribe, and God accepteth not of any person or thing to prevent the exercise of his perfect justice, and righteous government; but it signifies, also, a gracious reception of true believers, and they become the objects of the divine complacency in their persons, graces, and duties.

Believers themselves are the accepted of the Lord; hence are spoken of as God's peculiar people, as his jewels high in esteem, as kings and priests unto God; yes, they are called Hephzibah, for "the Lord delighteth in them." "The Lord taketh pleasure in them who fear him, in those who hope in his mercy;" "he resteth in his love, and rejoices over the objects of it with singing." Nor must we confine this to their persons, Gen. iv. 4, but extend these remarks to their graces and services; these we will consider as united, for no

service can be performed acceptably without grace, and where grace influences, duty will be the chosen path in which we shall persevere. Heb. xii. 28, "Let us have grace," &c.

The graces of the Christian are, "plants of our heavenly Father's right hand planting;" they are not natives of our soil, but exotics. Although your weak faith be as the trembling hand; though your hope be but as a weak eye; and your love but as a little spark, he "despises not the day of small things;" be not discouraged by the impressive convictions of sin, "he will not break the bruised reed;" and though your desires are languid, rather like "the smoking flax" than the shining flame, he will not "quench" them, no, he will fan the holy fire, till it bursts forth into a blaze, pure as heaven and unceasing as eternity, until it receives new vigour, and appears in perfection, mingling with kindred flames in glory. To obtain this acceptance in your daily walk, and religious performances, appears your worthiest aim, your governing end. How often are your desires clothed in the language of David, Psalm xix. 14, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer;" and to this, with holy Paul, you would consecrate your efforts, that you "may be accepted of him," 2 Cor. v. 9. Are we thus reconciled to God; to his will, as the rule of our conduct, and to his glory as the end of life? we are "accepted in the beloved," and imperfect services can now be presented with

holy confidence, and the most pleasing assurance. Our prayers, so defective in spirit and composition, are as melody to the Lord; "the prayer of the upright is his delight;" our very groans from a "broken heart," rise as holy incense; if we drop a word for him from a principle of love, he graciously notices it. Shall it not be entered in "the book of his remembrance," as in the time of Malachi? and will he not put our penitential "tears into his bottle?" there shall not a "mite" be given to his cause, but he will graciously accept; nor a sincere desire for the good of his cause and the prosperity of his chosen, but he will consider it as our kindness. "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not," 2 Cor. viii. 12. Sometimes, he sees "the flesh is weak," and that "we would do that we do not," but he discerns "the willing spirit," and pities our manifold weaknesses. To be thus accepted of God as our Father, was beautifully delineated and finely depicted in the parable of the returning prodigal. Come, then, see a father's heart; come, then, and hear a father's melting language; come, then, and behold a father's gracious conduct; and though conscious guilt diffuses the generous blush over your cheeks, and a humbled soul produces the genuine confessions of penitence, yet arise and come to him; fly to his arms, widely extended to receive you, seek protection in his care, and felicity in his favour, and to the glory of his grace acknowledge yourselves

entirely indebted. To be thus accepted, must also include the following things :—

*First.* That every obstacle to the exercise of divine favour is removed, see verse 7. It was necessary to remove sin, which was a separating bar between God and man; to honour the law, and redeem from bondage and the curse; and to subdue our infernal foes: these things have taken place; the mountains which obstructed have become plains, crooked things straight, a way is open, a new and living way consecrated, in which God communicates his favour, and man, redeemed man, is brought nigh to God, and finds acceptance with him.

*Second.* Acceptance supposes an offering; this may be illustrated from Malachi i. 10, 13: there is something analogous to this in the subject before us. Jesus himself presents his people and their services; he is their officiating and perpetual high priest. Believers also having “a right spirit,” are made willing to give themselves unto a covenant God, Father, Son and Spirit; under the holy constraints of mercy, such abundant mercy from God, “they present themselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God,” knowing it to be a “reasonable service.” One says to the Lord, “I am thine;” another tells his church, “I am the Lord’s, and I will go with you, because God is with you;” and they all with “one heart” unite as the church of old, declaring to Jehovah, “other lords have had dominion over us, but by thee



will we make mention of thy name, and of thine only;" "all we have, and all we are, shall be for ever thine;" we are not, "nor desire to be our own," or to live to ourselves. Then the acceptance of the Lord, is his reception of us, the affording us tokens of his gracious regard, and the expression of his complacency in us. The word may indeed signify "endeared us to him," as in Luke i. 28, it is "highly favoured;" viewing us in Christ it is with delight. We come then to show,

II. How it is enjoyed by sinners of the human race.

Many things which render persons acceptable to their fellow-creatures have no place here. It is not youth, nor beauty, nor wealth, nor influence, nor friends; but "in the beloved." Christ is the beloved, eminently so; the "beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased;" and the beloved of all who are taught of God; "unto you who believe he is precious," unspeakably precious. In him, and no where else, are any accepted.

*First.* In him as our covenant Head. Those who are accepted are set forth as having been "chosen in Christ from the foundation of the world," which refers to the "everlasting covenant" wherein they were given to Christ as his sheep, as his seed. These "he came to seek and save and to gather into one," that they being one with him might receive the benefits of this covenant, "ordered in all things and sure," and enjoy the privileges of children, ver. 3—5. In him, then, they

are "complete;" his righteousness is theirs, their dress, as the wedding garment in which they appear accepted at the gospel feast on earth and the marriage supper in heaven. In him, then, they are really accepted, and in him appear with acceptance, and as to their services, these are laid upon him as "the altar which sanctifies the gift," and thus ascend "as a sweet smelling savour." Ephes. v. 1, 2. Connected herewith they are,

*Second.* In him as their representative. The subject of representation may receive light from many passages of holy writ. Suffice it to refer you to Job xlii. 8, where the sacrifices were to be taken to Job, he was to act as mediator for his friends, and to pray for them as their representative before God; in this way, and this alone, were they to seek acceptance. Thus it is with Jesus, our great and perfect surety: see Col. i. 22, Rev. viii. 34, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

That we are accepted in the beloved Jesus, might further be demonstrated from considering,

The testimony clearly borne to Jesus, not only by prophets and apostles, but by a voice from the most excellent glory.

Assertions concerning his people strengthen our faith. For they are said to be of "the household of God," "the friends and children of the Most High."

The promises must not be forgotten on this subject. "Whosoever cometh, he will in no wise cast out." "If ye give a cup of cold water

in the name of a disciple, it shall not lose its reward.”

The descent of the Spirit as a spirit of adoption puts it beyond doubt: and the gracious intimations afforded to the children of God become a source of undeceiving joy. Here flows in a sacred peace, not like that of the wicked which shrinks from investigation, or dies away under a fit of sickness; but that bears scrutiny, and “keeps the heart and mind.”

Have you not, Christian, in going to God,—for Christians have not only to do with the preacher and ordinances, but with God,—found your fears removed, and said, “It is good for me to draw nigh unto God,” for he met with you and said, “See, I accept you concerning this thy request,” Gen. xix. 21. Then duty becomes delight when we take the encouragement of God, feel holy boldness excited, fears removed, and pure joys become more solid and abundant.

We must,

III. Glance at the end.

“To the praise of the glory of his grace.” Not to lay any foundation for human boasting, that is excluded, but the praise of the glory of his grace. It is an Hebraism, “that grace might be known in its glory.” Creation manifests his wisdom and power; the law exhibits his authority and purity; but the gospel displays grace—free, abounding, and everlasting grace. This is made known in the acceptance of believers,

*First.* From the way in which it is granted. Not of our own works, for we are accepted in another, even the Beloved; the constitution of whose person, his advent into our world, and the work he undertook, are all filled with wonders of grace.

*Second.* The objects show it to be glorious grace. Some have been the poorest as to worldly circumstances; some have been the vilest in their moral character; some have enjoyed this blessing after many, many years of careless indifference; others have been brought in ways most unlikely, and all have been totally unworthy and guilty. May we not add,

*Third.* The duration of the blessings speaks the same thing. The covenant of grace, not like that made with Adam, is an everlasting covenant. None in that covenant given to Christ, shall have their names erased, nor shall those who are in his hand be plucked thence. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance;" and lest any should suppose this is licentious,

*Fourth.* The effects exalt the divine grace. The following are among others:—fruitfulness in their lives to the honour of God; the love of Christ constrains them to duty; they are neither barren nor indifferent to good works, but careful to maintain them, and thus adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour, and unite in their acknowledgments of the divine favour, and in praises to their covenant God. How glorious does this grace appear in their view! what transport fills their breasts and excites to

grateful songs of praise—songs of praise in which all Zion's children unite here, and shall have one heart to celebrate in heaven.

## IMPROVEMENT.

1. For information. Do any ask, Wherewithal shall I come before God, and bow myself before my Maker? Can a sinner find acceptance at his throne? In what way may I approach and find mercy, approach and live? It is not by the excellency of your own works; for nothing short of a perfect righteousness can justify. It is not from the absolute mercy of God; for no such mercy is exercised. It is all through a Mediator. You may do much, and suffer much, but if from wrong principles, of no avail. Some are represented as going to the gate of heaven with hope, and retiring thence with despair. Nor does your acceptance depend upon a good frame. Many are much mistaken here, and are disposed at times to neglect a duty because they do not feel so comfortably as they could wish; and then again, suppose they have reaped no advantage because their passions have been little affected; but we must remember, our frames are not the rule of obedience, nor the engaging our passions however desirable, the only rule of judging whether we are profited. But Jesus is the way, the true and the living way; "no man can come to the Father but by him." Believe in him, and you will enjoy access, and find acceptance, but "without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. xi. 5. Is not this

information valuable? How important! how pleasing! No cruel sacrifices of the fruit of the body, your children passing through the fire unto Moloch; no impositions of Romish superstition; no slavish exertions from a legal heart, but in a way of grace through Jesus. Are we seeking it in this way? Do our hopes here rest? Is this Gospel embraced with pleasure and thankfulness? For if we are averse to this Gospel method of saving sinners, we are enemies to the grace of God, and oppose its praise and glory; and living and dying in that state must be finally rejected.

2. Are believers accepted of God?—then, how dangerous to oppose them, how desirable to be interested in their influence! Many oppose them, but God accepts them, and therefore danger attends their enemies. See Jer. xiv. 10—12. The Lord told Jeremiah he should not pray for them; but how dreadful, should they, in praying for the church's victory over her enemies, include you! As Queen Mary feared the prayer of Knox more than the opposition of a thousand men. But how desirable to have their influence. Do you inquire, What influence have they? They have very little wealth, or honour, or connexions in this world. True. But they have influence with God and in the court of heaven. The ear of Jehovah is open to them, and his heart is engaged by them. What wonderful effects have attended their prayers! The prayer of one righteous man avails much. Ministers know this, and wish the influence to be employed for

them. Christians engage in the mutual exercise, and all who feel aright will wish an interest in the same. Dan. ii. 17, 18.

3. The duty and happiness of God's people may be gathered from this subject. Their duty is to honour the witnessing Spirit of God, to guard against negligence, and to exalt the riches of divine grace, and the Beloved of their souls; and their happiness is from God. What matters who rejects, so long as he accepts? What may not such expect who are objects of divine favour? Go then, O Christian, "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a cheerful heart, let thy garments be always white, and let thy head lack no ointment, for God now accepteth thy works." Eccles. ix. 7, 8.

## SERMON XIX.

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*We have fellowship one with another.*—1 JOHN I. 7.

THIS chapter develops the grand design to be answered by the Christian ministry, see verse 3 ; in order to this, the apostle shows the full evidence he and the apostles possessed of the truth and divinity of our holy religion ; he marks out the way in which the best of blessings are communicated to the sons of men, the change necessary to take place in their hearts, and the high dignity to which the true Christian is raised : “ We have fellowship one with another.” Fellowship with God is afforded the Christian, with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in love, and grace, in redemption, and influence. Phil. ii. 1, and other places, treat of communion with the Spirit. It were easy, and delightful to enlarge upon this privilege of “ our high calling.” The declarations of our text might be used, of saints in heaven, and believers on earth ; they have fellowship : the Christian is brought not only to God the Judge of all, and to an innumerable company of angels, but to the church of the first born, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, Heb. xii. 23 ;



“ The saints on earth and all the dead  
But one communion make ;”

there is but one family, though part of this family be in heaven, and part on earth, in distinct apartments in their Father's house. Delightful idea! reviving thought! to be incorporated with those happy spirits, and united to the same glorious Head. But we must consider the passage as referring to the truly pious upon earth who, however situated, or circumstanced in this world, have fellowship one with another. The word *κοινωνια*, like many others, has both primary and subordinate significations; the primary meaning is a participation in the things which belong to each other, arising from mutual interest, and herein we may distinguish it from communion, strictly so called, but what is at times meant by the term fellowship, *i. e.* mutual converse, or endearing intercourse. I propose to show,

I. The things in which Christians participate with each other as constituting Christian fellowship; and,

II. That this is a fruit of their union with Christ.

I connect the two parts, lest I should fall into a repetition of the same things, and a tautology of expression which otherwise would be scarcely avoidable.

