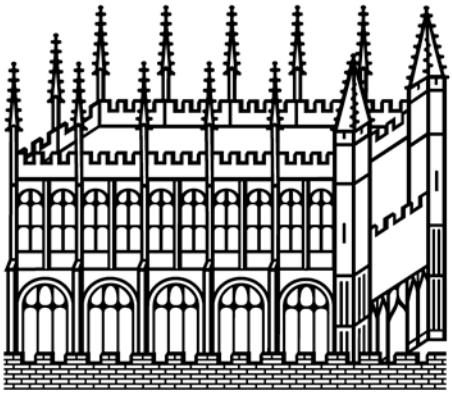

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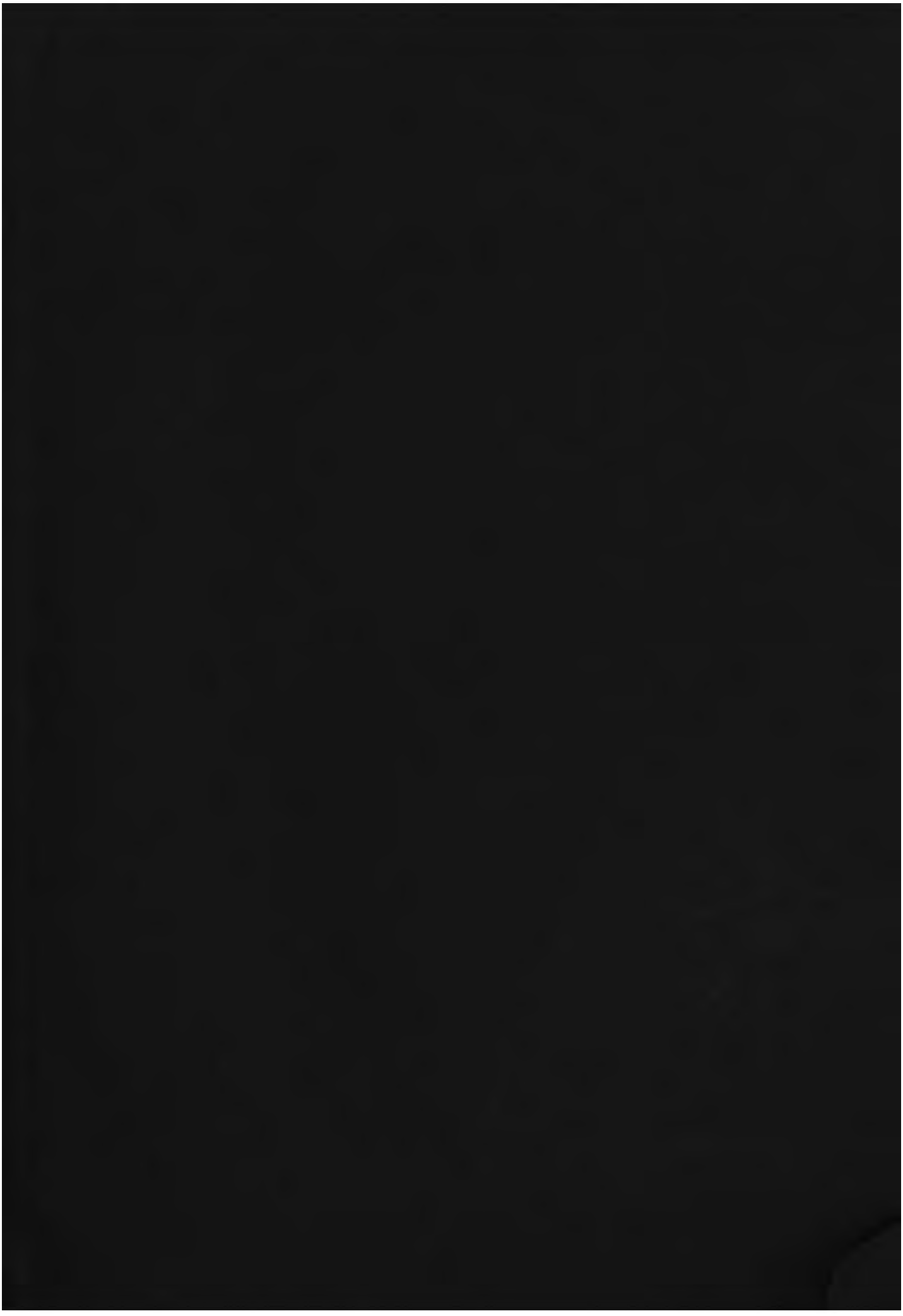
CHALMERS'
SELECT
SERMONS



SELECT

SERMONS

BY

THOMAS CHALMERS,

D.D. LL.D.

EDINBURGH:

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THE RIGHTEOUS MAN TAKEN AWAY FROM THE EVIL TO COME.

ISAIAH LVII. 1.

"*The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.*"

THE intelligent Christian has often occasion to remark, that God's ways are not as man's ways, nor His thoughts as man's thoughts. This holds true in a vast variety of respects—it holds especially true in connection with the removal of the righteous from this scene of things by the hand of death. If the affairs of the Church or the world were intrusted to the management of man, he would protract the life of the faithful to the extremest limit of human existence, and while life was prolonged he would take care that the mind should retain all its vigour, and that the experience and public usefulness should ever enlarge. Widely different oftentimes is the Divine method of procedure. While the useless and positively injurious are

frequently spared for many years, and that only to become worse and worse, the faithful are often cut down in early days; so it was with John the Baptist and the illustrious Messiah, of whom he was the forerunner. Nor is this all; the servants of God are unexpectedly taken away, not when enfeebled in gifts, or graces, or influence, but when their powers are most matured, their minds most thoroughly disciplined for future service; it may be, when from successfully weathering trials and temptations, they are in more favourable circumstances than before, for exerting a propitious influence upon society at large.

What is the reason of this singular arrangement of events—an arrangement entirely at variance with that which would naturally have been expected? In so far as the righteous are concerned, doubtless the chief part of the explanation is to be found in the fact, that their work is complete, that the Lord of the vineyard does not mean to accomplish anything more by their instrumentality, though they were to live to the age of Methusaleh, and that He will not withhold them from their heavenly reward. But there are additional, though subordinate reasons, and one of these is intimated in the words of the prophet, "the righteous (man) is taken away from the evil to come." God sometimes—we do not say always—for whether good or evil be treasured up in the future, the faithful *must*, sooner or later, die as well as the unfaithful—but not unfrequently the Lord so arranges the time of departure, that the removal is the means of preserving them from varied evils—from the experience of evil in themselves—such as spiritual degeneracy, or outward disaster—from the sight of evil

in others—the moral fall of relatives and friends—the decay of the Church with which they are connected—national calamity and overthrow. Under the last head we might comprehend such a case as that of Josiah, spared by an early removal the pain of witnessing the Babylonish captivity and oppression of his nation—a calamity which all his reformations, coming too late, were inadequate to prevent.

But we need not appeal to an individual instance. The inspired statement of the prophet is plain. Moreover, it is evidently intended to describe a *common* arrangement of Divine providence. Nay, its lesson is so obvious and impressive, that men in general are condemned for not laying it to heart, and for refusing to consider it. It is part of the Lord's promise and procedure to keep his people from *all* evil. Unseen by them, He preserves and delivers from a thousand dangers from day to day; and when He sees that more good is to be accomplished by the removal than the continuance of the believer in this world, and especially that he is thereby to be spared the pain of serious evil, it falls under the head of the general promise of preserving care to take him away—it may be suddenly and unexpectedly. We often meet with occurrences in families—the unfaithfulness, for instance, of children—over which we are led to exclaim, "How kind was that arrangement of Providence, in virtue of which the pious father and mother were taken away before the dissipated career or the dishonourable bankruptcy of the favourite son had appeared! From how much pain were they thus mercifully spared!" The particular event alluded to by the prophet seems to have been the cutting off of the faithful, by the hand

of persecuting violence, in the days of the wicked Manasseh. That was an age of many martyrs. But so sunk and insensible were the great majority of the nation, that they looked tamely on, and refused to mark God's hand, and to draw the appropriate lesson. They ought to have been aroused. The removal of the righteous was in itself a serious loss to survivors, and it intimated the probability of more serious times awaiting them in the future. But they set at nought the warning. Justly, then, might it be said, "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men (or men of kindness and godliness) are taken away; none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come."

How condescending the love, wisdom, and power of the Lord, that He not only saves his people from all evil in the world to come, but spares them the worst calamities in the brief passage of time—where needful, so arranging the circumstances, even of their earthly departure, as to prove their defence against coming evil in time, as well as their introduction to boundless good in the eternity which is to follow. How worthy is this of the parental character of God and of his providential grace!