Some of the things in which Christians participate with each other; for there may be and are personal distinctions, and certain peculiarities in which as Christians they have no common

interest; but in others an interest runs through the whole church, from the highest apostle to the weakest believer.

*First.* They have fellowship in their spiritual relations. Not strangers, but of the household of God, the sheep of Christ, the children and heirs of God, the citizens of heaven; that these high characters, expressive of spiritual relations, are applicable to all the people of God, and are enjoyed through Christ Jesus, will appear from consulting Gal. iii. 26, 28, 29; John x. 16; Eph. iii. 17, 19.

*Second.* In the gifts they possess. May I not here recall to your recollection the metaphor we lately considered, taken from the human body? The peculiar gift with which any member is endowed, is for the good of the whole; the discernment, the activity, the sensation, the strength of the different members are considered as the mutual possession, all have an interest; so it is in the Christian church, Eph. iv. 11, 12; there you see for the edifying the body, and belonging to that body we should never lose sight of mutual dependence and general interest in each other's gifts; if not occupied with this aim, there is either a guilty negligence, or unwarrantable end.

*Third.* In the exercises of grace. In godly sorrow for sin; in the lamentations of a broken heart; in desires, earnest and ardent desires for pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace; in a faith which embraces the distinguishing truths of the Gospel; in love to God and his people; in a pure joy founded

upon the atonement ; in a Christian sympathy, or delight with others, there is a coincidence of experience. The things I have enumerated are only distinct parts of experimental religion ; in some they are more conspicuous than in others, and in the same person beam forth more fully at one period than another ; but they have a real existence in all true Christians. “ They have obtained like precious faith through the righteousness of God their Saviour,” 2 Peter i. 1 ; they are brought to have “ one heart and one soul,” Acts iv. 32 ; for faith works by love, particularly love to the brethren, to all the household of faith ; this gives them a delight in their company, Psa. xvi. 3, cxix. 63 ; sympathy under their trials, or joy and thankfulness in their prosperity. You have felt these exercises when reading tidings of Christians and churches, which you never expect to see, or from whom you cannot expect any advantage in this present evil world. Permit me to say, it is an unfavourable symptom when this is not known and felt, see Amos vi. 6 ; or, to revert to the members of the human body, “ These being one body in Christ, therefore whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it ; because the members should have the same care one for another,” 1 Cor. xii. 26.

*Fourth.* In the enjoyment of privileges. These are of an external nature, or inward possession ; in the former view we may reckon ordinances, and providences ; the ordinances are parts of the

common salvation, and every Christian may claim a participation; and as to Providence, its various dispensations "are yours if ye are Christ's," 2 Cor. iii. ult.; and what son doth not the father wisely correct and improve? The more spiritual are, interest in Christ, the same righteousness, adoption, and grace; the same freedom, divine acceptance, hope, consolation and dignity; they have a common interest, and are fellow heirs of the same grace and inheritance.

*Fifth.* A conformity in their services, and unity of design. They have many services to perform; and some have relative duties to which others may not be called; but as Christians, they have practically to attend the same word, apply to the same throne, confer upon the same things, mutually to exhort, to comfort one another, and to contribute to the prosperity of the same cause; see Psa. cxxii. 1; Heb. iii. 13; Matt. vii. 5; Eph. vi. 18; Acts ii. 44. The contributions referred to in the passage last quoted were upon an extraordinary occasion, but the principle is the same, and the cup of cold water to a disciple from the principle of grace, is a service Jesus will acknowledge in the great day; these services are regulated by the same precepts, enforced by the same motives, discharged by the same power, presented in the same way for acceptance, and with unity of design, that God may be glorified, his cause promoted, and man benefited; hence they may be called not only helps, servants, and labourers, but fellow helpers, fellow servants, and

fellow labourers in the work of the Lord. We say not, that this fellowship will not admit of more intimacy between some persons than others, for this appears almost unavoidable, arising from a greater agreement in sentiments ; more affinity of natural disposition, frequent intercourse, union in place and acts of worship, and by union of office, or agreement of the divine conduct as to their experience.

The holy fellowship of which we have been treating, is one great end of the covenant of grace between the Father and the Son, Eph. i. 10. To give it effect Jesus died, John xi. 51, 52. For this he intercedes, as is plain from John xvii. 14. This was prophesied of, Isaiah xi. 6, 7 ; probably an allusion to Noah's ark, where they dwelt in amity. It is prefigured in the institution of the Lord's supper, and can only be ascribed to the energy of the blessed Gospel ; for this 1 John i. shows it to be made known in order to this end ; and is a glorious effect peculiar to the Gospel. It is this Gospel which can form into union persons so contrary as to their natural dispositions, national prejudices, and different circumstances, as Jew and Samaritan, Greek and barbarian, the bond and the free. Interest has done much, but nothing like this, as a consequence of life from the same Head, and power from the same Spirit. It is so sublime, so pure, so durable, that nothing can dissolve it, and as offences may arise, it provides a forgiving spirit to be manifest, not in seven instances, but seventy times seven.

How desirable that it should extend in all places, and correct bad tempers in families, and subdue boisterous passions among meddling politicians, as also to carry the professors of religion above the government of a party spirit, and the low views of bigotry. We will draw to a close, by way of reflection, arising from, or connected with the subject.

1. How beautiful the Christian church! not as seen among all bodies of professing Christians; no, pride, ambition, contentions, and discord have disfigured the object; a miserable daubing, unlike the fair original; but, as delineated in the Scriptures, how beautiful does the king's daughter appear! we cannot fail to admire, if we have right views of this fellowship in its pure nature, its divine source, its dignified properties, its important advantages; and its eternal duration. May right views and right dispositions excite our praises to Zion's God and King. But,

2. How many mistake respecting church fellowship. Some appear to think of it as little more than nominal, or at highest as sentimental. Perhaps it may be asked, "What is necessary to qualify for this enjoyment?" this is a question of no small importance, therefore demands a full reply; it is a question of some difficulty, therefore must have a modest reply. I will give my sentiments freely, and wish you to receive or reject them as they bear, or will not bear examination by the unerring rule of God's truth. As the totally ignorant are incapable of this enjoyment,

there must be some knowledge of divine things. We assert not, that there must be universal agreement, for being designed to comprehend persons in different and distant nations, of opposite customs, under respective prejudices from education and habits, we cannot expect they should see "eye to eye;" but some knowledge is of the first consequence: their judgment must be one in weighty matters, such as the view of their sinfulness, the salvation of God, the work of the Redeemer, and the influence of the blessed Spirit; hence in 1 Cor. i. 10, the apostle besought them to speak the same thing; that they might be of the same judgment, and that the God of patience would grant them to be like minded, &c. was his prayer.

As the self-righteous cannot be justified, or accepted with God, there must be faith in the Lord Jesus. He is the centre of union, for sin had produced an awful separation from God, and in a moral sense, scattered the human race. Jesus came "to gather them" again, but in himself; therefore by faith we become united to him as the head of this body, submit to him in the obedience of faith as our King, enter into his school as our Teacher, and give ourselves up to his conduct as our Shepherd. This divine faith produces the same moral taste; "we taste that the Lord is gracious," and as persons must possess a similar taste for fellowship in the same natural enjoyments of music, drawing, or pleasure; so in this spiritual

fellowship there must be a oneness of taste produced by faith.

As the unholy cannot have fellowship with God and his people, there must be a measure of sanctification ; let no man presume to fix this measure, or set up any standard ; let no Christian say, because I feel my heart hard, and corruptions strong, and doubts frequent, therefore I am unfit ; no, these are favourable symptoms of a gracious concern awakened in the mind. Now this inward change by the Holy Spirit is truly important ; as the verse before us, “ If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another ;” there will be a “ putting off the former conversation, which was corrupt,” and “ the works of darkness ” will be laid aside ; it will be shown by walking honest and upright before the gentiles who know not God ; there will be a holy conversation and godliness : this “ becomes the gospel of our Lord,” and publicly manifests the proper objects for church fellowship.

The remarks I have set before you arise from the nature of things, and more, no minister, nor church are justified in requiring. As to any mode that may be thought most eligible to any particular society, let it be proposed, but not imposed ; if the end be secured, the mode is but a secondary and very subordinate consideration : admitting the truth of the above remarks ; and we think ourselves justified in our dissent from the religion established by law in this country, where her com-



munion has no fence, nor her most sacred rites any security from the unhallowed and profane.

3. How negligent are many Christians in seeking to cultivate this sacred fellowship. Are there any indifferent to this in a public way? Let me ask you, "Does it appear of no importance to acknowledge Christ's authority in public? Or if in some instances, why not in all? Are you not bound to unite as part of a flock under a pastor, to be fed with knowledge and understanding? Do you think the primitive Christians who were stedfast in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking bread, and in prayers, are unworthy of your imitation? Do you think it of no consequence to countenance a punctual regard to the ordinances, and the universal regard to them? For, remember, if one may be neglected so may another, and the remissness of one person may prove a bad example to another, to all; if all were to act as some, ordinances would be lost, opportunities pass unnoticed, and societies be broken up. Can you be under too many, or too powerful obligations to a circumspect and holy walk? or do you fear it will clash with any selfish plan you have formed? When men look only upon "their own things, and not upon the things of others also;" when they inquire how can I prevent generously contributing, and yet the cause be carried on? or how can I neglect such a duty because it does not suit my humour? it is a very bad sign; it makes every thing done a burden, and tends as the bane of an interest to its total overthrow.

There is, however, something worse than this negligence. What can that be? Why, it is an attempt to produce discord and separation among the people of God. How contrary to the spirit of the gospel, Phil. ii. 1, 2; Eph. iv. 3. 4. To divide between Christians is an attempt devilish in its nature and source.

4. What a wide contrast between the fellowship of the saints and the communion of sinners. The confederacies of sinners are very numerous, "they join hand in hand," and "assemble themselves together," they are united in one head; but he is the leader of angelic and human apostates; they visit the same temple of dissipation, and of mammon; they have communion in the same works of darkness, and, how shall I declare it? I must—it may awaken you sinners in Zion—they will have fellowship with each other in the end of their course; the misery of the damned; your fellowship in present pleasures will end; your fellowship in ruin will be inevitable and eternal. May Heaven prevent it! may you be brought from having "fellowship with the works and workers of darkness," to "have fellowship with us;" and, whatever some say, or you may think, truly our fellowship is with the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, with angels and saints.

5. How truly desirable and glorious will be the perfection of gospel fellowship. If it be here so pleasant and improving, "so good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity," what

must it be in heaven ? There will be nothing to detract from the fulness of its excellency, nothing to interrupt its perpetual flow, nothing to lessen our apprehension of its value, or make us indifferent to the enjoyment. Around the throne of God and the Lamb shall be assembled Adam and Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, David and the Prophets, the holy apostles, and evangelists, the noble army of martyrs, and the confessors of our God ; there shall be an innumerable multitude redeemed from all kindreds, tribes, nations, and people ; all in the uniform of heaven ; and of one heart, engaged in the same blissful employment. Alleluia to God and the Lamb shall be their unceasing shout ; heaven's high arches shall ring with the triumphs of its inhabitants ; the music of angels shall aid their rapture ; and God himself shall bless them with his eternal smile.

O thou gracious God, who didst send thy Son to seek and save sinners, and to bring thy children nigh unto thyself, here and hereafter, bless me, even me, and my dear reader of these pages, that we may have the felicity of thy redeemed, and at length join our feeble strains to the shouts of that innumerable multitude.

## SERMON XX.

---

*For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen.—*  
2 COR. I. 20.

THERE may be in this passage an immediate reference to the promises of God in the Old Testament, which had a glorious reference to the person, coming, work, and kingdom of Jesus the Christ. He was promised as “the seed of the woman to bruise the serpent’s head;” as the “seed of Abraham in whom all nations were to be blessed;” as the “star out of Jacob, and the sceptre out of Israel;” as the “branch from the root of Jesse;” as the “child born, the son given, the glory of his people, and the light of the Gentile world.” These and such like promises centre in him, and in him appear verily fulfilled, really and abundantly confirmed unto the glory of God by us Christians. But the text need not be so limited; for it hath pleased the Father, “that all fulness should dwell in Christ, and therefore the fulness of blessings contained in the promises, are in him “yea,” freely and without uncertainty; and in him, are “Amen.” They are confirmed and ratified.

I propose to set before you,

I. The nature and excellences of the divine promises.

II. To whom they belong, and how they are to be used.

I. The nature and excellences of the divine promises.

A promise is the declaration of some benefit to be conferred, or the assurance of some good to be bestowed. It is however to be noticed, that in some cases the good is rather negative, that is, rather the delivering or preserving from evil, than of any positive good to be bestowed, but this is certainly considerable.

A promise having good to be bestowed is distinguished from narration, doctrine, or information, which simply refer to the truth of any fact, and is opposed to threatening, as that which denounces an evil or punishment.

The promises of God may be distinguished into absolute or conditional, spiritual or temporal. Many of the promises are absolute; the fulfilment depends not in any respect upon man, any more than the descent of rain or the copious showers of the dew. Of this nature are such as, Isa. ix. 6, "A virgin shall conceive and bring forth a son," &c. Psa. cx. 3, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." "I will work, and who shall let it?" "He shall be great, and in him shall all nations be blessed." "He must increase, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." "I will give unto my sheep eternal life and none shall pluck

them out of my hand." Others there are which we term conditional, or have a relative dependence upon others, as in 1 Tim. iv. 8. These respect temporal blessings, and enjoyments of peace and pleasure in waiting upon God. Having all things, as food and raiment, added is dependent upon seeking "first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Do we desire the comforts of God? we must be first made to mourn, Mat. v. Do we desire to have the peace of God keep our hearts and minds? we must walk by God's rule, Gal. vi. 16. God forbid I should unnecessarily encumber any one promise of God, but I know of no promise to warrant our hope of inward peace or spiritual joy, or usefulness, but what is inseparably connected with a humble, holy walk before God. No promise to countenance a careless, loose conduct; his smile will be withdrawn if we walk as tends to grieve his Spirit. Other distinctions of less importance might be made of the promises; but I shall treat of the excellences. In order to this, I shall dwell upon two words of inspiration used on this subject, 2 Pet. i. 4, "Exceeding *great* and *precious* promises."

The greatness of these promises will fully appear,

*First.* As intended to display the Divine glory. Jehovah has here resolved to demonstrate the freeness of his mercy, the greatness of his love, the boundless provision of his grace, the honour of his name, and the stores of all his sufficiency; these promises are to be "to the glory of God by us;" and are not these grants worthy Jehovah? he gives like

a God : his promises must be exceeding great, as far exceeding what we can ask or even think, as his infinite mind and perfections exceed our finite comprehension.

*Second.* The objects promised, show the greatness of the promises ; the good things promised in the Gospel are indeed great as well as good ; great as the wants of the body and mind, for this world and a better ; what supplies of wisdom and power, grace and comfort, support and victory ; a blessed resurrection, a glorified body, a crown of glory, a seat in paradise, a mansion in glory, yea, eternal life ; language is too poor to describe their worth, and imagination too languid to give them colours sufficiently striking ; for they extend beyond our desires, and far exceed the stretch of human thought. They are exceeding great promises, but,

We remark the promises of God are very precious.

*First.* Precious because freely given, and through a glorious medium. They are bestowed “ without money and without price,” no merit on our part, no valuable consideration to propose, as furnishing us with the least claim, or as returning an equivalent ; but freely granted, (2 Peter i. 4) and as to the way in which they come, it is through the blood, “ the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot or blemish :” of Him it may be said,

“ There’s not a gift his hand bestows,  
But cost his heart a groan.”

If we feel an additional worth, or set a higher value

on costly presents by the source and medium from which we receive them, how can we sufficiently appreciate the promises of our God?

*Second.* Their preciousness arises greatly from their suitableness. From these sacred mines the poor derive true riches ; here the traveller to Zion derives new vigour to urge on his way ; and the Christian warrior is furnished with power to make new conquests. From this storehouse we receive abundant supplies of good things, and are satisfied with the gracious provision ; these are like the leaves of a tree which afford a balsamic virtue to the wounded in spirit, or like the fruits of Canaan which are brought to the taste of God's Israel to make them long for the full vintage, and encourage them to go forward to possess the land, "the glory of all lands." The words of promise contain light for darkness, cleansing for the polluted ; strength for the weak, stability for the wavering ; comfort for the dejected, succour in temptation, guidance and influence in the world ; joy in death, boldness in the day of judgment, and bliss in eternity ; in short, it may well be said "They are sweet words on which the children of God live."

*Third.* They are precious because certain ; the promises of God, in Christ, yea and amen ; these are the promises of him who often exceeds, but never does less than his promises, because he is abundant in truth, Exod. xxxiv. 6 ; 1 Kings viii. 16 ; Heb. viii. 6, 10, 23. "He hath spoken and will he not fulfil?" can he want power? is he



liable to change ; or will he prove unfaithful ? impossible ; here then,

“ Engraved as in eternal brass,  
The mighty promise shines ; ”

here the promises stand like the pillars of the universe : like the basis of Jehovah’s throne,

“ O for a strong and lasting faith, ”

to receive them as the words of God, and take the comfort as our own ; but,

*Fourth.* They are precious in their tendency and end ; these have an end worthy of God, they are intended that we should be brought to the participation of a divine nature and a holy word, 2 Pet. i. 4 ; 2 Cor. vii. 1 ; and they tend hereto as they encourage, animate, and strengthen with the strength of God. But we proceed to show

II. To whom they belong, and how they are to be used.

Let this truth be fully settled, and retained by you, that they are in Christ. Compare Gen. xxii. 18, with Gal. iii. 8, 19, 22, 29 ; where you find the promise made to Abraham, of blessedness to the nations in his seed, was of and in Christ, and those who believe in Christ come to the promises, and as heirs enjoy them in him. In this view, eternal life was promised before the world begun, Titus i. 2 ; doubtless, in the covenant made with Christ for his people ; see further, Romans iv. 8, 13, 14 ; that this is the privilege of those who receive the

gospel is plain from Eph. iii. 6, and they are further described as “fleeing for refuge to the hope set before them,” Heb. vi. 18, 19; all the blessings, then, are in the fulness of Christ, whether justification, sanctification, perseverance, victory, or glory, all are in him; through him they come to us in a way of promise, and we being one with him by a vital union, have an interest in the promises, and enjoy them as made unto us in and through Christ our all glorious Head; others have no right to the promises, they are not among the children, therefore presumption to expect the privileges of the children, or the future inheritance which God hath promised to them who love him. The promises are given to be used. In what way may they be used with divine acceptance and personal advantage? when they maintain in our minds a sense of our wants, and dependence; when they lead us to admire the divine provision which God hath made; when they encourage our minds in God’s way, and in the Lord’s work. But to be a little more particular:

*First.* Use them to nourish your faith. We are too ready to say, was my faith stronger, or was I more holy, then I could come to the promise: this is unbelief, under the garb of humility; rather remember, you come to Christ as a sinner, and to have your faith increased. As faith embraces the promise, (Heb. xi. 13,) it feels divine supports, and receives the sacred cordials; and remember,

general promises may be embraced and used for particular cases.

*Second.* Use them as the objects of your Christian hope. The divine commands regulate your obedience, and the threatenings awaken your fear; but the promises are objects of hope; hope then for grace, and glory, and every intermediate good. "Be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel," founded in oaths, and promises, and blood; let this hope be cast as "the anchor of your soul," that it may keep the vessel of the mind, "sure and stedfast;" and as mariners have to cast forth the anchor in dark nights, so in dark seasons like David, encourage your soul by saying, "Hope thou in God, I shall yet praise him;" have time, opportunity, and a heart so to do.

*Third.* Use them as motives to patience. Heb. xi. 3. Abraham "patiently endured and so received the promise." We are to be "followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises," they believed and then waited, Heb. vi. 12, 15. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness," 2 Pet. iii. 9; distinguish between a failure and a delay of accomplishment; wait, for blessed are they who wait for him.

*Fourth.* Use them as subjects for meditation. Like the bee, light upon these flowers in the garden of God that you may extract a sweetness thence.

*Fifth.* Use them as arguments to plead in

prayer. They may not only serve as a directory in prayer to regulate; but as live coals taken from God's altar to increase the flame of pure devotion; these promises have been compared to notes, issued from the bank of heaven, and in prayer we present them for payment; as David, "Fulfil thy word unto thy servant upon which thou hast caused me to hope."

*Sixth.* Lastly, Use them as springs to your obedience; that you may run in God's ways, and always abound in the work of the Lord.

To the unbeliever I must address myself in a very different strain. I dare not say, in your present state, that one promise belongs to you—No—the threatenings are yours while a stranger to Christ; the promises you "have neither part nor lot in." As the threatenings are yours, the dreadful artillery of heaven is levelled against you. Shall this awaken no fear? Will you still harden yourself against conviction, and against God? Do not fight against him any longer; it is foolish, it is criminal, it is dangerous; are you made willing to seek him and receive the word of reconciliation? Jesus invites, he assures you he will in no wise cast out, and in him you will know, the promises are yea and Amen, to the glory of God by us.



## SERMON XXI.

---

*All are yours.*—1 COR. III. 22.

I HAD thoughts of enlarging much more upon the privileges of those who are one with the Lord Jesus; or of enumerating more of the blessed fruits and effects of union with the Redeemer; but as I have the prospect of a temporary absence, I shall endeavour to close the subject before that takes place; and I have selected this comprehensive passage as affording me an opportunity of at least hinting at most, if not all the remaining privileges which I should in other circumstances more fully have enlarged upon.

If we attend to the connexion of the words, we may discern a peculiar propriety and beauty; there were in the Church at Corinth, persons of a contentious spirit, who formed a kind of religious faction; they constituted distinct parties, set up their respective heads, and contested warmly for the superiority of their favourite leader. Verses 3—5. One said, “I am of Paul,”—none like him for masterly reason, striking addresses, or fulness

of the Gospel; another, was equally warm for Apollos, possessing such a strain of eloquence as warmed the passions, and bore away the hearer with a pleasing impetuosity, &c. But from whence did this vain glorying arise; and what were the consequences? It arose from littleness of mind, and had a direct tendency to obstruct their general improvement. In hope therefore to cure this mental disorder, this complaint in their society, the apostle was inspired to set before them the fulness of the Gospel, the vast privileges they had belonging to them as Christians, and consequently the evil of being so contracted in their views and dispositions, as also the absurdity of setting any minister up against others, and glorying in men; “whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, all are your’s; for ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.”

Doctrine, By union to Christ, Christians have an advantageous interest in all things. I intend to,

- I. Descant upon the words.
- II. Obviate an objection raised against the truth.
- III. Show in what senses it may be understood.
- IV. Make some remarks from the whole discussion.

I. Descant upon the words.

“Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas;” the ministers of God are yours; the office of ministers, whether filled by an apostle, evangelist, pastor, or teacher, is instituted for the good of the church; the gifts they possess, however various, or great. Was Paul possessed of great reasoning powers? was Apollos

distinguished for his oratorical abilities ; or Cephas a man of peculiar zeal and boldness ? these were by grace consecrated to your service ; the service of your souls. Was Paul the instrument of conversion ? was Apollos blessed to comfort your minds ? or Cephas to establish your hearts ? all are united in your lasting benefit, and are happy in being your servants for Jesus' sake.

The "world" stands for you ; here you are to act for God, and when you have finished, the stage will be thrown down ; here you are preparing as a building for God, and when the building is completed the scaffolding will be thrown by. "The holy seed are the substance" in this world, and, like Lot in Sodom, its preservation ; their departure will be the signal to the destroying angel.

"Life," with its opportunities of doing good or getting good, with its trials to your graces, or its peculiar privileges, is for your advantage ; yes, the living shall live unto God, the living praise thee, O God !

"Death," whether in general, or the death of our dear relatives, friends, or fellow Christians, loosens the ties to earth, and tends to the improvement of our graces, minds, and characters ; and when Death comes to our persons, we shall sleep in Jesus ; the union will still remain, we shall find it eternal gain.

If I speak in general of "things present," they are yours ; the sun comes forth of his chamber to give you light and comfort, and the night affords you rest to re-invigorate your exhausted powers ; the



earth yields her increase, the laws human and divine are for your safety; even revolutions are for your trial, and your instruction; your afflictions are working out good, and your trials prove blessings in disguise. But we are sometimes more influenced by the expectation of things future; here you have nothing to fear; you may rest in a tranquil state, you may indulge pleasing hope, for you have a cheering prospect: "things to come," also, "all are yours;" "all are yours." This is the epitome of your charter, this the treasure God imparts, this the high privilege of real Christians, this is the sum of my reckoning and the close of my enumeration, "all are yours." But a difficulty arises, therefore

II. An objection is to be obviated.

Does not matter of fact oppose the passage? There are many things in which they are uninterested, and many things they appear to want; but, we do not say all things are the Christian's in every sense; they are not in their power, or at their disposal, as the Fifth Monarchy Men supposed; but that which is not true in one sense, may be truth itself in other senses; this will be the substance of our next general proposition.

III. To show in what senses we are to understand the truth.

*First.* "All are yours" by virtual possession; 2 Cor. vi. 10, is a fine passage, though paradoxical; "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet pos-

sessing all things:" like to this, is Eph. i. 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ;" he hath blessed us with all these,—how can this be when we have received so few comparatively? they are in Christ, possessed by him, for his people; he possesses them as our representative, and in him we possess "all things;" all things are ours; for we are Christ's, and Christ is ours.