I need scarcely remark, that I have been led to select the present theme, and indulge in these reflections, influenced by the mournful event of the past week. This day se'ennight a master in Israel, an eminent servant of God, reverenced and loved by all who knew him, and always the more the larger the personal acquaintance, was as well, in point of bodily health, apparently, as any of us, and more likely than some, to see increase of days and usefulness. This day week he was engaged, as we

are now, in the public worship of God. During the brief lapse, however, of less than seven days, he has died and been buried. One week he returned to his much loved home, after a temporary absence; next week he was carried to his long home. He has already been two days in his grave; and an entire Church, besides many in other Churches, is on this Lord's day wrapt in mourning on his account. Though, blessed be God, he has not been cut off, like the faithful in the days of Manasseh, by the sword of persecution, yet much of the prophet's declaration, in regard to the faithful of his time, is not less applicable to the case before us. The friend of whom I speak was, in the Scripture sense of the terms, pre-eminently a righteous man, and a merciful man; righteous in the righteousness of Another—hence sanctified and beneficent in character. He was "taken away," as the original intimates, by a sudden and unexpected death; and though there is no reason as yet to complain of heedlessness and insensibility in connection with the event; though, on the contrary, the best men of a nation, through all its classes, are deeply moved, and seem to be vieing for an opportunity of testifying their sympathy and admiration, yet there can be little question that a vast body who ought to be affected will not be moved, and that even of those who deplore the loss, many will not perceive, judging from the general aspect of things, that the removal should be interpreted as a probable signal of evil in the future, and, therefore, furnishing a solemn warning to all. Anxious to offer a humble tribute to the memory of departed worth and greatness, and at the same time combine practical instruction which may

be useful to survivors, I propose, depending on the Spirit of God to hallow the exercise, to devote this afternoon to the brief contemplation of the CHARACTER, SERVICES, AND DEATH OF DR. CHALMERS, and the LESSONS WHICH THESE SUGGEST.

If any are disposed to ask why I occupy so much of the time allotted for public worship and the exposition of the truths of God's Word to a particular case and passing event, I would remind them, that it is very rarely I indulge in such digressions—that the occasion is an extraordinary one, which cannot be expected to occur again in our time; that I stand in a special relationship to the honoured dead, the relationship of a pupil to a preceptor; that his services to the cause of evangelical religion generally, and of the Free Church of Scotland in particular, were altogether pre-eminent and peerless; that we dwell in Glasgow, a city which early shared in the benefits of his new-born spiritual powers, and for the welfare of which he cherished the warmest affection to his latest hour. I may add, that I feel my own existence and life-time as a minister so identified with his career, that I would be doing violence to my feelings were I to be silent, or even to content myself with a passing acknowledgment, on such an occasion. I am persuaded, too, that such are the sentiments of reverence, admiration, and love, universally borne by you, in common with all the congregations of our Church, to the memory of Dr. Chalmers, that I am in greater danger of erring by brevity than by fullness. Is it necessary further to say that, in anything which may be suggested, I desire to aim at your practical improvement, and only to draw

those lessons from God's providence, which are grounded on the instructions of his Word, and which are not unsuited to the solemnities of his day? I am sure that it is in no spirit of idle creature worship that I have addressed myself to the present sad duty. I trust it is the glory of the sovereign grace of God which I desire mainly to honour. While the righteous man is commended where affectionate admiration is due—and this is no more than what the Word of God sanctions; indeed that Word is peculiarly kind in speaking of the faithful after they are gone, even though it has marked shortcomings in their lifetime—still, I hope that the source of all the gifts and graces which we admire, even the free mercy of the Righteous One, will ever draw our first and special regard.

It is, happily, not necessary to refer at any length to the CHARACTER of the noble man, whose loss has come upon us as a stunning blow, an event at present impossible to realize. There are some able men, on whose character no small mystery rests. It is difficult to understand or explain them, and the difficulty is increased by the reserve in which they wrap themselves, or the retired obscurity in which they pass their days. It was far otherwise with our departed friend; it may require a mind somewhat akin to his own to be able fully to appreciate, and, much more, adequately describe his high qualities—the relation in which they stood to each other, and their mutual influence and bearing; but the more prominent features were within the observation of all, and were *felt* by all.

It was one of the charms of his character that, naturally, and still more by the renewing grace of God, it

was thoroughly open almost to a fault, full of kindness and generosity, condescending to all, rendering the man known and familiar to all—high and low—young and old alike. Hence the deep feeling, even of the humblest, that by his death they have lost a friend. There was no distance—no reserve—no jealousy of others—no selfish self-seeking. Simplicity, frankness, cordiality, cheerfulness, even innocent playfulness, shone forth conspicuously in his whole air and deportment. Unspoiled by an adulation, not of a passing popularity, but of thirty to forty years' duration—an adulation which would have upset most minds, and before which strong men have fallen, he remained humble throughout, stooping to the most common offices and attentions, of every-day life, and ever honouring modest retiring worth with his warmest homage. None but the bitterest and most malignant enemies, who judge of others by themselves, could attribute aught to him but what was entirely sincere, honest, and benevolent in aim. And in point of fact, in all the many controversies in which he was engaged, few, if any, ever whispered a suspicion of his integrity or disinterestedness.

This transparency of character renders it less needful to attempt to explain or commend it. The character speaks for itself. It shines forth in its own light. Indeed, none could fail to mark the leading features; and those who were brought into contact could not but *feel* how great and good—how powerful in intellect, yet how humble in spirit, was the man with whom they conversed. Moreover, when it is remembered that our venerable father lived, not in retirement, but in public, before the eye of the world, for five and thirty years

together; that he passed through and bore a leading part in serious successive controversies, well fitted to try and manifest the character of men; and that he maintained his consistency in all; it is not wonderful that he should not only be well known, but universally revered; and that, besides the friends of true religion, not a few should feel that, in losing him, society and the country have sustained a heavy calamity.

In looking back over the history of the Christian Church, and thinking of the great men who have from time to time appeared upon its stage, I cannot recall any man of precisely the same combination of qualities. We may find men as distinguished, or more distinguished for certain properties, natural or acquired — more distinguished for learning, strictly so called, whether classical or theological—for severe reasoning—for ready powers of discussion and debate—for accurate taste—in some respects for eloquence—even for influence over others. I refer, in the last particular, to Luther and Calvin, as in popular power to George Whitefield—not that our departed friend was deficient in these or kindred respects; far from it; but less noted than some. Where, however, shall we find a case in which so much original genius —high and almost universal scientific acquirements— surpassing powers of illustration — peculiar and overpowering eloquence—vast energy of character— enthusiasm communicating itself to all around —sagacity— humour — influence over masses of intelligent men— blended in one individual? Where shall we find a case in which all these rare elements combined with the loftiest Christian principle and devotedness, and the exercise of the most humble, gentle, cheerful Christian

virtues? Among prominent Christian men of modern days, the names which most readily occur to recollection, in connection with the character of Chalmers, are perhaps those of the celebrated Robert Hall and William Wilberforce. They were noble men, and honoured to render noble services in their respective departments; but though in some points, it may be, equal to their Scottish brother, it is no disparagement to say, that in point of real genius, universal science, force of character, and influence on the age of posterity, they fell far short of him.

Opposites seemed to unite in the character of our departed friend and father. He was noted for the most brilliant fancy, and yet he was thoroughly and minutely practical; so much so, that if one were in a real difficulty, which required the aid of a plain and sound judgment, there was no one to whom we could more safely and successfully have repaired for counsel than to the man whose imagination teemed with the spirit and images of poetry. His acquirements, as well as tastes, were varied and diversified; and yet he was distinguished for the most indomitable perseverance; labouring, for instance, for the good—social and eternal—of the common people, as he used to express it, to the very end, with an ardour which no disappointment nor vexation could cool, as if his attainments were limited to one order of things, from which he could not deviate.

While I thus speak with admiring affection of a venerable and much-loved preceptor, I ascribe to him no perfection of excellence. He would have been the first himself to condemn creature worship. No man was more wounded than he with the praises of others. I am not

insensible to the defects of his character. With all his strength he had his weak points and his shortcomings as well as inferior men—but he was wonderfully, or rather entirely free, from all that was offensive in these—and the chief errors and defects of his character may be said to have originated in the generosity of his nature, and the originality and power of his genius. Out of the first sprung his too favourable judgment of others, especially if they accorded with his own views; out of the second sprung the tenacity with which he held by the views, which had originally presented themselves to his own mind; resisting modification from the arguments and reasonings of others—at the same time, his generosity, in yielding points for the sake of harmony, is well known. To the force of his genius, too, must be ascribed what some will perhaps reckon a defect—the possessed state of his mind—so that, when under the influence of one view, he gave no rest to those around him till they partook of the same sentiment; a sense of duty might have its influence in the matter, as he was often heard to remark, that if he had ever done any good in the world, it was by *Iteration.*

But these are small defects at the most, and they seem smaller now—I have no doubt that his fame, instead of proving, like that of merely brilliant men, evanescent, will grow and extend with years. He had one of the peculiarities of a great mind—he was far ahead of the age. When the age, under the influence of living Christianity, is brought up to the standard which the infallible word of prophecy predicts, the world will be in better circumstances to appreciate the genius and works of our illustrious countryman. He seems to have had a presenti-

ment of this himself—he died in the confidence, that principles which are now disesteemed would be valued and honoured "long after," to use his own pictorial expression, "he had himself mouldered to dust in his coffin."

Such being a few lines in the character of Dr. Chalmers—a character so high—so rare—so loveable—it is not matter of surprise that his fame was not confined to his much-loved Scotland—to Britain—to Europe—to the United States of America—that it was a world's fame. He was honoured with a place in the membership of the French Institute, one of the highest scientific distinctions which can be conferred. Though a humble Presbyterian minister, he was spontaneously invited by leading men of England, of another communion, to write one of the works in the series of Bridgewater Treatises, on the Being and Perfections of God, as at once best fitted to do justice to the theme, and confer honour on the bequest. At a later day he was invited by similar parties to deliver a course of lectures in the metropolis, on the principle of Church Establishments—a duty which he fulfilled to the admiration of his auditors, consisting of some of the first men of the nation, and, it is understood, to the altered convictions of not a few; and all this he accomplished, without the smallest sacrifice of any principle which he had professed before or subsequently, yea, in consistency with the full maintenance of all. Many of his works were translated into foreign languages; while his name was welcomed, as a household word, in the most remote parts of the American continent. Intelligent travellers have assured us, that he was the great subject of inquiry in foreign lands. It is certain that none mourn his loss

more profoundly than the able and devoted Christian men of the continent of Europe.

Labouring with simplicity and singleness of heart for God's glory in the good of souls, he was not, like some, chary of his fame as an author. He published nearly thirty volumes in his lifetime; while his writings, like those of the great Luther—to whom, in not a few points of intellectual and moral character, as well as outward appearance, he bore a strong likeness—were incessant, and, when put together, must be immense. His correspondence was most extensive. Many possess memorials of his goodness, as well as greatness, in the records of his pen, which they will now preserve more affectionately than ever. And there is reason to believe that, largely as he has already written and published, important additions may be made to those works by which, though dead, he will yet speak to the instruction of the present and future generations. Besides four different series of Theological Lectures, constituting his course, and kindred productions, it is understood that he has left behind him devotional comments on a large part of the Holy Scriptures—two-thirds of the entire volume. No life-concluding occupation, surely, could better befit the philosopher and eminent divine than the devotional study of the Word of God, with the pen in his hand, the better to fix and detain the holy breathings of his soul. Let us hope that the volume may prove of such a character that the Christian Church may be admitted, with propriety, to the benefit of its perusal. Thus will the Christian world have the last and only desideratum supplied, in the vast circle of enlightened, comprehensive, and edifying instruction which Dr. Chalmers has been

honoured to furnish—a work on devotion—elevating the soul to God, through the matured and recorded experience of one of the humblest, and at the same time one of the most illustrious of His servants.

It would be delightful to expatiate on the character of Dr. Chalmers in connection with HIS SERVICES TO THE CAUSE OF GOD AND OF MAN; to dwell upon these services as a Pastor, first in a rural parish for twelve years, and then in this city for eight; as a Professor of Moral Philosophy and Political Economy at St. Andrews, noted for fresh and original views; subsequently as Professor of Theology in Edinburgh, eminent and enthusiastic in his walk, beloved by his students, a father anxious for their spiritual as well as professional progress, as if he had no other care. It would be pleasing, too, to dwell upon services still more public and enlarged, and not less permanent; upon the great battles which he fought with such power, sagacity, and rightly understood success in the fields of Church Establishments; Church extension, where he was instrumental in doing what no single individual had done before, raising hundreds of churches in the course of a few years; in the field of the spiritual independence or freedom of the Church of Christ in things spiritual; in the erection of the Free Church of Scotland, the grand event of the age, yea, of many generations. But I must forbear. One spirit pervaded the whole—the spirit of honesty, simplicity, affection, supreme devotedness to the honour of his Master; the spirit of self-denial and disinterestedness, the spirit of generous anxiety for the temporal and everlasting welfare of man.

To run the eye along the titles of his published works

is enough, were there nothing more, to show how vast are the services which he has rendered. There is, however, one point to which I must refer, which is, after all, the most important, and to which Dr. Chalmers made everything else subservient—I allude to the success with which he was blessed by the Holy Spirit in winning souls to Christ. His own conversion was remarkable—in point of mode in keeping with the mind and character of the man—matter of prayer beforehand to the older faithful witnesses in the Church, and of unspeakable joy when the prayer was heard. Though Dr. Chalmers was not Professor of Divinity in this city, yet he came to Glasgow as a pastor at a time when his venerable predecessor in the pulpit (the late Dr. M'Gill) had just received the appointment, and was anxious to introduce a favourable change on the cold and careless system which had hitherto prevailed in the Divinity Hall—a system hostile at once to piety, and theological study, and literature. It is understood that the students almost universally attended the ministrations of Dr. Chalmers on the Lord's day, and that these powerfully aided the tuition of Dr. M'Gill on the week days, so that the result, ere long, was a new state of feeling, and a fresh order of things in one of the nurseries of the ministry of the Church. While this both directly and indirectly conduced to the revival of evangelical religion, the services in the pulpit, and the labours in the parish wrought in the same direction. Many men who can look back intelligently on thirty years, tell me that they remember well the change on church-going which Dr. Chalmers' coming to Glasgow created, that families, the male members of which, at least, were never in the habit of entering the sanctuary,

now became regular attendants and interested auditors, and have continued so ever since. They tell me of the bustle on the street, and the crowds attending, even on the week-day, when the Astronomical Discourses were delivered—that the adjoining Exchange was deserted while the service lasted.

I have heard, also, of spiritual fruit still more decided, of some who are now ministers, and of others holding a private station in society, or it may be office in the Church, who attribute their most salutary convictions and impressions to the ministry of Dr. Chalmers. A number of years ago a Dissenting pastor informed me that not a few persons, joining his congregation, dated their first spiritual views from his ministry, indicating that the fruit was not limited to the Church of which Dr. Chalmers was an honoured pastor, but extended to other denominations. Indeed it is but the other day that an intelligent man stated that his deceased wife, who was an attached member of the Methodist Church, and continued so to the end, attended the preaching of Dr. Chalmers in town and country, as often as she could find opportunity, and received the richest spiritual benefit through his instrumentality. The clearness of his views of the Gospel, and the freeness with which he proclaimed its invitations, not less than the energy and eloquence with which he spoke, reached many hearts; while the Sabbath school system, and other institutions on the strictly parochial plan, organized by him, tended to perpetuate the good which appeared. Even though we could not appeal to any visible spiritual result, it is plain that such a man, coming to our city in the spirit of faith and prayer, at the termination of the destractions

of war in 1815, and beginning an almost new system of evangelical operations, could not but be blessed; but he *was* visibly honoured, and we cannot doubt that much of the fruit of his sowing will continue to appear in the years of the future. And who can tell, too, how many happy spirits, whose relationship to him was unknown below, have already welcomed him at the gates of Heaven as their spiritual father.

Not a few are at present saying, "We have lost one of the greatest men of the age." The truth is, that without any presumption, or idle praise of man, it may be safely said—we have lost not only *the* greatest man of the age, but of many ages, and the most amiable, generous, and truly Christian at the same moment. Who among his contemporaries has been honoured to achieve so much for the best interests of man? who, indeed, since the days of the great Reformation from Popery, has been honoured to render such varied and important services to the cause of living Christianity? and who has done so much, by his personal labours and sacrifices—by the pulpit, by the press, and by the training of so many hundreds and thousands of young men for the Christian ministry—to perpetuate the good which has been begun? At the same time, in admirable keeping with such services, who would have more heartily disclaimed all self-glorying and human praise? who would have more humbly and heartily ascribed to God the undivided honour of all good attained or prospective? No man with the energetic and persevering use of means better combined or more earnestly taught an implicit dependence on the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.

I cannot doubt that his name will go down to posterity,

not only with distinction, but pre-eminent honour—that his character, life, and labours, will form an epoch in the history of Christianity, and will be, to modern times, what those of Augustine, or Wickliffe, or Huss, or Luther, or Knox, have been to earlier days. He has already, in some sense, stamped his image upon his age. He has already left traces of his power in the very language of his country—felicitous modes of expression—transferences from physical to moral and theological science—graphically marked distinctions which will never die.

But it is time to pass from the character and services to THE REMOVAL BY DEATH of our venerable father. Often has one been tempted to think and say, at the close of his wonderful appearances: "What a mournful day will that be when this great light shall be closed in the darkness of death—what will be adequate to compensate for the loss? Long may it be postponed!" And now that day is come—that loss is sustained. And what adds to the aggravation—not after sickness preparing for the event—but all unexpectedly, in the fullness of health, with the prospect before the Church of years of usefulness.

The amount of the loss it is impossible to estimate aright. I pass over the loss to his family and immediate circle of friends and general society, and the cause of common philanthropy; though all who know how endeared he was in every relation of life—how he loved, and how he was beloved—will not judge of it lightly. But the loss to the Free Church of Scotland, to whose testimony, principles, and organization, he was so profoundly attached, is signal indeed. It is true that of late years he had withdrawn from any very active charge

of her affairs, save in the faithful and unwearied fufilment of his professorial duties, and that he sometimes spoke of retiring altogether; but his very name, though he had done nothing, would have been a tower of strength. His continued life would have been like the presence of an old veteran warrior at the head of his troops, gracing, though he no longer directed the army. His services, however, though abridged, were active and most valuable. Apart from the duties of the college, he was ever ready with his counsel: he organized and watched over the reclaiming of one of the most destitute districts of our Scottish metropolis with more than parental affection, and was gladdened with the success of his moral experiment. He never ceased to ply the press, in which he showed all the vigour and eloquence of earlier days. As often as anything important, whether in the affairs of the Church of Christ or of the country, demanded his powers, freely was their exercise tendered. One of his last literary efforts was in connection with his suffering country. I allude to his recent article on "The Political Economy of a Famine;" and his last active service to his Church, or rather to the Church of Christ, of which he was so enlightened and devoted a minister, was giving evidence before Parliament that the thousands of his fellow-Christians and fellow-countrymen, who are still denied standing room on which to worship God according to their conscientious convictions, may, for money, be favoured with the privilege!—evidence which one on the spot, and well able to judge, pronounced "noble." Down to the last moment, then, the active service to the Free Church was most valuable; and when we think of the character of the man, and what must have been the

character of the service—how superior to that of many men put together—it is impossible to estimate the severity of the loss.