*Second.* "All are yours" by title. Human nature had an extensive grant to the use and enjoyment of every thing good in this world in the first Adam; but casting off his allegiance, and rebelling against the Majesty of heaven, he forfeited his privileges, and, as a creature, had no claim upon the goodness and care of his Creator; but we are recovered to a higher title, and furnished with more extensive grants through the Lord Jesus; God himself becomes our Father, and we his sons and daughters. As children we are heirs, heirs of God; this is our title, and shall it not be acknowledged? will God disinherit, or prove a Father unkind? No; the title originates in his grace, is enjoyed through his Son; is confirmed by the imparted Spirit of adoption, and all is ours by title. Immediately connected with this,

*Third.* It is secured by promise. "Godliness hath the promise of this life, and that which is to come;" "things present, things to come;" "the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will

he withhold from them who walk uprightly;" "they who wait upon the Lord shall not want any good thing;" "all things shall be added unto them." Yes, he giveth us all things richly to enjoy; to enjoy, not abuse; richly, *i. e.* abundantly to enjoy, all things good, and really proper, and, sure, in any other sense they could not be ours. But,

*Fourth.* "All are yours" as to their beneficial tendency. All you are concerned in shall subserve your interest; "all things work together for good," Rom. viii. 28; all things work together, and that for good, to such. Unbelief may say, "All these things are against me;" but Jacob, who uttered those words, found himself mistaken, and lived to see the folly of judging the Lord by feeble sense, rather than trusting to his word, and walking by faith. The conduct of God, mysterious and painful as some parts were to the Israelites, was advantageous on the whole, and appeared so in the end; and this, if not typical, might illustrate his wise and good conduct toward his church; but as this is an interesting part of our subject, an enlargement may prove of some service, to promote resignation under trials, and to promote our faith in God and his word. In the natural world we have the wintry season, cold and nipping frosts, dark and dreary days; these are very unpleasant, but you know the severe frost tends to good, so afflictions, (Heb. xii. 10;) they hurt the man, but not the Christian; they are as an unpleasant season, but they are working an exceeding weight of glory; they will issue well.

Persecution is as a fire, but while it consumes the dross, it purifies the precious metal. It is like a knife which is used for different purposes; in the hand of an executioner it may be dreadful to the malefactor, in the hand of a surgeon it may take away the gangrene member of a patient. In persecution, "the Spirit of God and glory rests" upon the Christian, and he has more "fellowship with Christ in sufferings," and shall in glory, Phil. iii.; these draw him nearer to his God. If providential dispensations are mysterious, they teach you humility that you know so little; and make you more desirous of that world, where you shall know what your Lord is now doing; and behold with thankfulness that he is now leading you in the right way to his habitation.

If the sun of prosperity shines upon you, it is to draw forth the sap, to accelerate growth, and make your fruitfulness more abundant. Mercies of God have a sweet and powerful constraint. Rom xii. 1. "O how great is thy beauty, how great is thy goodness." "What shall I render for such great, such numerous benefits?" These are the generous strains in which a mind impressed with the divine goodness will pour itself forth. Thus, believers, you may look around you on enjoyments freed from the curse; you may look before you to death, judgment, and eternity with pleasure; you may look above to your Father, and your Saviour, your Friend, and your all. Amid changing scenes you have an interest in a covenant, "ordered in all

things and sure ;” in a word, you may taste divine love in all events, and taste that the Lord is gracious in all his appointments, and the allotments of his providence.

Things which are common to others are especial favours to the children and people of God, for they are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. We,

IV. Make some remarks from the whole of the subject.

1. How wonderful the effects of divine grace communicated through Jesus and his Gospel! To think that such support and comfort attend through all the variation of things present, that even death itself should be rendered our gain, and that the future things of eternal life and glory should be among our treasures. Should deists assault your faith, or infidelity make a bold attack against you—should the seductive temptations or fascinating objects of time and sense solicit your abandonment of true religion, or put in a claim for your preference, remember, they have nothing to propose that will bear a competition, and that you can never be furnished with any motive sufficient to justify apostasy : no,

“ I’d call them vanity and lies,  
And bind the gospel to my heart.”

2. How different the state of the sinner and the saint. The former has not any thing secured or promised that is really valuable. You may possess much of temporal good, but this is a snare. Even

your prosperity tends to your destruction, and your talents hid or abused will witness against you. At enmity against God—how awful! For “if God be for us,” nothing can materially hurt. If God be against us, and “his face is against the wicked,” nothing can do us any real or abiding good. “Return unto the Lord, and seek pardon and grace in the Mediator.”

3. Christians, among you there is no occasion for envy, no room for murmuring. You should be more than resigned; rather be full of praise, of joyful expectation, and walk by faith.



## SERMON XXII.

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*Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?—2 COR. XIII. 5.*

SOME have thought that the apostle here speaks of Christ being in them by his great power enabling them to work miracles, but this was no sign of any being in a safe state, for in writing to the church at Corinth, the apostle supposed it possible to have a faith by which miracles might be performed, and yet destitute of that love which distinguishes the real Christian. Nor does the want of this power argue a state of reprobacy. Such an interpretation must therefore be rejected. But I consider them as referring to that actual, vital, indissoluble union which has been the subject of the foregoing discourses. The nature and effects have been set before you, and although I have occasionally called you to consider its necessity “as the one thing needful,” yet I would deliver one discourse more fully to treat of its importance. This I might have done from setting it before you as the greatest concern of faithful ministers, and the end to be answered by their labours and ministrations. “My



little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you," Gal. iv. 19. "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col. i. 27. But, perhaps, no part of the word is more calculated to answer my design than the interesting portion I have selected. Here, are reiterated exhortations to examine, to prove, to know; and attention to this is urged by considerations the most awakening and solemn.

The doctrine of the text may be thus stated:— It is of the utmost importance to be united unto Christ, as otherwise, we are in a state of reprobacy.

The discussion of this proposition shall be in the following order:—

I. To state the scriptural doctrine of reprobation.

II. To show that without union to the Redeemer we are reprobates.

I. To state the scriptural doctrine of reprobation.

Perhaps no doctrine has been more misrepresented. Some have supposed it to be the eternal, irreversible decree of Heaven, that without any considerations of sin, a number of the human race should be exposed to endless misery. Now for the honour of Divine goodness and justice, I shall oppose such an absurd sentiment, and remind you, that while grace is the only cause of salvation, sin is the only cause of damnation. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed

thyself;" and observe the phraseology in Rom. ix. 22, 23: "Vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory." It is not said, which he fitted for destruction;—no—this was their own sin, unbelief, and impenitency; but of vessels of glory which he had afore prepared. Beside, condemnation supposes God's hatred. But can there be hatred without offence? Now, if there be offence, it must be either in the creature as a creature, or in the corruption of that creature; it could not be in the creature simply considered, as that would reflect upon the Creator; it must therefore originate in the depravity or corruption of the creature, and that is sin.

Further—Condemnation is a punishment. Punishment, to constitute it proper, necessarily implies guilt, the consequent of sin. Again, the condemnation of sinners is represented as glorifying divine justice, and consisting greatly in the remorse of conscience which the impenitent feel—this is "the worm that never dies." But if it were possible to doom a person to endless woe without that misery which arose from sin, the suffering object could neither feel remorse, nor could the woe be considered as an act of justice, but rather of arbitrary caprice, or tyrannical power. Far be it from any to think thus of God. His sovereign acts are all compatible with the perfect excellency of his nature. What then are we to understand by being reprobate? *Αδοκιμω*, the word we render "reprobate," is a compound

word which signifies “not proof,” or “not approved.” There may be an allusion to metals brought to the assayer which he tries, and finds to be not sterling; it is adulterate,—it will not pass current; or there may be an allusion to the Agonistes, who ran or wrestled for prizes in the Grecian games. He puts in his claim for the prize, but it is found defective, and judgment goes against him. His claim will not stand, and upon examination is therefore rejected; according to this view there appear to be three things included.

*First.* Such are materially defective. There are defects in all, as there is alloy in the current coin of gold and silver in the kingdom. But in the reprobate there is a material defect, as in reprobate silver; *i. e.*, vile, adulterate mixture, worthless in its very nature.

*Second.* Rejected. The reprobate coin is not permitted to pass current; so all who are reprobate are the rejected of God.

*Third.* Condemned in judgment. These ideas I have to resume,

II. In showing that without union to the Redeemer we are reprobates.

*First.* We are materially defective. “I have no pleasure in you,” saith the Lord to some who regarded the externals of his service, Mal. i. 10. “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood,” that is, if ye abide not in him, and he dwell in you, “ye have no life in you,” said the Lord Jesus. John vi. 53. Without Christ, or se-

parate from him, "ye can do nothing." Neither persons, nor services, can be accepted. If we are not proceeding by the gospel, we are walking by the law, which was never intended for the restoration of a guilty creature. There will then be a defect in the rule, and this, like an error in the press, will produce erroneous copies : in the motive, which is fear and dread suited to a slave : and in the end, which is self rather than God. Isaiah lviii. 3—5. Vain attempt, like labouring in the fire, which when weighed in the balance, must be found wanting. "No man can come unto the Father" but by Christ. No approaching but through "the High Priest over the house of God."

*Second.* Rejection is included. Not to pass current in another world. "Many things highly esteemed among men" will appear an abomination in the sight of God. Witness the plea and claim of the pharisee. Are not the scriptures most plain upon this subject, "that without faith we cannot please God?" Is it not highly reasonable that as you reject the wisdom and the grace of God manifested in Jesus, and the testimony he has borne to his Son, so you must expect rejection? As God is holy, just, and true, every false plea, every unjust claim must meet with his rejection.

*Third.* There must be a condemnation in judgment. Prov. iii. 32; John iii. 18, 36; Matt. xxv. Some have one plea, some another, but all rejected; and the unbeliever will feel the awful condemnation and wrath of the Almighty, unless grace brings

him into a new state. How awful to be left to a state of reprobation ! to be given over to a mind void of judgment, destitute of grace, exposed to misery ! Such were they, who, “ not liking to retain God in their knowledge,” or acknowledgment, “ were given over to a reprobate mind to do those things which are not convenient,” even to name, in a Christian assembly. Rom. i. 28.

This enforces, then, the duty of self-examination. Let us prove our own selves.

Can we consider such rich legacies bequeathed in the New Testament of our Lord without wishing to receive them or examining our claim ? Is it not of vast importance to know whether we are in a state of nature or grace ? of justification or condemnation ? Whether we are sincere or hypocrites ? whether we are accepted or rejected ? whether we have the Christian hope, or presumption ? whether we have a good title to the fair inheritance above ? whether we are hastening to heaven or hell ?

Many have been deceived. “ A deceitful heart hath turned them aside.” By comparing themselves with others, as the pharisee with other men openly sinful ; some by the externals of religion to which they attend ; some by the good opinion of others. But as an actor on the stage may easily assume the character of a conqueror or king, and find himself after all involved in debt and misery, so have many assumed a character which neither belonged to them, nor was of any advantage to

them. Examine therefore your faith ; for to be in the faith, and to be in Christ, are synonymous expressions. We do not ask, in what frame are you ? or, whether you have made such attainments as some have ? but, are you in the faith ? in the spirit of faith ? under the influence of faith, and walking as believers on the Lord Jesus Christ ? Remember, things are capable of trial, some by the balance, or touchstone, a rule or a scale for numbers. The scriptures are profitable for this purpose. Come to these balances of the sanctuary to weigh your motives—bring the truth of your religion to this touchstone—try yourself by the infallible marks of this holy word—and take its directions as the rule of obedience.

If you have reason to fear upon this investigation, remember there is much to humble, to mourn over, but you need not despair. Apply to Christ. The Lord the Spirit help you so to do ; for remember “ this man,” this God-man, “ receiveth sinners.”

Let the Christian rejoice in the Lord.



## SERMON XXIII.

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THE SUBSTANCE OF A FUNERAL DISCOURSE FOR MR.  
THOMAS HETHERINGTON.

*But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation.—1 THESS. v. 8.*

THERE is not a duty recommended in the word of God, but, viewed in its connexion, appears both reasonable in its nature, and beneficial in its tendency. The services in which we are to engage naturally arise out of the relations we sustain, the privileges we enjoy, or the attendant circumstances; these things appear floating on the surface of the text; for the children of light or of the day should walk as the children of the day; those who are privileged with the advantages of the day, should engage in the work of the day; and such as are in a post of danger should be solicitous for armour that is proof, as their defence. In attempting to assist your meditations, I shall do little more than analyze the passage, by reducing it to its principles, explain the figurative language, drop some hints suited to the occasion, and close with an address;



depending upon the Holy Spirit to make it impressive, abiding, and truly profitable.

Those who are addressed are “of the day.” The term in this connexion signifies the season of light. Light and day are terms of equal import, and used as synonymous expressions in verse 5, “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day.” And this stands opposed to the night, or time of darkness. The day of which our text speaks, broke forth when the great Sun of Righteousness arose upon our benighted world. He came not only as a light into the world, but says, “I am the light of the world.” The intellectual and spiritual world as much depends upon the Lord Jesus for light, as the solar system upon the natural sun; and while that continues to enlighten, day is protracted; so while the Gospel dispensation remains, the day abides. Those who are favoured with the Gospel are favoured with day time, in opposition to the night of paganism, the darkness of the patriarchal period, and the shadows of the Mosaic economy. Were we to touch upon the nature and multitude of heathen deities, the sacrifices which were offered, the customs and general manners which prevailed, and the absurd things asserted respecting futurity; it would fully appear that gross darkness covered the people, and every effort, unassisted by divine revelation, was found inefficient to dispel the gloom. See the nations sitting in this darkness at length visited with the Gospel; then they are addressed in the sublime language of Isaiah, “Arise, shine, for thy light is

come," and the darkness is past away : ye are favoured with day.