Even though a man of the same genius and capacities were to be conferred by the Great Head of the Church to-morrow, he could not possess the public weight of our departed friend for years. Happily it is so ordered in the providence of God, that talents will not give influence without character, and that the development of character, and with it the growth of influence, is the fruit of time. In the death of Dr. Chalmers, it is the loss of a patriot, and philosopher, and Christian professor, and ecclesiastical councillor, which we have to mourn, all in one. Need I add, that to a Christian Church the presence or the absence of leading minds is of serious moment. Not only are powerful and accomplished minds important in the Christian Church, to keep in check the taunting spirit of the world, which would fain represent piety as necessarily associated with intellectual weakness; not only are they useful in exposing specious error, and vindicating truth against all assailants, but the presence of minds of acknowledged capacity tends to repress the pretensions of inferior minds, and so to conduce to the good order, energy, and harmony of the Christian Church. Although, blessed be God, leading minds are still spared to us as a Church, and we have reason to be grateful for the continued gift, still we can never but deplore the withdrawal of such a mind as that of our departed friend and father. We see other Churches suffering from the want of able leaders; we cannot but apprehend that we may be called, in God's providence, to suffer in the same way; at least a heavy blow on this side has just been sustained.

But deep and irreparable as the loss may be to the Free Church, I have no hesitation in saying, that in the present circumstances and prospects of Christendom, the loss is still greater to the cause of true Christianity. Evangelical religion had done much for Dr. Chalmers. He was not ashamed to acknowledge and publish, first to his people, and then to the world, that though an ordained minister of the Church, for years he was blind, and his labours useless, till he discerned by the grace of God's Spirit, and felt the power of its enlightening, peace-giving, sanctifying, and saving truths.* To evangelism he afterwards owed not a little of his energy and renown —the finest and most impassioned passages of his eloquence drew their inspiration from the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel; apart from these, as a preacher he would

* Among the many striking things which I have seen Dr. Chalmers do, or heard him say, I remember few finer than a reference which he made to the great change which his mind had undergone, on the things of God. About twenty years ago, in a debate in the Old Assembly House, Edinburgh, on the question of Pluralities, he was twitted with expressing sentiments at variance with those contained in an anonymous pamphlet which it was believed had issued from his pen, in the celebrated Leslie case of 1806, then a young man. The speaker evidently thought that he had struck the Doctor a severe blow—the latter, with great promptitude and solemnity, immediately rose and expressed himself to some such purpose as this:—"Moderator, I avow myself the author of that pamphlet. At the time I wrote it I was deeply absorbed in the study of mathematics. What is the object of mathematical science? Magnitude and the proportions of magnitude. But, then, I had forgotten two magnitudes—I thought not of the littleness of Time; I recklessly thought not of the greatness of Eternity; I recall the sentiments of that publication." This noble confession produced an electric impression on the House, almost extinguishing the unhappy speaker who had called it forth. Though the event took place twenty years ago, the scene is as vivid in my recollection as if it had happened but yesterday. And, I record it the rather, that, though currently known, the circumstances in which it originated are not so, and they add to the interest.

have been little known. And as our venerable father was much indebted, all indebted, to evangelical religion, so did he render to it the noblest services in return. He was not ashamed or afraid to own it in every form before the world. Like the great apostle of the Gentiles, he gloried in it. He might have taken for his motto, "Jesus Christ, and him crucified." His life was consecrated to its defence and diffusion. He ever insisted, and successfully proved, by practical labours, as well as argument, that it is the exclusive, because Divine, remedy for all the evils under which humanity groans. At the same time, he did not undervalue other legitimate means of usefulness. If one thought of the most prominent and honoured champion of the evangelical cause in all Churches throughout the world, the mind instinctively turned to the name of the great and good man whose sudden removal has this day clothed our Church in mourning. Whoever might be the most distinguished man of individual Churches, all bodies cheerfully placed him at the head of living evangelical religion. And what a loss, then, has that cause sustained in his death—the loss of his influence, the loss of his example, the loss of his prayers.

In any circumstances, at any season, the loss must have been severe, but it is peculiarly solemn at the present moment, in the existing prospects of Christendom. The true Church of Christ is evidently entering on a fierce conflict—let us hope the last—with Infidelity and Popery in varied and insidious forms. She will have to contend with men who glory in mere knowledge without the religion of Heaven, as adequate to regenerate society; not to allude to grosser aspects of impiety and unbelief. And she will have to encounter the devotees

of rising superstition, who set up human authority in divine things to the overthrow of the authority of God speaking in the Scriptures. The foundation of both is one. It is the sufficiency of reason, the necessity of tradition; in other words, the work of man. Hence they will readily coalesce, as they have ever done, against the imperative claims of the truth of God.

How nobly, unweariedly, courageously, our venerated Professor warred with both unsound principles for more than half a lifetime, I need not tell—nor predict how certainly and successfully he would have continued to war with them still. He stood in a peculiarly favourable position for the combat. No one could accuse him of being the enemy of knowledge, or afraid of its progress. Why? He was recognized as one of the men of highest and most varied science in his age. No one could accuse him of being friendly to superstition. Who did not know that, with all his high imagination and love of the past, he thoroughly understood, and rigidly followed, that Inductive philosophy which is the sworn foe of credulity? It is well known that he did more for the propagation of knowledge, and the cause of education, than hundreds who pride themselves upon being their exclusive patrons. And in religion he was the fearless advocate of the rights of private judgment; his perpetual appeal, as his writings show, was to the supremacy of the Word of God. His Astronomical Discourses—his works on the Evidences—his arguments in connection with Geology—his recent article on Modern Philosophy, designed to meet the Pantheistic tendencies of the age, especially in foreign lands—all show what a champion of the truth of God, against rising errors of varied names, he was honoured

to be. What services might still have been expected at his hand, and what a loss to the whole circle of Truth, therefore, has been incurred by his death! It may be noticed, in passing, that while Dr. Chalmers was familiar with science, and instead, like many, of confining himself to one branch, embraced such variety as Mathematics, Chemistry, Political Economy, &c., he took care to Christianize them all. His Astronomy was hallowed to the demonstration of the Divine glory, and the vindication of revealed truth. So of his Political Economy; it was political economy bearing on the moral and Christian well-being of the people. This was a great charm of his acquirements, as well as eminently called for in the day in which he lived. He married science and piety—the works and the Word of God. Instead of encouraging the idea of antagonism, he proved them to be friends.

It may be added, that the catholic views of the Church of Christ which he cherished gave a peculiar importance to his advocacy of the truth, whether against scepticism or superstition. These served to extend his influence, by keeping it clear of the narrow and exclusive. They enabled him to present the truth in the most attractive light, and ever to aim rather after the practical than the theoretical.

The loss which the general cause of Evangelical religion has suffered is aggravated by a similar loss on the continent of Europe. Among the comparatively few eminent Christian writers of the continent, the man who, in point of genius and grace, came nearest, perhaps, to that of Dr. Chalmers, whose fame (with the exception of the celebrated Historian of the Reformation) was most extensive—whose influence was great and growing—I

allude to Professor Vinet, of the Free Church of Lausanne—has been summoned to his heavenly crown at the early age of forty-nine. We would have said the loss of one such man is enough at once. The exalted Head of the Church thinks otherwise. He has taken both at a time when the assailed Evangelical Church seems ready to exclaim, "I can spare neither."*

But let us not be unjust to the Master of the servants. There are alleviating circumstances to the sadness of the removal of the great Scottish Professor. He died at an age bordering on the appointed limit of human existence. He died after recovering from an illness which threatened, twelve years before, to cut short his useful days—an illness from which, like Hezekiah, he appeared to receive a new lease of life, the better to prepare for the years of invaluable service which followed. He died not from home or upon a journey, or in a foreign land, but in his own house and bed, surrounded by his most attached relatives and friends. He died, indeed, suddenly and unseen, when preparing for the business of the Church, like his eminent Scottish brother, sixteen years before (Dr. Andrew Thomson), immediately after a similar service; but he died in the full maturity and exercise of his intellectual, moral, and spiritual powers. He departed in the midst of the assembled office-bearers of the Church, who were scarcely less dear to him than

* I understand that among the Christian graces for which Professor Vinet was distinguished, nothing was more conspicuous than his humility; that his estimate of himself was lowly, almost to excess. It is delightful to find men of first-rate talent, true philosophy, and fine taste, when under the influence of evangelical faith, humble as children. How glorifying to the Gospel, in an age when pride and self-sufficiency, with very moderate attainments, may be said, among the irreligious, to be almost the order of the day.

he was to them. He died with all his lofty capacities unweakened by lingering sickness or approaching imbecility. He entered at once, and in full consciousness and strength, into the joy of his Lord. He was removed when his work, in a large measure was accomplished, when he could look round and see the Free Church to a great extent independent of his aid; and after living so long, and leaving such works of genius, wisdom, and Christian usefulness behind, that the Evangelical Church of all lands, whatever may be the struggles of generations to come, will be able to appeal to the character, memory, writings, services of Dr. Chalmers, as an answer to a thousand cavils, and an armoury furnished with the choicest weapons for her defence and propagation.

His own favourite idea of the appropriate division of Christian life, according to which the last ten years should be consecrated mainly to devotion and preparation for eternity, may not, in his case, have been realized. Who could have wished that his ten latter years should have been subtracted from the *active* service of Christ? He may not even have had the ten days of devout dying of his venerable successor in this city (Dr. Brown) whose demise we lately at once lamented and rejoiced in. Still there are great alleviations. The Church has large ground for thankfulness and praise. The Lord of the servants has arranged the removal and its circumstances far more wisely and mercifully than would have been the case had the ordering been committed to the hands of human friendship and affection. Indeed, except for the painfulness of the loss, one cannot but feel that a more fitting time and mode of death could scarcely have been devised for so great and good a man. He comes down

from the metropolis, where he has been preaching the Gospel, as well as bearing witness in the great cause of religious freedom before the leading men of the nation. He is actively engaged, thereafter, in preparing important business for the General Assembly of the Church. He is in the very midst of his work, in his usual style of health and vigour. No one can say that he is in his dotage, or that the proceedings of his latter years have been influenced by age or weakness. He is not only in as great energy as he enjoyed at any former period of life; but this is proclaimed by his preaching, his published writings, and Parliamentary evidence. When the whole service which the Great Head of the Church requires of him is thus complete, he is called away—suddenly but gently—saved all the pain of dying, and all the anxiety which the prospect of dissolution sometimes occasions, even to the faithful. His departure is more like a translation than a death, in admirable keeping with the serenity and sunshine which, I am assured, characterized, in a remarkable manner, the days of his English visit. It is not necessary, as poor papists dream, to sing a requiem for the repose of his soul. His soul is fully and immediately happy with its Redeemer. To use the language of our noble Catechism, "At death the souls of believers are made perfect in holiness, do immediately pass into glory, and their bodies being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection." What end could have been more peaceful and triumphant? What more appropriate? What better termination could have been devised for so brilliant a career? Surely we cannot better express our feelings on the occasion than in his own words, on the death of his

excellent predecessor, Professor M'Gill. Speaking of him in a private letter, he says:—

"Still even in this bitter visitation there are ingredients of a precious and overpassing comfort. The recollection of what he was on earth—the confidence that he is now in Heaven, where his pure and righteous spirit, emancipated from the cares of this distracting world, now rejoices in the presence of its God. Our day is fast approaching, and may the grace which sanctified and prepared him for a blissful eternity enable us, whom he hath left behind him, to be followers of those who, through faith and patience, are now inheriting the promises."

As the death rightly contemplated was noble, not less so was the funeral. It was only his own graphic pen which, in a few words, could have pictured forth the scene. Suffice it to say, that it was a spectacle of the moral sublime, which none who witnessed will ever forget—which has never been witnessed before, and probably will never be witnessed again. It was a spectacle worthy of our country and of our countrymen—a spectacle at which patriotism and piety might be represented as weeping over the grave of their most illustrious champion. How true is it, after all, that the world, with all its blindness, can appreciate the difference between mere external glory—the power to please and amuse for the passing hour—and the glory of moral and religious worth—of substantial and permanent services to man. The funeral of the representative of the one scarcely attracted a transient notice—the funeral of the representative of the other was eagerly embraced by a nation to testify the most profound homage. Those who live to please the world cannot secure even the world's permanent esteem. Those who live only to do the world good, though unvalued and disliked by many at the time, receive, in their death, the world's loud acclaim.

In closing, I hasten to notice a few practical points.

I. We, and the Evangelical Church generally, have a loud call to gratitude to the Great Head of the Church, for raising up such an instrument at the time in which he was raised up—so largely endowing him with gifts and graces—so long sparing him in the full, and faithful, and consistent use of them, without anything to tarnish or weaken his influence—so eminently blessing his labours in the varied departments which he occupied—and so gently withdrawing him from this scene of things when his work was accomplished.

Nothing can more strikingly display the hand of the Master than the preparation of men, and the times and places for which they are prepared. Witness the case of the Apostle Paul in connection with the circumstances of the early Church, when he was brought upon the field. Nowhere is this adaptation more conspicuous than in the Free Church movement, and the active career of Dr. Chalmers. The same style of man would not have suited the days of the Reformation from Popery, and the men of that day would not have suited our times. Higher refinement and freedom, besides other qualities, were requisite, in addition to all their firmness of principle, and therefore are conferred; yet the Master, and the truth, and the Church, and the cause are the same. How gratefully should intelligent Christians mark these things—how affectionately should they acknowledge them—how implicitly should they trust the same Divine wisdom and guidance for the future. There was adaptation also in Dr. Chalmers successively occupying important spheres in the two most influential cities of Scotland.

It may be well to notice in passing, that gifts as well as

graces proceed from the hand of God, and are legitimate objects of admiration. Some good men are jealous of them: they seem to think that they are man's, not God's, and that to commend them is to disparage the work of the Holy Spirit. But such notions spring from narrow views. Though it be needful to keep gifts in their own place, and that a subordinate one, yet within that sphere they are of the highest value,—they are blessings for which the Church should be as truly thankful to her Great Head as for graces. Though they are not placed on the same footing, they are blessings to be prayed for, and when received they are to be esteemed and admired. We have high authority for this in the Saviour's own warm eulogium upon John the Baptist. Before He spoke of his graces, He admired his gifts, exclaiming, "He was a burning and a shining light."

In living in the day of Dr. Chalmers—in being in any measure associated with him in objects of common interest —we have enjoyed privileges not extended to those living in a cold and declining age, unblessed with the presence of illustrious servants of Christ. Let us remember, that while gratitude is due for the gift, we are responsible for the use which we make of it, and that our venerable friend and father was, in God's providence, placed in such a variety of positions, and made such ample use of his facilities for doing good, that the circle of office-bearers and members of the Church, rendered responsible for his services, is a very comprehensive one. His pupils, now ministers of the Gospel, or destined ere long to become such, and sinners who have remained hardened and unbelieving under his many expostulations as a pastor, should feel the sense of re-

sponsibility with peculiar force. Their venerable professor and friend may now be said to be addressing them from his grave, or rather from the right hand of glory. Let us pray that the impression produced by his death may be lasting, and that the sudden removal may seal and give power to all the instructions and appeals of the past.

II. We are furnished with a fine illustration of the nature of real evangelical religion. This religion is much misunderstood and misrepresented — charged with tendencies and associations to which it is a stranger. It has been supposed to be inimical to the cultivation of general knowledge and refinement of taste — to be friendly to relaxation and inactivity—to be allied to a severe and exclusive spirit. Behold it embodied in the character of Chalmers, and judge whether such be its true characteristics. Did his Calvinistic evangelism lead him to dread knowledge and eschew taste, and pursue an exclusive course? The very reverse. But it is often alleged that evangelical preaching deals in mere doctrinal points and speculations, and exerts no influence, or an injurious one, upon the morals of every-day life. Here again we appeal to the discourses and ministerial example of our venerated father. Was his preaching mere doctrine disjoined from practice? Was it not a beautiful blending of what real evangelical preaching is, doctrine and duty — the one flowing from the other? Indeed, his own *experience* presents such a striking proof of the utter inefficiency to moral ends of all preaching but Gospel preaching, that, in these days of reviving formalism, which is only another and more earnest aspect of the same useless system, from

which he was at length set free, I beg leave to quote his evidence on the point. It is the most striking on the subject with which I am acquainted. Well may it be asked if Dr. Chalmers, with all his high powers—his eloquence—his ardour—his sincere anxiety to do men good, failed, in the absence of Gospel preaching, to produce any moral influence on his hearers—are inferior men, wielding the same weapons, likely to be more successful?*

* In his farewell address to the people of Kilmany, he had the Christian humility as well as the true magnanimity to say:—"And here I cannot but record the effect of an actual though undesigned experiment, which I prosecuted for upwards of twelve years among you. For the greater part of that time, I could expatiate on the meanness of dishonesty, on the villany of falsehood, on the despicable arts of calumny—in a word, upon all those deformities of character which awaken the natural indignation of the human heart against the pests and disturbers of human society. Now could I, upon the strength of these warm expostulations, have got the thief to give up his stealing, and the evil speaker his censoriousness, and the liar his deviations from truth, I should have felt all the repose of one who had gotten his ultimate object. It never occurred to me that all this might have been done, and yet every soul of every hearer have remained in full alienation from God; and that even could I have established, in the bosom of one who stole, such a principle of abhorrence at the meanness of dishonesty, that he was prevailed upon to steal no more, he might still have retained a heart as completely unturned to God, and as totally unpossessed by a principle of love to Him, as before. In a word, though I might have made him a more upright and honourable man, I might have left him as destitute of the essence of religious principle as ever. But the interesting fact is, that during the whole of that period in which I made no attempt against the natural enmity of the mind to God, while I was inattentive to the way in which this enmity is dissolved, even by the free offer on the one hand, and the believing acceptance on the other, of the gospel salvation; while Christ, through whose blood the sinner, who by nature stands afar off, is brought near to the heavenly lawgiver whom he has offended, was scarcely ever spoken of, or spoken of in such a way as stripped Him of all the importance of His character and His offices, even at this time, I certainly did press the reformations of honour, and truth, and integrity, among my people; *but I never once heard of any such refor-*