The patriarchs and those under the law had some rays of light, but much obscurity. Abraham saw the day of Christ, but it was distant : it was through the medium of faith, it was by anticipation rather than enjoyment. As the Christian now beholds the day of glory, and the later saints saw it in the predictions, types, and promises of the dispensation delivered by Moses. They waited, they longed for his coming who was to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of Israel. About the time of his appearance a general expectation was entertained of his rising ; therefore when John, the harbinger of Christ, appeared, with the brilliancy of the morning star, he found it necessary to direct them still to wait : " he was not that light " they were taught to expect, but was to shine till he should be lost in the luminous display of the Saviour's perfect conduct, wonderful doctrines, miracles, institutions, and discoveries. This blessed day continues. Think what a day it is ! It might have been a season of extreme bitterness and misery ; it would have been a day of vengeance, had God marked our transgressions. Instead of which it is a day of information, of mercy, of salvation ; the day of visitation from the God of grace and redemption.

Oh to enjoy this day ! to be children of the day ! The great luminary of heaven pours day on these lower regions, but the man destitute of sight enjoys it not. The variegated colours which light

forms are lost to the blind ; there must be a faculty adapted to the object. Thus, only more awfully, is it in religion : a thick film has spread itself over the mental eye. God alone can remove this.

He not only reveals the object, but he shines into the heart. 2 Cor. iv. 6. This is "opening the eyes of the understanding," not to see any thing unrevealed as to the object, but "to understand the scriptures." This is faith—the conviction of things not otherwise to be seen. Here let me remind you that study and prayer should go together, for prayer without meditation is presumption, and study without prayer is practical atheism, it is affecting independency of God. Take David as a pattern when you sit down to read, or come to hear the word of God. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." If you are of, that is, under the influence of, the day, your governing principles will correspond with the properties of the gospel, or accord with the qualities of light. Children of light, so termed by way of resemblance, as believers under the present dispensation, are called children of Abraham, in that they resemble him in faith, in good works, in privileges, and in expectations.

The text further, suggests, that it is a day of conflict ; else, what need of armour ? The present enjoyments of a Christian are embittered by opposition from his enemies. Within us—how much to endanger ! from strong and sinful propensities, from unbelieving fears, from carnal reason-

ings, and a criminal indifference to things of the first moment. The world opposes our true interest. The influence of its corrupt maxims and customs is highly pernicious; and the enticements of sinners, aided by the example of bad companions, have destroyed thousands of souls. The great opposer of God and holiness, the devil, is a potent adversary; he has large quivers stored with arrows, poisonous arrows; at times they fly thick around us, and in quick succession; his bow of malice is always strung, and he aims with peculiar skill. When at times the soul has obtained an advantage, and began a song of triumph, ere he closes it he sees new troops advancing against him, and has to prepare for more formidable opposition. But dismissing this mode of representation, the temptations of Satan are called fiery darts; perhaps alluding to the conduct of nations who dipped their arrows or darts in poison, which, entering any part of the human body, inflamed with a fiery heat; and this is a just view of those atheistical thoughts, blasphemous and deistical suggestions, God-dishonouring thoughts, &c., &c., which we are all liable to from the temptations of this subtle, active, powerful enemy. We are in the field of battle, and we should be principally concerned for the safety of our vital parts.

The soldier must particularly regard his head and his breast. Other parts are of less moment, therefore less entitled to our regard. To have an arrow dipt in poison enter the heart or the head is to receive a mortal wound. Our attention should

be chiefly directed to guard those parts where a wound would prove most alarming and dangerous. Shall we consider this as applicable to our sentiments and principles? In this view the head will be considered as the seat of our ideas. It has been said that right sentiments are not of importance to our religious conduct being acceptable, or to our future safety. A most dangerous opinion, and truly absurd; for I am necessitated by the law of my nature to have my feelings excited by my apprehensions, and my pursuits by my feelings, &c.; so that wrong sentiments will operate as an error of the press, producing only wrong or false impressions. Pay, then, a most particular attention to the seat of your judgment. The heart, or the seat of your principles, is, if possible, more important to be defended, to have gracious principles perpetually cherished in their operation, sacred reverence of God, holy fear, godly jealousy, &c., &c. In order to this end, we must use the armour provided. See a similar passage in Ephes. vi. 11—18. Here is recommended sobriety, which stands opposed to excess in general, see Luke xxi. 34; and relates to our desires, enjoyments, and pursuits of present good. But faith and love compose a breastplate, or a plate worn by warriors to defend the breast and heart. It may be remarked that in Ephes. vi. 14, the apostle recommends righteousness as the breastplate; but this diversity of expression conveys not any opposition of meaning, for if it respect the imputed righteousness of Christ, it is the object

of faith, and used by faith : and if it be admitted as the evangelical righteousness of the believer in the way of obedience, it flows from faith, which works by love to God, his word, his ways, and his people.

These operate by way of defence against the charges brought by the "accuser of the brethren" against an overwhelming and despairing consciousness of our criminality and unworthiness, against the evil of the world, and the objects which would separate us from communion with Christ and his people.

A helmet also is prepared for the head. In Ephes. vi. the apostle says, "take the helmet of salvation." Here the hope of salvation, because salvation is enjoyed through hope, and it is only through hope of interest in its blessedness that it invigorates or animates the Christian soldier. There are many things which oppose his views of the Redeemer in his sufficiency to save—his freeness, glory, and eternal fulness ; but a hope so much divine supports, and as a helmet not only defends, but inspires with courage ; so a hope founded in the gospel, is like a covering to the head in the day of battle, and inspires the sacred warrior to contend for the faith, the worship, and the glory of Christianity. We should therefore remember, the armour recommended is not carnal but spiritual, not offensive but defensive ; and that as faith, love, and hope constitute such essential parts, they are abiding graces ; graces we are daily and constantly to use till the conflict be ended, victory be obtained, and the

great Captain of our salvation grant us a release from the toils of warfare.

It was with this armour, we trust, our departed friend "fought a good fight." Connected with his experience and desire the text was brought to your notice, and we trust while we are to use it, he has entered upon a day without clouds, and upon a world where armour is no longer necessary. It is not my intention to say much about the deceased, not only because the materials are rather scanty, but because he had a great aversion to funeral panegyric and lengthened harangues on the departed. I will however, notice his being ready to enter upon religious conversation whenever I wished him; also, his humbling sense of what passed within him; and that the Lord Christ was the only object he could rest his soul upon, the only foundation upon whom he could build his everlasting hopes of future felicity. The increase of his afflictions, I hope, was attended with an increase of patience; and though I do not mean to hold him up as a saint of the first eminence, I have no doubt of his safety. It concerns us to avoid whatever we observed defective in his Christian character, and to follow his steps in what was praiseworthy; thus may we use the failings and the excellences of others with improvement, the end we are to aim at in this service. Death is a solemn subject. The departure of Christian friends is affecting to my mind. To look on the right and left, there sat one, from that pew another taken, and they are gone. Where?

Gone beyond the hearing of the minister, beyond the possibility of having their state changed. Whether the minister has been faithful or not, he shall see them no more till they meet at the bar of Christ. Solemn meeting. Oh to meet with joy! But especially does this speaking providence address you, my dear young friends, who were related to the deceased. You have lost a father; not in relation, but in his love, care, and concern for you. Permit me to remind you, he has very often expressed to me a concern for your welfare in both worlds, and your usefulness. He was greatly concerned for you. I am much concerned for your happiness. I trust all present are in a measure. Oh may you feel a suitable concern for your own selves, a concern to adorn the doctrines of the gospel, and to be useful in this world, and happy in another state. Surely you should look to God, and especially from this time. Cry, "My Father, thou shalt be the guide of my youth." May he guide you by the counsel of his word, and by the power of his Spirit, and that even unto death, and then receive you to his eternal glory. We are all interested in the lessons which God teaches. We must remember our mortality, the future world, the importance of faith, love, and hope to fit us for present services and trials, and meeten us for a happy meeting with our departed friends, and the Judge of all, &c.





## SERMON XXIV.

PREACHED AT HENLEY, OXON, AT A MEETING OF  
MINISTERS.

*According to the power that worketh in us.—EPHES. III. 20.*

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SOME of my hearers may need to be informed that I am appointed on this occasion to preach on the efficacy of the gospel.

This is a subject with which we must become acquainted, in order to our eternal safety and felicity. May I not hope to be accompanied by your serious attention? Permit me also to solicit your ardent prayer that I may speak according to the Holy Scriptures, and that what shall be spoken, may be followed with that divine blessing which insures success.

We inquire, Wherein doth the efficacy of the gospel consist?

This question involves two terms, which may require some little explanation; the one is gospel, the other is efficacy.

By the gospel, we mean, the revelation of divine

grace to fallen man, which is manifest in the word of God, and more especially under the New Testament dispensation of religion.

The word of God is often spoken of as the word of his grace ; it displays the unmerited favour of God in sending his Son to seek and save lost sinners of the human race, and recover them to a state of purity, dignity, and bliss. These good tidings of salvation in Christ Jesus were published immediately upon the fall of Adam, and were more fully explained and enlarged under the succeeding dispensations of religion. The gospel was preached unto the Fathers as well as unto us. Heb. iv. 2. David and the prophets saw and felt the divine effects of the gracious word in the enlightening the mind and converting the heart unto God ; but by the personal appearance and ministration of the Messiah himself, and the perfect dispensation he thus introduced, divine grace shone forth in its brightest glory, and its salvation hath been proclaimed unto the ends of the earth.

This system of grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ possesses various constituent parts, distributed into doctrines, institutions, precepts, promises, examples, and prospects. We do not intend to consider these separately, or to detach the one from the other, but to refer to all as parts of the same glorious whole.

The term efficacy is sometimes used in a restricted sense for the effecting some purpose ; but the more obvious and general import is, the

strength, force, energy, or power which attend a thing.

If we apply the remarks we have made to our present subject, we shall be led to this general proposition.

**Doctrine.** The word of divine grace is attended with a peculiar and mighty power or energy.

Shall we ask whether this influence attends the reading of the Scriptures or meditation upon them, or more generally the preaching of the gospel? This is quite immaterial; no one of these means should exclude the others, and the Holy Spirit blesses each of them, that we may more fully be engaged to use them all.

To display the energy of the gospel we are at no loss for materials. Shall I raise up to your view the embattled ranks Christianity has had to encounter and subdue? or, set before you the matchless victories she hath obtained over numerous and combined enemies, who tried every method of attack? Nations, both the learned and the rude, in successive periods of time, have been subdued by her heavenly arms, and the very powers of darkness and of hell tremble at the name of her great Leader. The achievements performed by the gospel were obtained, not by secular power, not by fascinating eloquence, not by the influence of worldly connexions, nor by warlike instruments; it rejected with disdain all carnal weapons, selected some of the most weak instruments. adopted the most sim-

ple methods, and took occasion from those to demonstrate its power to be divine.

Without launching out into these general views of the triumphs of Christianity, I shall confine my thoughts to that seat of its operation specified in the text, as “a power which works in us.” While I disclaim the attempt to mark out accurately its efficacious operations through the progressive stages of Christian experience, I am desirous of throwing some light upon its regenerating and sanctifying grace. I propose to show,

I. That the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is powerful.

II. That saving energy is peculiar to the gospel. Under this head we shall also inquire, whether it should be considered as innate or inherent, or attendant.

After a short discussion of these points, I shall aim at an extensive improvement.

I. That the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is powerful.

“It is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,” Rom. i. 16. “Unto us which are saved it is the power of God,” 1 Cor. i. 18. Have not all the churches been truly addressed, as in 1 Thess. i. 5: “Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power.” Let us enter into some of its scriptural representations, and trace its effects.

Consider the divine representations.

It is a great and divine light. It is a light greater and more marvellous than the moon shining in her brightness, or the great king of day when coming forth with all his dazzling splendour. This light chases away darkness, both the native darkness of the human heart and the clouds which have arisen from prejudice and superstition.

The word of the Lord is also as a fire. Fire is the first power in nature. This sacred fire consumes the corruptions of the mind and flesh, conveys heat to the affections, which were entirely cold towards God and spiritual things, and it kindles an inextinguishable flame of sacred love and devotion which shall arrive at its celestial perfection by union with kindred fires in the world of glory.

As this is the rod of Christ's strength, its effects far surpass the wonderful effects ascribed to the rod of Moses. May not the gospel be called Christ's rod, in allusion to the rod of Moses?