Adverting to another view, and here specially addressing myself to young men, I would remark what an illustration does the case of Dr. Chalmers afford of the happiness of dedicating all powers, and resources, and acquirements, to God and to his service. This was eminently true of our departed friend. And what a life of honour, and usefulness, and true enjoyment, did the consecration secure! How superior was he throughout to the mere men of the world, even the most elevated of the number! How superior even to men of science, strangers to true religion! What a contrast his services to society, and especially to the masses, compared with those of selfish, ever-changing politicians! How poor and contemptible do all the calumny and abuse with which he was assailed by the irreligious or the infidel for his faithfulness, whether to the truth and day of God, or the freedom of the Church of his Anointed Son, now appear!

mations having been effected amongst them. If there was anything at all brought about in this way, it was more than ever I got any account of. I am not sensible that all the vehemence with which I urged the virtues and the properties of social life had the weight of a feather on the moral habits of my parishioners. And it was not till I got impressed by the utter alienation of the heart in all its desires and affections from God; it was not till reconciliation to Him became the distinct and the prominent object of my ministerial exertions; it was not till I took the scriptural way of laying the method of reconciliation before them; it was not till the free offer of forgiveness through the blood of Christ was urged upon their acceptance, and the Holy Spirit given through the channel of Christ's mediatorship to all who ask Him, was set before them as the unceasing object of their dependence and their prayers; it was not, in one word, till the contemplations of my people turned to these great and essential elements in the business of a soul providing for its interest with God, and the concerns of its eternity, that I ever heard of any of those subordinate reformations which I aforetime made the earnest and the zealous, but I am afraid, at the same time, the ultimate object of my earlier ministrations."—*Works*, vol. xii., p. 108.

Let us rejoice in his character as a bright example of our faith. Let us be more and more satisfied that it is the moral and the spiritual, not excluding the intellectual, which confer real happiness and lasting honour and power, whether with existing or after generations. Let us, depending on the grace of God, cultivate these with chief care. Let us well understand the nature of evangelical religion, both doctrinal and practical, and that from our own experience. Let us be prepared not only to vindicate it in argument, but to strengthen our argument by the adornment of our lives. And, so far as our talents, or resources, or influence reach, let us, like our distinguished Professor, devote them increasingly and exclusively to the best of causes and the best of masters.

III. We are reminded, in a special manner, of the duty of following out the particular plans and labours which he started and prosecuted with such wisdom, generosity, and untiring zeal. Reduced under one head, these all resolve themselves into efforts after the revival and diffusion of evangelical religion among the masses of society. Honoured to stand at the head of a revival of evangelical religion in the west of Scotland, much about the same time that it was revived in the east by other distinguished labourers, his great and successful care, through multiplied agencies, was the prosecution of the same work. In this cause a peculiar obligation rests upon the Free Church. As we venerate the memory of Chalmers, let us zealously and perseveringly carry it forward. We shall, indeed, no longer hear that voice summoning us to noble deeds which has so

often summoned his countrymen to such deeds before. It now lies silent in the grave; but the very silence is, in some respects, more expressive than words, and should be felt more powerful; still does it call upon us to follow and complete his work. May all be at once disposed and enabled to do so. This is the best monument which we can rear to his venerated name—the monument, of all others, which he would have most highly prized. His case affords a striking illustration of what *one* individual may do—of high gifts—engaged in the best work—with appropriate scriptural means, the whole crowned with the sought blessing of Heaven. Let us seek, by combined numbers, to make up for what is wanting in individual power, and breathe the spirit and walk in the course, though we cannot keep pace with the steps of the illustrious departed.

IV. Lastly: Proceeding on the principle announced in the passage of Scripture prefixed to this tribute, we are furnished with a solemn warning. Those who survive the death of the eminently righteous and benevolent, are, in that very event, reminded that evil days *may be* coming (we do not say certainly will come), for the faithful, we are taught, are taken away from future evil. The Church might rather wish them to remain, judging that all would be needed. But no. While the Lord takes his people home, he will better try the faith, and courage, and submission, and other graces, of those who survive.

The history of the Church of God corresponds, in this respect, with the intimations of his Word. Shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem, with all the horrors which that event drew along with it, several of the

apostles, and doubtless many of the private believers, were gathered to their heavenly home. Martyrdom was better than the scenes which not a few of the survivors must have witnessed. The history of the Church of Scotland bears testimony to the same principle. Towards the middle of the seventeenth century, and at that period, distinguished and faithful men were taken away before the days of internal dissension, as well as before the more serious times of external trials and persecuting violence — such as Henderson, Dickson, Gillespie, Durham, Binning, Rutherford, and others, including Baillie, who lived into the persecuting time. The fact cannot be explained on the score of age, as some of them were comparatively young; Durham, thirty-six; Gillespie, thirty-three; Binning, twenty-six. Dr. M'Crie particularly notices the removal of Henderson, the great leader of the seventeenth century, as an illustration of the righteous being taken away before the coming evil. There can be little question that the absence of enlarged and influential minds among the ministry conduced to that unhappy state of things which encouraged the Restoration of Charles II., with all the sin and woe which followed, and that, humanly speaking, had the men of earlier days been alive, the event might have been mitigated in its consequences, if not altogether prevented. In all probability there would have been less division among the ministers. The nation would not have been so easily satisfied with insufficient terms, and the government and its agents would have had less success in the race of deceit and treachery.

So of more recent times. Immediately before or about the commencement of the ten years of controversy which

terminated in the erection of the Free Church, there was a visible sweep among prominent men in the Church of Scotland, embracing the older witnesses for the truth; a sweep which drew observation at the time as possibly indicative of days of approaching trial. Sir Henry Moncrieff died in 1827, and so did Dr. Davidson, and Dr. Colquhoun; Dr. Campbell in 1828, and about the same period Dr. M'Intosh of Tain; Dr. Andrew Thomson in 1831, Dr. Buchanan of the Canongate in the same year; Dr. Robertson of Leith in 1832. The close of the year witnessed the commencement of the Church Establishment controversy. Soon thereafter the Rev. Mr. Martin of St. George's, Edinburgh, and the Rev. Mr. Geddes of Glasgow, both prominent in talent and position, though young in years, were called away. Dr. Inglis, who witnessed the commencement of the Church Establishment war, and bore a part in it, was soon thereafter removed. So marked and felt were the changes, at the outset of the dates to which I have referred, that Dr. M'Gill, who was Moderator of the General Assembly in 1828, referred to the fact in his concluding address in these terms:—

"During the year which has elapsed since the last General Assembly, some of the most distinguished members of the Church have finished their course, and gone to render an account of their stewardship; they have fought the good fight, and were strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. The floods lifted up their voice, but they trusted in Him who is mightier than the noise of many waters, and continued stedfast to the end in the cause of their Master. Amidst the buffetings of the tempest they bravely stemmed the tide, and still were seen rising on the top of the billows, nobly directing the vessel to the kingdom of their Lord. They have entered the haven of rest, while we still remain to struggle with the storm."—*Memoirs of Dr. M'Gill*, p. 290.

The common exclamation among the friends of evan-

gelical religion was—What will become of the evangelical party, now that Sir Henry Moncrieff is taken away? And the exclamation was renewed a few years after in a louder tone, when Dr. Thomson, at the early age of fifty-two, was gathered to the fathers who had gone before. The only compensation was the call of Dr. Chalmers to the Theological Chair in Edinburgh, in 1828—the very year when so many of the faithful were mourning over the removal of the older witnesses, who through a dark period had fed the lamp of Truth. It adds to the interest of the point to which I refer, that there were comparatively few deaths, at least of men who took a public part in the affairs of the Church, during the actual currency of the ten years of controversy. I do not remember any, save Dr. M'Gill of Glasgow, and Dr. Dickson of Edinburgh, the one in 1840, the other in 1842, and the former had for years before retired from the charge of any business except that immediately connected with his Professorial Chair. I should add the names of Rev. Mr. Fraser of Kirkhill, who died from the effects of an accident in 1836; and Dr. Martin of Kirkaldy, from a similar cause in the succeeding year. But since the close of the ten years of controversy, in 1843, and shortly after the Free Church gained a settled footing, we have met with severe losses—losses, too, such as cannot be altogether attributed to age. Who need be reminded that such righteous men and merciful men have lately been taken away as Dr. Welsh, the Moderator of the General Assembly at the Disruption; Dr. Abercrombie, a leading elder of the Church; Mr. Greig of St. Ninians, Dr. Brown of this city, Dr. Brewster of Craig, Dr. Duncan of Ruthwell, Dr. Muirhead, Mr.

M'Bride of Rothesay, and now Dr. Chalmers, the first Moderator of the Free Church Assembly; all in a short space of time, not to mention others.* The result is, that comparatively few elderly ministers survive in the Free Church.

Let all the faithful be solemnized by thinking what changes have passed and may be coming. We know that infidelity and popery are advancing, both at home and abroad. We fear that evangelical religion, which has been flowing so many years, and in the revival of which the venerated Chalmers bore so conspicuous a part, is beginning to ebb—not only in Britain but the United States of America. Judging by the intimations of prophecy, we fear that the Witnesses have yet to be slain.—Rev. xi.†

In these circumstances we do well to be serious and to improve every dispensation of Divine Providence, especially one so solemn and impressive as the present. Of this we may be sure, that if God has honoured us as a Church—and who can question the honour?—he will try the grace which he has given: we know not how soon and how effectually. Let us be alive to the meaning of such events as the taking away of the righteous. Let us not be among the number who refuse to consider or to

* If a parallel were wanted in our day to the deaths of very young ministers in the seventeenth century, it could be found. Hugh Binning was but twenty-six, and his cotemporary, Andrew Gray, one of the ministers of Glasgow, only twenty-two. Does the reader need to be reminded, that shortly before the Disruption, death deprived the Church of Christ of one, in gifts and graces, wonderfully like them both—Robt. M'Cheyne of Dundee?

† Every Christian heart must rejoice in the recent very remarkable revival of religion in America (1858). May it be perpetuated, and extend to other lands.

lay it to heart, as if it were a matter of accident or of little moment. On the contrary, let us improve such events to greater self-watchfulness, a stronger feeling of responsibility; greater diligence in doing the work of the Lord—a more thorough ceasing from man and created resources; a more entire dependence upon the Church's Head; more ample and unwearied prayer for ourselves and others.

Nor let us be dismayed by the prospect of coming evil, should such be the design of Providence; let us remember that whoever may die, Jesus Christ still lives, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; that after all, the Church's safety does not lie in the number of her eminent instruments, but in the power, and grace, and faithfulness of her covenant Head; that He who gave so largely to our departed friend is not impoverished by his donations, and will give not less freely to his survivors and successors; that the very death of Dr. Chalmers may be so overruled as to be of more signal service to the Church, than continued existence at his advanced years would have proved; that in all circumstances the promise is faithful—as is the day so shall be the strength of the people of God; and finally, that blessed shall be the consummation, when all the servants of the Lord, whatever the age in which they have lived or died—whatever the relationship in which they have stood one to another—shall be gathered into one home, and when they shall have full and uninterrupted time for the worship of their God, and for sweet and unbroken fellowship with each other, and with the unfallen and redeemed.

SELECT SERMONS.

SERMON I.*

GOD IS LOVE.

"*God is love.*"—1 John iv. 16.

Did we only believe the statement made in this text,—did we but view God as love, this simple translation into another belief than we are prone to have naturally, would be the translation into another character; with the establishment of this new faith, there would instantly emerge a new heart and a new nature. Let us attend, in the first place, to the original conception of humanity, placed and constituted as it now is, in reference to this great and invisible Being; and you must all be sensible that it is not of God as a God of love, but of God—I will not say as a God of malignity—but of a God that has displeasure in his heart towards you. I believe this is the first and universal sense of nature as it now is; not such a view of God as can make you respond to him with confidence and grateful affection; but such as makes you

* Preached in St. John's Chapel, Glasgow.

regard him with distrust, jealousy, and terror. In the second place, let us adduce the likeliest arguments, by which to overcome this conception, and to find lodgment in the human breast for another and opposite affection, in the achievement of which a very great change would take place in the human heart. In the third place, let us stop and contemplate the effect of such a change in the state of man's understanding as to God in the whole system of his life. I verily believe, if such a change be accomplished, it is quite sufficient to make you new creatures; that if you can only succeed in dislodging from your minds the apprehension that God looks on you with displeasure, and in place of it put into your minds the confidence that God is love, such a change of your apprehensions in respect of God would produce a change in your whole system of feelings and conduct.

Now then, in regard to the first general head, in which we propose to consider the apprehension of nature in regard to God, as of a Being that looks on you with a stern displeasure, and whom you cannot therefore regard without distrust; there are two reasons why we conceive God to be so actuated towards us, as not to inspire us with terror, or at least with distrust; instead of conceiving him to be actuated by that love the text ascribes to him, and which, as soon as believed by us, would set us at ease, and inspire us with confidence. The first reason why we view God with this terror and distrust, may be shortly stated thus. It is a kind of general law in human nature, that whenever we are placed within reach of any being of imagined power, but withal, of unknown purpose, that being becomes the object of our terror and dismay. It is not necessary that we should be positively

assured of his determination in respect of us: it is enough to produce alarm, if we know that he has strength sufficient for the execution of his displeasure. Uncertainty alone will beget terror; and the fancies of mere ignorance, in regard to such a being, are ever found to be accompanied with alarm. It is thus that a certain recoil of dread and aversion would be felt in the presence of a strange animal, whatever the gentleness of its nature may be, if simply its nature were unknown. Hence, too, the fear of a child for strangers, who must first make demonstration of their love, by their gifts and caresses, ere they can woo it into confidence. Hence also the consternation of savages, on the first approach of a mighty vessel to their shores; more especially, if in smoke and thunder, and feats of marvellous exhibition, it has given the evidence of its power. It may be a voyage of deliverance, but this they as yet know not: they only behold the power—and power beheld suddenly is tremendous. Many are the fruitless demonstrations and signals of good-will ere they can dislodge themselves of their distrust, or recall themselves into free or fearless intercourse from the woods or lurking-places, to which they have fled for safety. Such then is the universal bias of nature, when the power is known, and the purpose is unknown; men give way to visions of terror, to the dark misgivings of a troubled imagination. The quick and instant suggestion upon all these occasions is that of fear; and the difficulty—and an exceeding difficulty it is—to work against this tendency of the heart, so as to reassure it into confidence. Now this may prepare you for understanding what I would call the first reason why we view God with such terror and distrust.

Apply the terror so remarkable in the case of savages when an unknown vessel of tremendous power is seen, and they do not know the purpose of its approach, to that terror and distrust wherewith God is viewed. If such be the effect on the human feelings of a power that is known, associated with a purpose that is unknown, we are not to wonder that the great and invisible God is invested to our eyes with imagery of terror. It is because he is great, and at the same time invisible, that we so invest him. It is precisely because the Being who has all the energies of nature at command, is at the same time shrouded in mystery impenetrable, that we view him as tremendous. All regarding him is inscrutable; the depths of his past eternity, the mighty and unknown extent of his creation, the secret policy or end of his government—a government that embraces an infinity of worlds, and reaches forward to an infinity of ages; all these leave a being so circumscribed in his faculties as man, so limited in his duration, and therefore so limited in his experience, in profoundest ignorance of God; and then the inaccessible retirement in which this God hides himself from the observation of his creatures here below, the clouds and darkness which are about the pavilion of his throne, the utter inability of the powers of man to reach beyond the confines of that pavilion, render vain all attempts to fathom the essence of God, or to obtain any distinct personality of his person or being, which have been shrouded in the deep silence of many centuries, insomuch that nature, whatever it may tell of his existence, places between our senses and this mighty Cause, a veil of interception. There is an untrodden interval between the spirituality of the Godhead on the

one hand, and all that the eye of man can see or the ear of man can hear; and there is a barrier which all his powers of curious and searching conception cannot cross, and across which God, at least for many ages, has sent forth no direct or visible manifestation of his own person or character; and so whatever the character or the manifested kindness may have been in those primeval days when God walked with man in the bowers of his earthly paradise, and among the smiling abodes of his innocence, certain it is that now, an exile from the Divine presence, all this confidence has fled. Now that the Divinity has withdrawn from mortal view, man trembles at the thought of him, and the dread imagination, whether of a present wrath or coming vengeance, is the only homage which nature offers to an unknown God. And is it not natural in these circumstances that we should stir ourselves up to get hold of him—that we should seek after God if happily we may find him? But there is nothing in the varying aspect of creation, or in the varying fortunes of human life, which can at all alleviate our perplexity in regard to the final designs or character of God; for on the one hand the smiles and sunshine, and the softer beauties of the landscape, which seem to picture forth the mild attributes of Deity, are alternated by the other and opposite features—the sweeping flood, and the angry tempest, and that dread thunder of the skies, wherewith the mysterious Being who rules in the firmament above, overawes the world; and thus, while in the one case we have the mutual affection and unnumbered sweets of many a cottage, which might serve to manifest the indulgent kindness of him who is the universal parent of the human family; we have on the other hand the cares, the heart-

burnings, the moral discomforts, often the pining sickness, or the cold and cheerless poverty; or, more palpably, the fierce contests and mutual distractions even among civilized men; and lastly, and to consummate all, the death—the unshaken and relentless death with which generation after generation, whether among the abodes of the prosperous and the happy, or among the dwellings of the adverse and unfortunate, after a few years are visited, laying all the vanities of human fortune in the dust; these all bespeak, if not a malignant, at least an offended Deity. It is in the midst of such contradictory appearances that the regimen of the Divine ministration becomes a profound, a hopeless enigma, at once to exercise and baffle all spirits; and the unapproachable Being who presides over all, is the object of our dread, because of his concealment. Obscurity is terrible because it is unknown.