When Moses waved his rod, the influence upon the natural world was vast, but the heart of Pharaoh remained unchanged, his impious pride and cruel rage remained in force, but the rod of Christ sweetly subdues the hearts of his enemies; they willingly bow to his all-conquering sceptre. Shall I say more on scriptural representations? Is it necessary that I speak on the sword of the Spirit as penetrating the conscience and giving a mortal wound to vain confidence and delusive hopes? or, to show how the truths of this gospel are employed as weapons of a holy war to demolish the

strongholds of inward depravity? I will only make one general observation as connected with this part of our subject, and important to be viewed in this connection—that all these representations are according to truth.

Let us now go on to examine some of the effects of the gospel. These are to be seen in numerous instances around us, to be felt and enjoyed within us, and may be reviewed to confirm us in the faith.

As the gospel “works in” the redeemed of the Lord, this fully convinces us that it has made its way to the heart. Thus it makes the tree good that the fruit may be good also. The understanding feels a power which makes it capable of perceiving spiritual objects. Now the soul has new views of the divine law and of sin, of Christ and grace, of time and eternity; it lays open the secrets of the heart, presents to the view what things the man has done and thought. John iv. 29. Have not persons frequently said, “the minister knew my case;” like one who, when she first heard the gospel to make an abiding impression, thought her husband had previously been with the minister laying open her faults of temper and conduct? When the secrets of the heart are thus disclosed, they worship God, and no wonder if such “report that God is in his word and ministers of a truth,” 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

Conscience is awakened and consoled. The gospel rouses to a sense of guilt, and excites painful

remorse, but it also affords relief. When the mind is overwhelmed with despair, it communicates a gracious hope, and thus operates as a sovereign efficacious balm ; it heals broken hearts.

The imagination is purified, the will receives a new bias, and the current of a man's desire is turned, having received Christ as his Lord and Saviour. "Now," he says, "what have I to do any more with idols? get thee hence." He becomes active in dethroning the usurpers of the heart. As before the current of his heart ran strongly toward earthly things, now it is directed toward the things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

The passions which raged with ungovernable fury become regulated in their activity, and directed to their proper objects. In short, the gospel has a power sufficient to preserve from the destructive influence of temporal things, to make even sorrows blest, and cause the bitter waters of affliction to become wholesome and sanative. It is sufficient to ennoble the nature that sin debased, and that which had fallen, fallen, it raises to conquest and a crown.

My brethren, if we have an experimental knowledge of the gospel, we have been roused from our long sleep of stupidity, having heard this voice of the Son of God, we have been quickened to a new life. The vain imaginations we once entertained of our dignity and freedom, and the proud reasonings exalted against Christ and his righteousness, have been brought into captivity to the obedience



of Christ. Was it not the gospel that subdued the rebellion of our nature, and induced us as humble penitents to apply for pardoning mercy? Was it not the gospel that broke the shackles of unbelief and carnality in which we were so long enslaved, and introduced us into a state of freedom indeed? Did not this precious gospel put us into a possession far surpassing the riches of the Indies, or of the whole world? Were we not indebted to this effectual working of the gospel for the graces which are pleasing in the sight of God, by which we are formed for every good word and work in the various relations and stations of life? In a word, it has made us new creatures, created us anew after the image of God, in knowledge and true holiness. The change is therefore visible; more so in some characters than others who were before moral in their conduct.

Behold yonder man! He lived without any apprehension of his danger as a sinner, and was destitute of any conviction of his duty as a moral agent. He lived without God in the world. True, he said his prayers, but his heart was estranged from a spiritual service. Year after year he continued in this state, but lately he heard, he embraced the gospel, and now can no longer remain prayerless; spiritual desires have been excited, and the Lord says of him, "Behold, he prayeth." In that place is another living trophy. Through the restless fire of ambition, he had ascended to a dangerous height, from which he might have been precipitated into

ruin, but he has been conducted safely into the valley, and has chosen a place at the feet of Jesus.

Not far from that man I behold one who was a child of dissipation. The gaieties of life, the sinful amusements of the age, and the circle of the fashionable, wholly occupied his attention, and engrossed his heart. Could you have assured him he had nothing to fear from futurity, he would have desired no other heaven. As to thoughts of God and his soul, they were very, very far from him. He had been often told that under the flowers which strew the path of sensual pleasure, there are pits and snares, and the end of the way is death ; still he disbelieved the solemn declarations, and rejected the warnings as idle tales. Recently, however, the gospel opened his eyes, alarmed his fears, stopped him in his sinful course, and now a convert to Jesus Christ, he lives under his eye, and walks with him in the path of holiness and heaven. Seest thou, also, this happy believer delivered from an agony of grief ? he is no longer the subject of bondage and slavish fear. The mountain of his guilt flowed down, his mind enjoys the soft sabbath of a divine calm. The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keeps his heart, he daily rejoices in an unseen Saviour, and in the firm hope of an inheritance undeserved, undefiled, and unfading. Could a weak system produce such effects ? Could a power less than divine effect such wonders ? This is the supernatural energy of grace. This is the

efficacy of the gospel of the blessed God, and peculiar to it—which leads me to observe,

II. That saving energy is peculiar to the gospel.

Various methods may be tried to renew the soul, and produce newness of life, and fail of effecting these great purposes. Will you try the most regular education? or, call to your aid the light of philosophy? Will you use the best histories extant? or exhibit the most glowing descriptions of virtue and vice collected from our most celebrated poets? Will you furnish the memory with the best ethics from Seneca and others, and add to all these the force of example? Alas! these will be of no avail, if unaccompanied by the power of the gospel. They may indeed operate in a moral way, as many prescriptions do in a natural disease; they keep it from breaking out, but do not destroy its government; they may give a dress to the exterior, but they do not refine and dignify the inner man.

Behold, then, the parent instructing with all tenderness, the historian writing with the utmost impartiality, the logician teaching to reason justly, the profound politician laying down maxims for government, and even the Divine Legislator issuing his mandates from Sinai's flaming eminence. Yet, one thing is lacking; that is, the gracious power of the gospel. This only can dissolve the stony heart, purify and change the mind. Upon this truth is founded the holy triumph of our apostle in 1 Cor. i. 20, 21. "Where is the wise? where is

the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." (See my sermon on those words; see also 1 Thess. i. 6—10.) I have already in a measure entered upon an inquiry we proposed to consider under this head of discourse.

From whence is this efficacy? No preacher can command it although he were endowed with talents of the first rate, invested with the gifts of an apostle, most eminent for his piety, and most assiduous in his endeavours. Were his exertions equally great, his efforts as unvarying, or the methods he used as consummate as those of Paul and Apollos, they were of themselves as nothing.

The efficacy of the gospel appears to be partly a native power. Many attribute too much to the written word, while others ascribe too little, and speak of it as though it had no tendency to impress and awaken. It is certainly powerful as a mean; as an instrument, it is wisely adapted to the end. The warnings are rousing, the doctrines weighty, the expostulations tender and moving, the invitations encouraging, the promises engaging and attractive, the examples and prospects all energetic,—yes, the words are spirit and life; still we are constrained to say, the heart of man must be prepared for the reception of the good seed, the seed of the kingdom of heaven. Hence, the efficacy of

the gospel is eminently derived from the Holy Spirit. To Him is ascribed the increase attending the exertions of ministers, through Him the preaching is made mighty, 2 Cor. x. 4 ; the change produced is likened to a resurrection from the dead only to be effected by omnipotence, Ephes. i. 18 ; this is called the effectual working of his power, Ephes. iii. 7.

All, all the saving effects of this gospel are dependent on the will and power of its Divine Author.

#### IMPROVEMENT.

It has been asserted that application is the life of a sermon. On our subject we may be more than vindicated in attempting an extensive improvement. We will then endeavour,

To rectify a common and dangerous mistake. Not a few have imagined that secular power is necessary to aid the progress of truth. This is to put our hand, as Uzzah did, to the ark of the Lord, as though it required human support. We should remember for this he was not applauded, but smitten with death. All that the civil power should do in reference to religion, is to preserve the right of private judgment, and defend the territory of conscience from invasion ; but in all spiritual matters let every man judge, determine, and act for himself. External force may produce hypocrisy, but cannot conviction. Let the delusions of Mahomet, the usurpations of papacy, and the impositions of antichristian hierarchies, call to their aid the carnal weapons of

worldly force and human terrors ; but the gospel rejects them. It requires no more than simplicity and godly sincerity in the preacher, and the impartial examination of the hearer, while both look up for the divine blessing of the Holy Spirit, and the word shall accomplish the thing whereunto it is sent.

The subject is encouraging both to preachers and hearers of the gospel. Ye ministers of God who do his pleasure, you are not called to instruct men in an uninfluential system, not to preach a dead letter, not to wield weak weapons, “but mighty through God,” &c. These things you have known in yourselves, and these things you realize as important to others. While a sense of this importance awakens your solicitude, (and this solicitude is a great qualification in a minister, and always to be manifested,) here is much to maintain your hope, to invigorate your best expectation, your labour shall not be in vain.

Here is also encouragement for hearers. As sinners, it is true, you are prisoners ; but salvation is still proclaimed, and you are prisoners of hope. While the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is preached unto you, and you attend it, we hope concerning you, that it may prove the power and wisdom of God unto your salvation. You are in the land of hope, you have the object of hope set before you, and the foundation of hope clearly pointed out. “Behold, says the Lord, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner

stone, a sure foundation ; he that believeth shall not make haste." " Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." These great things are again addressed unto you. Who can tell, the Lord may have been waiting to be gracious until this time. This may be the favoured hour to be signalized with mercy and to succeed the address of his servants. Light is conveyed by the entrance of his word. Faith comes by hearing. Oh that he who can speak to the heart, who conveys life and salvation to the soul, who blesses Israel, would command his blessing to descend upon you, " even life for evermore." May he say concerning you from this day, " I will bless you," not merely with the perishable things of this mortal state, but those of his everlasting covenant and kingdom ; but encouraged as we are to make further exertions, we are not without many fears as to the want of abiding good from past labours. Let us then

Inquire, " Who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed ?

Have you understood the gospel ? It doth not operate as a charm, but it enters at the gate of the understanding. I would here remark the importance, therefore, of its being preached clearly, and not to think of addressing the passions till the judgment is informed.

Have you believed the gospel so as really to embrace it ? Unbelief perverts it to sin and death. Or, are you so sensible of the consequence of this as to pray for an enlightened mind, a believing

heart, and a sanctified will and affections, that you may choose and walk in the good way? I do not say these things are conditions to be performed, and to furnish us with a claim, but they are inseparably connected. They are operations of grace which we may term antecedaneous; *i. e.*, going before the enjoyment of divine consolation. We fear the want of these things in many—that they are strangers to these things. May not such be now present who have a name to live while they are dead? who possess the form, but practically deny the power of godliness? of whom we must say with the weeping prophet Jeremiah, (vi. 29,) “the bellows is burnt, the lead is consumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain, for the wicked are not plucked away.” Have you not frequently been told of the things which concern your peace? Yet you refuse instruction. How often and variously have you received, or rather rejected admonitions and warnings? When you had line upon line, when you heard pathetic expostulations and affectionate invitations, when heaven and hell were set before you in the most glowing colours, perhaps the thoughts of your hearts were a little awakened. Like Felix you trembled at the recollection of a future judgment, and a world to come. Because conscience told you that you were not possessed of a scriptural hope of heaven, you then said with Balaam, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his.” Alas! alas! your convictions were like a transient cloud, and



your fears passed away as the early dew. Year after year you have been but “almost persuaded to be a Christian.” True, you give some countenance to the cause of religion, and give your name up to Christ, notwithstanding you neglect his Spirit, and hate his holy government. Alas for you! while you are crying, “Peace, peace,” unto yourselves, you stand exposed to near and sore destruction, which will prove to those who feel it, universal and eternal. Were we, as Christians and ministers, not to feel for you, not to mourn over you, we should have cause to fear for ourselves that we have not his Spirit who was grieved for the hardness of men’s hearts; nor that benevolence and good will with which the gospel invariably inspires every heart under its government. We trust it is this divine spirit and active benevolence which induce us to pity you, to pray for you, and to cry unto you with earnestness in the name of the Lord, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” Knowing the terrors of the Lord, we would persuade you to “flee from the wrath to come;” and by the weighty motives of mercy exhort and urge you to look unto Christ as the only but all-sufficient Saviour, that in him you may be justified and glory. May the Lord give his blessing, then dry bones shall hear and live.

Let us, from this subject, vindicate the Christian in his sacred zeal.

Holy zeal is manifested by a firm adherence to the gospel and triumph in it. Why should the

Christian be ashamed of the gospel ? Is it not the power of God unto salvation ? Why should he be ashamed of the gospel when its aids are so superior to the aids of philosophy ? Why ashamed of the gospel when its saving energy is supernatural and divine ? Why ashamed of the gospel when it brings the best blessings to the subject himself, when it attaches man to man in the best bonds, gives endearments surpassing natural friendship, and excites the liveliest sympathies in the cares, afflictions, and joys of our brethren ? Why ashamed of the gospel when “it erects its trophies on the tomb, takes its votaries where the world leaves them, and fills the breast with living comforts in dying moments ?” Why ashamed of the gospel when it inspires with boldness “amid the war of elements, the crush of worlds,” and before the glories of the eternal throne ? Why ashamed of the gospel when it places crowns of glory and eternal life upon our heads ? Rather, let us endeavour to diffuse it more and more in our native land, among foreign countries, and distant isles. Can we do better ? Can we introduce to them any benefactors like those who have the gospel to impart ? Shall we say of such, they will humanize savages, they will civilize the barbarian, inform the ignorant, and unite the hostile in fraternal bonds ? We may say more ; through the efficacy of that gospel they have to impart, they will Christianize them, they shall no longer continue strangers and foreigners, but be introduced as fellow-citizens with the saints, and as

part of the household of God, as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

Here, here, brethren, is a stimulus to exertion. Where is then our philanthropy? Where our gratitude to God? Here let them be fully exercised. Therefore, my beloved brethren, let us be steadfast, unmovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord.

**FUNERAL ORATION.**



# AN ORATION

DELIVERED

AT THE GRAVE OF MRS. DAVIES, JAN. 18, 1809.

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HAD we been called to attend the funeral of a sinner dying without repentance and faith, our thoughts would have descended still lower than the grave; they would necessarily have been carried down to the pit from whence there is no recovery, to "that place of torment" which admits of no relief. He who does not repent, inevitably perishes. He who believes not in Christ is a stranger to his salvation. Were we at the grave of such a sinner, fear and trembling would take hold upon us, and with horror we might cry out, "how dreadful is this place!"

Blessed be God, on the contrary, we meet at the last home of a true believer—we have come to the funeral of a saint. He who hath said, "Behold, I make all things new," has altered the nature of death and the grave to his redeemed people.

"Death is no more the king of dread,  
Since our Immanuel rose."

Nor is the grave now to be viewed as a prison,

but a chamber of repose where the heavenly traveller rests and sleeps in Jesus. This is not an eternal sleep; it is but for a night, the blessed morning of the resurrection will assuredly succeed. The archangel's trump "with sweet salvation in the sound" will awaken such. Yes—then the dead in Christ will arise with a new and heavenly form possessed of undecaying vigour and eternal beauty; and so shall they meet their Lord, and be ever with him.

These, these are the sure and certain hopes we entertain of our pious friend whose mortal remains we now inter. She was one highly favoured of the Lord; she knew him, or rather was known of him, in early life. The sacred love which drew her heart to God, fixed it also in attachment to his truth, his interests, his people, and his glory. By a life of vital faith in Christ Jesus and communion with him, her religion became like a river both deep and broad; it possessed a depth of genuine experience and a breadth of uniform practice. It was in connection with a growth of faith and holiness, that she highly valued, and conscientiously observed the sacred appointments and ordinances of the Lord.

This gave an attractive influence to her closet. This made the religion of the family truly pleasant to her. This made the sabbath of the Lord and his worship her delight. Without enlarging, permit me to say, the gracious presence of her God was the object of her supreme desire. The gracious presence of her God was her support and her theme

unto the last. The glorious presence of her God is her blissful, her eternal portion.

On her account we have cause for joy and praise. We may mourn for ourselves. Those who knew her cannot wonder that the poor regret her removal, that her pious friends feel their loss, and that her surviving partner grieves. Let us, however, meditate upon those truths which properly regarded, may preserve us from immoderate sorrow. Should I suggest any thing which may contribute to comfort one who has been the honoured instrument of comforting many of the Lord's people, I shall be amply rewarded.

Let us, then, remember that this event was necessary. It was of necessity that she passed through Jordan to possess the Canaan which she loved. It was of necessity that she put off her earthly habiliments in order to put on the robes of glory. It was of necessity that she should conflict with the last enemy, that her victory might be complete.

In connexion with the necessity, let us also remember the mercy, the peculiar mercy afforded unto her. That the adversary, that "roaring lion" was so checked that he could not terrify her, was no small mercy. That her inward man was renewed day by day, while the outward was day by day perishing, was great mercy. To be kept in perfect peace of mind, and thus enabled to bear an honourable testimony to the power, grace, and faithfulness of Christ as she did, to see beyond the dark valley the path of life and angelic conductors

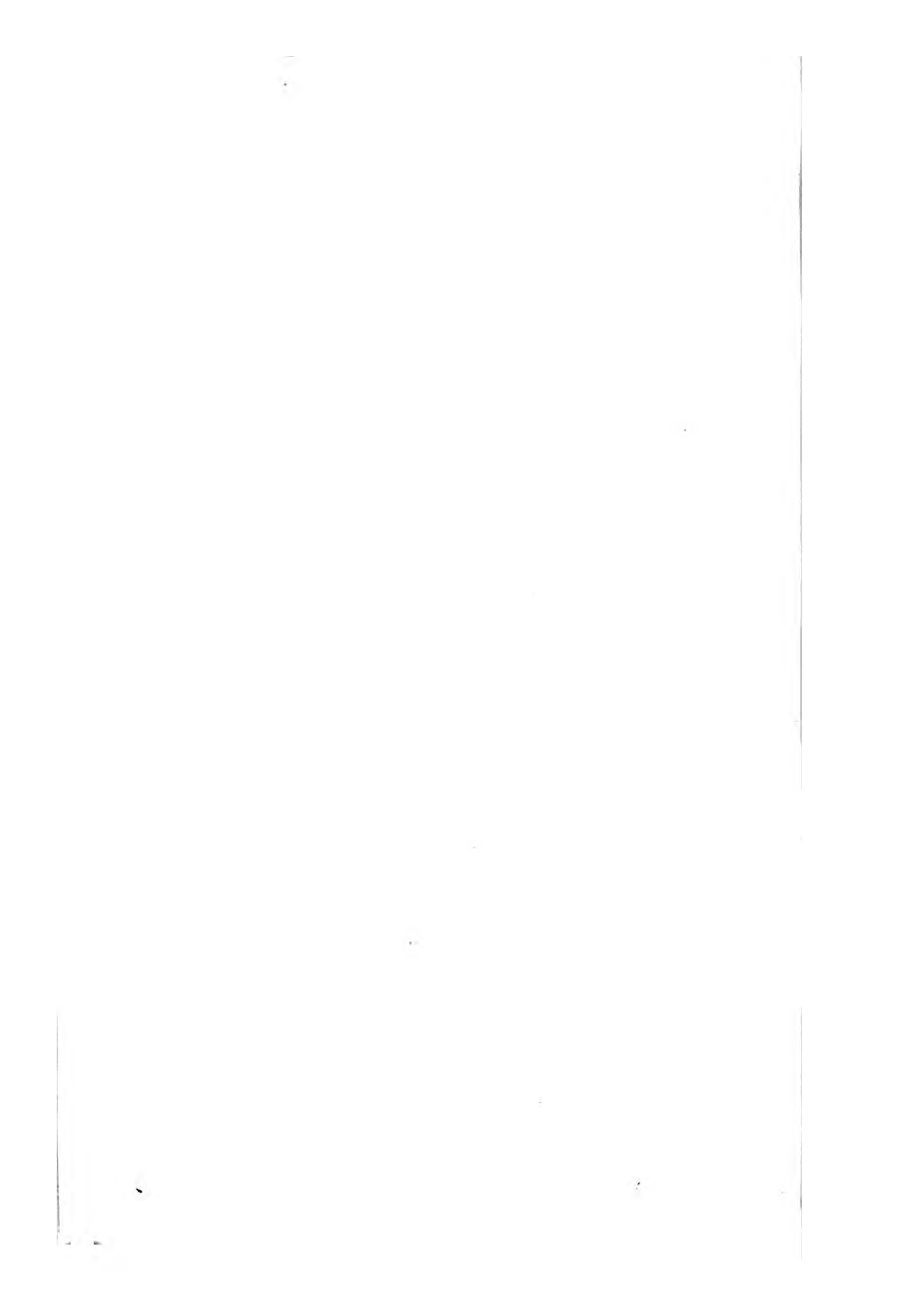


beyond the dark valley, were mercies afforded to her, but withheld from many of God's dear children.

Let us also remember her eternal gain. How great the deliverance she has obtained! What a vast accession to her knowledge! what perfection of purity! how consummate her joy! what glory to crown the whole! An exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Wherefore, comfort yourselves and one another with these things.

We should not leave this solemn place without a solemn inquiry—What prospects open to myself? what prospects for eternity? This is inseparable from personal state and character. What will it avail me to have a fair prospect for this world, but all darkness and gloom for the future? Have you been convinced of sin and melted in contrition? Have you fled as for your life to Christ? Are you born of the Spirit from above? Are you a follower of the Lamb? Do you show forth his praise?

**PASTORAL LETTER.**



# A PASTORAL LETTER

PREPARED

BY REV. A. DOUGLAS,

AND

ADOPTED AND CIRCULATED BY THE ASSOCIATED MINISTERS

OF THE

*Congregational Churches in Berkshire.*

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DEAR BRETHREN,

ON being appointed to address you in a short Circular Letter, we were induced to think on the nature of your union, and the end proposed to be answered. As these are exclusively religious, we are led to infer that our proper subject is true religion.

If we admit that human existence involves great interests, that the pious character possesses real excellence, that the design of the Christian ministry is highly valuable, and that the express declarations of Holy Scripture are full of truth, then religion is obviously very important; it is indeed the "one thing needful," eminently the "good part." Is it not, therefore, the imperative duty of every one, to inquire into it? Ought we not to proceed in such an inquiry with a devout spirit? Surely the manner of our investigations should correspond with

the nature of the subject we examine ; that which has the highest claim, should have our best attention. In such a state of mind, you will not be offended, because you find not in this paper, either the charms of novelty, nor the beauties of literary composition ; nothing more is proposed than a few plain remarks, calculated to excite your regard or increase your attachment to real godliness.

The religion of our Lord Jesus Christ is the only true religion ; this we consider it to be as opposed to Paganism and Mahometanism, and as distinguishing it from what is termed Natural Religion, and from Judaism. We will not now occupy your time and attention by arguments for the truth of Christianity, and to show that the religions of the Heathen and Mahometans are false ; this is unnecessary—you have full satisfaction on these points, but we will offer an observation or two on Natural Religion and Judaism.

By the “ Religion of Nature ” we would be understood to mean whatsoever is discoverable of God and duty by the light of nature unaided by divine revelation. Let this be rightly explained, and kept in its proper place, as adapted to man in a state of innocency—his original state ; and we can have no interest in depreciating it, nor do we subject ourselves to the charge of doing so, because we unequivocally assert that it is altogether insufficient to recover a sinner from his state of defilement, guilt, and misery. As it does not proceed on the supposition of depravity and weakness, of demerit and

condemnation, the awful circumstances in which we all are before God—so in vain shall any expect to find in it relief and deliverance. No, it is peculiar to Revealed Religion, to make known this gracious provision,—“the wisdom which comes from above,” conducts us to “a Saviour, and a great one,” able to deliver us, to supply us, and to bless us with eternal life.

The religion of our Lord Jesus Christ in the gospel is also to be distinguished from Judaism. While that dispensation of religion was in force, Christ was its substance and glory; we would not detract from the worth and utility it once possessed. The Jewish economy was plainly typical and imperfect, subordinate and transitory, “which glory was to be done away;” it has been fulfilled and superseded by a better dispensation, which is to remain. Therefore, the Jew who retains it, to the rejection of Christianity, gives awful proof that a veil is on his heart, nor will it be removed until he shall turn to the Lord. To give some method to the observations we are now about to submit to you, we will take a cursory view of religion,

As a divine system of truth and grace.

As a vital, governing, permanent influence.

As a practical course.

When we state that Christianity is a system, we are not disposed to maintain that every thing it proposes is in a systematic form, still there is a regular connexion of its parts; and as a whole, it exhibits order and perfection. It is so perfect that no part

is unnecessary, consequently, no part is to be neglected ; nor does it admit of improvement, therefore nothing is to be added. Let the improvements of human wisdom be afforded to systems of natural science, there they may be of great value ; but let them not be placed as appendages to our holy religion, here they would bear the marks of pride and folly. “ The gospel ” itself, “ is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth ; ” and the “ holy scriptures are given by inspiration of God that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Genuine Christianity is not the effect of human invention, nor is it of human authority ; but was “ given by the revelation of Jesus Christ ; ” it is every way worthy of its author. What are its purity and truth, its wisdom and grace, but the visible impress of divinity ? Who that has been enriched with the benefits it imparts in this present state, or cheered with the delightful prospects it opens into a future world, can fail to bind it for ever to his heart ? It is your privilege, brethren, to have the standard of evangelical sentiments in your own possession ; will you not highly appreciate it ? Surely it is your wisdom and interest to cultivate a good acquaintance with the book of God.

Yours also is the right of private judgment, you are to exercise it as your inalienable privilege ; to guard against the perversion of Scripture, and impositions on the judgment, is highly necessary ; in order to this, we by no means deem it inexpedient,

to caution you against those persons who on the one hand oppose the peculiar doctrines of this divine system, and those on the other hand, who set light by the peculiar character it is intended to form.

Do not such militate against the instructions and image of Christ? Shall we wonder at this opposition? Will it not be easily accounted for from a knowledge of the human heart, the spirit and course of the world, and the enmity of hell? When the very limited comprehension of reason is placed as the boundary of what God is to reveal, and its illusory decisions are employed to invalidate the claims of a divine testimony, we are prepared to expect that the doctrines of the Trinity, the deity of Christ, his miraculous conception, his expiatory death, together with the operations of the Holy Spirit in renewing and sanctifying the mind of man, will be rejected and calumniated; nor are those persons more favourable to religion who retain those doctrines in their creed, while their hearts are set on the pleasures of sin. If, therefore, you be assailed with "the oppositions of science falsely so called," with the sophistry of men of corrupt minds, with temptations to indulge a candour at the expense of truth, or a liberty destitute of purity—"beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness," lest you become lax in your religious sentiments or governing principles; rather give all diligence in reading and meditation, in simplicity of intention,



and fervent prayer, to "hold fast the form of sound words," and to keep a good conscience; also, to exhibit the word of life in its proper effects to all around you. "Buy the truth" at any rate, "sell it not" for any consideration. "Contend earnestly," not bitterly, "for the faith once delivered to the saints."

It is not to be supposed by these remarks that Christians will see eye to eye, or arrive at a perfect uniformity of sentiment on minor points; this diversity of opinions is owing to their different capacities, opportunities of improvement, degrees of application, influence of associates, and the divine blessing, which gives greater or less success to our endeavours; but as this variety in non-essentials does not affect the safety of the parties, it should not prevent the unity of the Spirit. Does not the blessed Spirit use these as arguments for mutual forbearance, and motives of kindness one toward another? Let these be exercised among all who "hold the Head," Christ. Let us cultivate the spirit which breathes, "Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity;" and then, the acrimony of a party spirit, and the unhallowed fire of angry disputants, will be consigned to unqualified reprobation.

The view we have taken of religion is, as the "good seed of the kingdom:" this may be scattered by conversation, by the distribution of pious publications, by diffusing the Holy Scriptures, and especially, through the ordinance of preaching: for

this end, the Christian ministry was instituted of God, who has engaged to perpetuate and bless it to the end of the world. When any of those means is rendered effectual, then religion is like seed sown in prepared ground. We are led hence to view it,

As a vital, governing, permanent influence.

The true Christian is "born again," "born from above," "born of the Spirit," "begotten again by the word of truth," made to possess a hidden life by a quickening Spirit; he has become "a new creature," and "lives by faith on the Son of God." Are not these scriptural representations? Are they not familiar to you? Under the description of this part as a vital influence are comprehended the activity or energy of its nature, the feeling it imparts, the diffusion and progress which attend it; this takes in the "faith which purifies the heart," the "lively hope," which excites the possessor "to purify himself even as God is pure," the love to which labour is assigned, the zeal which carries us forward in exertion, and the ardent gratitude which rises to heaven with offerings of praise. All these are seated in the renewed mind, there they dwell and produce the impression and feeling which constitute what is, strictly speaking, Christian experience. As the invisible principle of vitality spreads itself through the whole body, so the secret life of God in the soul of man diffuses itself through every mental faculty; or in other words, so "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts;" there is an influence which moves every spring, and extends to

every power. Hence it is that the believer obtains an ascendancy over the power of sin and temptation ; hence it is that he feels a holy fear of offending God, of sorrow that he has done so, and of joy as his hope of pardon and acceptance prevails. These inward principles are not at all times equally vigorous ; the springs of life may be low, the energies of the new man may suffer a declension, or they may be so invigorated as to manifest an “ increase with the increase of God.”

The spiritual growth, brethren, is highly desirable ; and in order to it, a gracious supply is provided, and channels are opened in the private means of grace, and in the public ordinances ; it is your duty, who are favoured with these, to attend on them—on all of them, and that with conscientious and unremitting diligence. It may be proper, lest any should confound the spiritual exercises we have referred to, with merely natural convictions, with transient emotions and perishable impressions ; and so conclude that those who are now the children of God may hereafter become the children of the wicked one and draw back unto perdition, to state further that this vital governing influence, is also abiding or permanent. Shall “ the workmanship of God in creating us anew in Christ Jesus unto good works ” terminate in the flesh ? Is not the truth in believers an incorruptible seed ? Will not he “ who has begun a good work in us perform it until the day of Christ ? ” What say the Scriptures ? Harken to them, my beloved brethren ;

“The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” “The water that I will give,” saith Christ, “shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.” “What shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us; for I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

“Let every man look diligently, lest he fail of the grace of God,” although he know that his deficiency will appear when placed in the balance of the sanctuary; still by no means let him decline the touchstone, that he may ascertain the genuineness of his inward religion. What art thou, O reader! if destitute of this? “Knowest thou not that Christ is in thee, except thou art reprobate,” *i. e.* disapproved? Such we must be, if Christians only in name, form, and profession; making a fair show, as a finished portrait devoid of life. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;” if none of his, it cannot be difficult to determine to whom such must belong; and continuing in that state, what will be his end? “But, beloved, we hope better things of you, and things which accompany

salvation,"—among which, we necessarily include holy fruits; these will demonstrate both the reality and excellence of your principles. We proceed, therefore, to our next view of religion

As a practical course.

Should any one in a course of iniquity, imagine himself to be in a state of safety, he is in lamentable darkness; if in addition to this, he attempts to vindicate his neglect of duty, by fallacious reasonings on grace and liberty, he is a sinner from system, as well as by nature and habit, and cannot be far from fearful destruction, being under the most awful delusion. The mere idea of this shocks the child of light. "Shall we sin because grace abounds? God forbid! how shall we who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Grace in the experience, will always secure personal goodness in the conduct. "The grace of God which brings salvation, teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the law, but under grace."

Obedience is both the effect and evidence of our love to God, of our union with Christ, and of "the faith which has for its end the salvation of the soul."

Obedience includes all that is amiable in the family, praiseworthy in the church of God, and useful in society at large. It embraces "whatsoever

things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report :”—in the exemplification of these, the Christian “lets his light shine before men,” “puts to silence the ignorance of foolish men,” glorifies his heavenly Father, and is read and acknowledged by others as an open “epistle of Christ.” In this way you may hope to attract and win some who are now averse to hear the word, or to attend the assembly for public worship. “This we pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”

If what is here submitted be a faithful summary of true religion, it will serve as a test to ourselves, whether we really possess it; and whether our actions be religious or not in their rise, nature, and end. Whether we rank among the friends or enemies of “God our Saviour.” Those who are not for Christ are against him—there are no neutrals.

This address may meet the hand of some irreligious person; of one who is without serious thought of his mortality, the value of his soul or the eternity to which he is every moment making an advance, a thoughtless sinner; of one who lives without supplication to heaven, a prayerless soul;

of one who lives "without God in the world," a practical atheist; of one who thinks he may be happy after death, but places not his hope in Christ,—a foolish man building on the sand. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, consider thy ways," "it may be they will yet consider;" consideration may lead to inquiry, What shall I do? To which we would reply, You can do nothing in the way of merit, nor any thing truly spiritual and efficient, without the aid of our Lord Jesus Christ; that aid, however, may be expected in the use of means, such as you can and ought to use. Read and examine the Scriptures. "Search the Scriptures." If they be neglected, you cannot expect to know who the Saviour is, nor how he saves sinners, "for they testify of him," they contain the "record which God hath given of his Son." Further, hear the Gospel preached: by this method Christ "opens the eyes of men, turns them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith that is in him." The preaching which shows you most plainly your state and condition as a sinner, which exalts Christ as a Saviour and Sovereign, and the Holy Spirit as a sanctifier, is, doubtless, most like that of the apostles, receives a blessing from heaven, and should be attended upon by you; moreover, daily bow your knees at the throne of God, and "pray God if perhaps the thoughts of thine heart," and the evil of thy life, "may be for-

given thee." You should also flee as for your life from the society of the ungodly. "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not; he that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

Oh ye who love the Lord, "be zealous" to present a favourable edition of Christianity embodied and animated in your own lives. Manifest from day to day that you are on "the Lord's side." Show your attachment to "pure religion," undefiled with debasing mixtures. A pious author has observed, "More danger is to be apprehended to individuals and churches from false religion, than from open irreligion." Endeavour to promote it in every way that may open to you. Much has already been done, but there remains yet more to do. Christianity has done great things in the civil and moral state of nations, but its conquests are to be universal. The British empire has witnessed its triumph, here it has thrown down the altars once erected to heathen idols, here it struck the dragon of Popery with a deadly blow, here it has united the best men of all religious denominations to form and pursue the most God-like designs; still there is much to do. While, therefore, we have among us schools for the instruction of all, societies for bestowing Bibles on all at home and abroad, and others for sending missionaries to enlighten the nations; and these are so formed, that the most tender conscience may not meet with any thing to offend it; let every one be up and

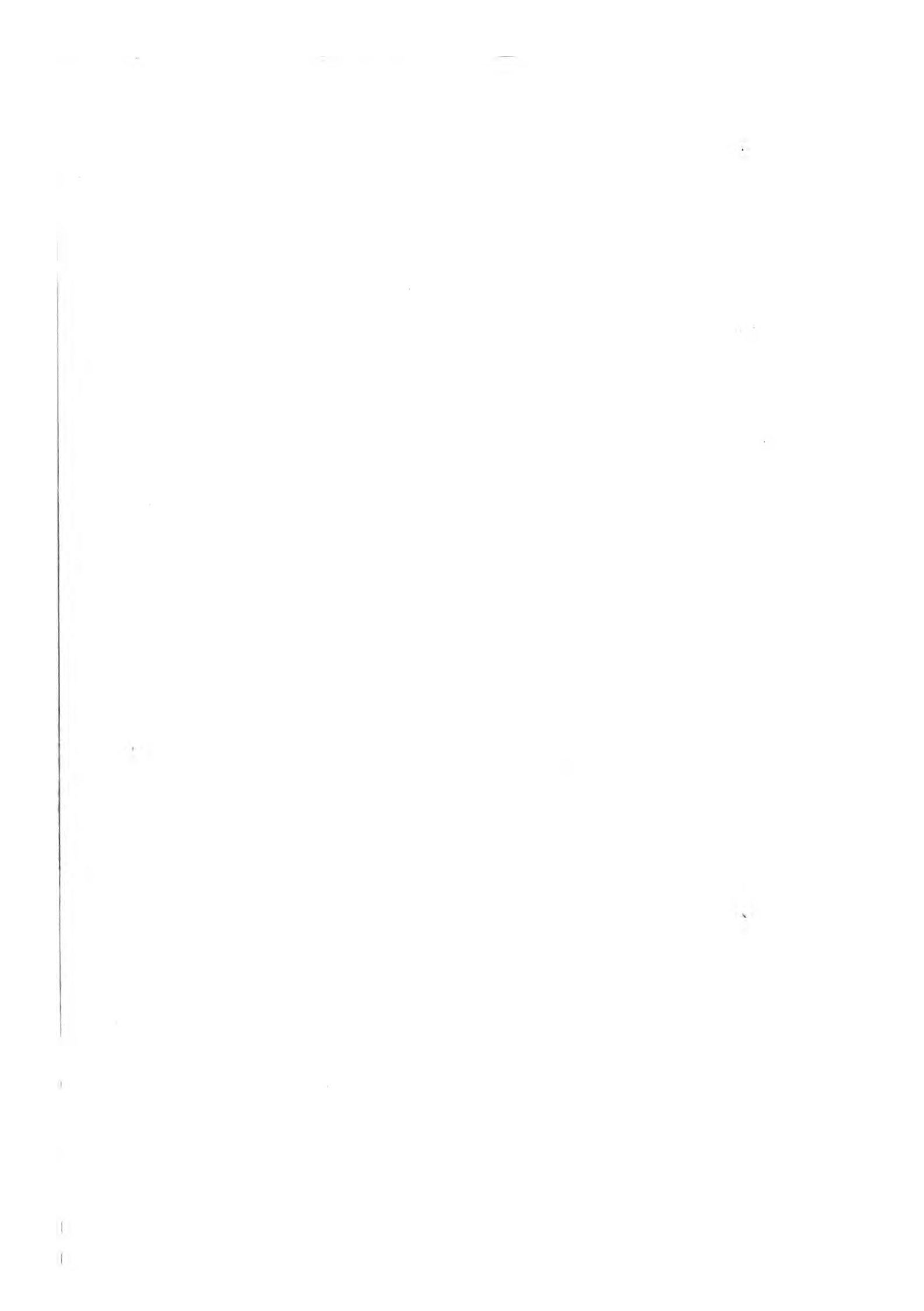


doing, and the Lord his God be with him. Let no one retire wrapped up in the garb of selfish indolence, or yield himself to the paralyzing effect of a party spirit: rather, may all hearts be united in the grateful acclamation, "Hosanna to Him who cometh in the name of the Lord;" Hosanna to the Son of David,"—and may every hand be put to the Gospel as the car of glory, in which he is going forth to take possession of the world as his own.

THE END.











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