I would proceed to the second reason why we view God with distrust and alarm; but instead of this I should like, in the first place, though it anticipates the second head of discourse, to bring alongside, as it were, of the way in which we view God as an object of terror, the Christian argument why we should view God as a Being of goodness. I would state only two reasons: Nature's conception of God is such as to inspire us with terror; and ere I proceed to the consideration of the second reason, I feel, I say, strongly inclined, though I should anticipate the second head of discourse, to state, and, in as far as we are able, to enforce the appropriate, the counterpart arguments by which this first reason, for thinking hardly and adversely of God, may be met and ought to be overcome. The argument, then, which we are in quest

of is not be found in the whole range, in the whole compass of visible nature. It is only to be found in one of the doctrines of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: a certain distrust and a certain terror will still continue to haunt and disquiet us, so long as any ambiguity continues to rest on the character of God. But there *is* such an ambiguity, and which no observation of nature, or no experience of human life, can dissipate. Whatever the falsely or superstitiously fearful imagination conjures up, because of God being at a distance, can only be dispelled by God brought nigh unto us; the spiritual must become sensible: the veil which hides the unseen God from the eye of mortals, must be somehow withdrawn. Now all this has been done, and done only in the incarnation of Jesus Christ; He "being the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." The Godhead, then, became palpable to human senses, and man could behold as in a picture, and in distinct personification, the very characteristics of the Being who made him. Then truly did men hold converse with Emmanuel, which is, being interpreted, God with us. They saw his glory in the face of Jesus Christ; and the Deity himself may be said to have been placed in authentic representation before them, when God manifest in the flesh descended on Judea, and sojourned among its earthly tabernacles. By this mysterious movement from heaven to earth, the dark, the untrodden interval which separates the corporeal from the spiritual, was at length overcome; the King eternal and invisible was then placed within the ken of mortals; they saw the Son, and in Him they saw the Father also; so that, while contemplating the person and history of a man, they could make a study of the Godhead.

We come then, I say, to this most remarkable manifestation, the manifestation of God in human form. The incarnation of Jesus Christ makes the Godhead as it were visible to us, and we can make a study of the character of God by reading the history and doings of Jesus Christ in the world. What a mighty thing it is that we should thus become acquainted with God, by becoming acquainted with Him who may be said to be his visible representative on earth! Well; how far does such a manifestation go to correct our apprehension of God, as a God of frowning displeasure? It is through the intervention of Christ as God manifest in the flesh, that unequivocal demonstration has been given that God is love. We could not scale the height of that mysterious ascent which brings us within view of the Godhead. It is by the descent of the Godhead unto us that this manifestation has been made; and we learn and know it from the wondrous history of Him who went about doing good continually. We could not go in search of the viewless Deity, through the depths and the vastnesses of infinity, or divine the secret, the untold purposes that were brooding there. But in what way could more palpable exhibition have been made, than when the eternal Son enshrined in humanity, stepped forth on the platform of visible things, and there proclaimed the Deity? We can now reach the character of God in the human looks, in the human language of Him who is the very image and visible representative of Deity; we see it in the tears of sympathy which he shed; we hear it in the accents of tenderness which fell from him. Even his very remonstrances were those of a deep and gentle nature; for they are remonstrances of deepest pathos—the complaints of a longing spirit against the

sad perversity of men bent on their own ruin. When we think that God looks adversely at us, let us think of Him who had compassion on a famishing multitude—of Him who, when he approached the city of Jerusalem, wept over it as he thought of its coming destruction; and, knowing that the Son is like the Father, let us re-assure our hopes with certainty that God is love.

I do not think that such stress is laid in the minds of many Christians as should be, on this doctrine, that God sent his own Son into the world manifest in the flesh. Let us dwell, therefore, for one moment on the mighty importance of this doctrine, in filling up that mysterious interval which lies between every corporeal being, and the God who is a Spirit and invisible. No man hath seen God at any time—and the power which is unseen is terrible. Fancy trembles before its own picture, and superstition throws its darkest image over it. The voice of thunder is awful, but not so awful as the conception of that angry Being who sits in mysterious concealment. This gives it all its energy. In this sketch of the imagination, fear is sure to predominate. We gather our conceptions of nature's God from those scenes where nature threatens. We speak not of the theology of the schools, and the empty parade of its instructions; we speak of the theology of actual beings—that theology which is sure to derive its sensations from the character from whence the human heart derives its sensations; and we can refer to your own feelings, and the history of this world's opinions, if God is more felt to your imaginations in the peacefulness of a scene, or in the liveliness of a summer landscape, than when winter with its mighty elements strips the forest of its leaves, and man flies to cover himself from

the desolation that spreads over the surface of the world. If nature and her elements be dreadful, how much greater that mysterious and unseen Being who sits behind the elements, and gives birth and movement to all things! It is the mystery in which he is found, it is the inexplicable manner of his being far removed from the presence of the senses, it is its total unlikeliness to all that nature can furnish to the eye of the body, or to the conception of the mind, which animates the body; it is all this which throws the Being who formed us at a distance so inaccessible, and that has cast an impenetrable mantle over his ways. Now Jesus Christ has lifted up this mysterious veil, or rather has entered within it. He is now at the right hand of God in the brightness of his Father's glory, in the express image of his person; he appeared to us in the palpable character of a man, and those high attributes, truth, justice, and mercy, which could not be felt or understood as they existed in the abstract and invisible Deity, are brought down to our conception in a manner the most familiar and impressive, by having been made through Jesus Christ to flow forth in human utterance, and to beam in the expressive physiognomy of a human countenance. Previous to this manifestation, as long as I had nothing before me but the unseen Spirit of God, my mind wandered in uncertainty, my busy fancy was free to expatiate, and its images fill my heart with disquietude and terror; but in the life, and person, and history of Jesus Christ, the attributes of the Divinity are brought down to the observation of the senses, and I can no longer mistake them; when, in the Son who is the express image of his Father, I see them carried home to my understanding by the evidence and the expression of human

organs—when I see the kindness of the Father, in the tears which fell from the Son at the tomb of Lazarus—when I see his justice blended with his mercy in the exclamation, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, by Jesus Christ uttered with a tone more tender than human sympathy or human bosom ever uttered—I feel the judgment of God himself flashing conviction on my conscience, and calling me to repent while his wrath is suspended, and he still waiteth to be gracious. And it was not a temporary character our Saviour assumed: the human countenance, and the expression which made it so expressive to us, remained with him to his latest hour; they survived his resurrection, and he took them with him to that mysterious place which he now occupies. This we learn from his parting words to his mother; we see it in his unaltered form when he rose from the dead; we see it in his tenderness over the scruples of the unbelieving Thomas, convincing him that his body still retained the impression of the nails; we see it in his mind retaining sympathy for us worms, in characters as endearing as when he was on earth. We have an High Priest who is touched with a fellow-feeling of our infirmities. My soul, unable to support itself in its aerial flight among the regions of the invisible world, finds in Christ the figure, the countenance, the sympathies of a man. He has entered within that veil which hangs over the glories of the Eternal; and the mysterious, inaccessible throne of God is divested of all its terrors, when I think that a friend who bears my form and aspect, and knew its infirmities, is there.

I cannot refrain from stating another consideration, that we may be no less sure that God is love, than that love is the characteristic of all good men. As Christ was

the incarnation of the Deity, so every Christian may be regarded as an incarnation of the Divine character; and he is formed after the image of God. Try then, my brethren, to recollect the countenance of him of whom you have the surest pledge that if now alive, he is a Christian indeed; or, if dead, he is now in heaven. I am sure if any who now hears me lives within the confines of a district in this parish, now bereft of its guide and guardian, he can be at no loss to recollect one who did spend and was spent among them, and is now gone to his everlasting rest—one of the brightest and most exalted specimens of Christian worth that ever adorned the visible Church on earth; and though he left not the world under the weight of an extreme old age, though he attained not what the Psalmist calls the sum of human life, threescore years and ten, yet did he live to the enjoyment of many years. A good man is like unto God, and many are the families who can attest how bright and visible was that love which our text has singled out as the great characteristic of God. The truth is, that he lost his own family; and his heart, desolated of the nearest and dearest of its earthly friends, gave and found relief in that large family among whom, day after day, in the midst of a populous parish, he expatiated with all fervour, and benevolence, and piety. And all can attest how well he acquitted himself as a Christian friend and father in the midst of them—how they rejoiced with him while he lived—and how all, from the oldest to the youngest, were saddened at his death. God grant this great breach be speedily repaired among us; and may both elders and people take a fresh lesson from him, who though now "dead yet speaketh."

We now proceed to another reason, why, instead of viewing God as love, we apprehend him to be a God of severity, and regard him with distrust. It is distinct from the former reason. It is not, like the former, a fearful imagination, a mere product of uncertainty, or resulting from superstitiously dark and terrific imagination, when employed in interpreting what is vast, and at the same time unknown. It has a firmer basis to rest upon; not being conjured up by fancy, but drawn from the intimations of conscience, and suggested by one of the surest facts or findings in the history of man's moral nature. In the constitution of humanity there is a law of right and wrong in every heart, and which the possessor of that heart knows himself to have habitually by him. We have all consciences in us, that tell us of right and wrong, and we have all sufficient consciousness in our hearts to know, that that law of right and wrong is what we have habitually violated. Now this is distinct from fear. This brings us to a more certain reason why we should view God with distrust; for along with the law of right and wrong in our own minds, along with the felt certainty of such a law, there is the resistless apprehension of a lawgiver—of a God offended by the disobedience of his creatures—of a judge, and judgment that awaits us—of a governor and king in heaven; between him and ourselves there is a yet unsettled controversy; and because of which we are disquieted with fear—a thought of reckoning and vengeance that are to come. We cannot view God as love, at the very time that conscience so powerfully tells us to view him as our enemy. Even though the lessons of nature and Christianity should conspire to inform us that love is a characteristic of Divinity,

we cannot feel the practical influence of such a contemplation, so long as we are sensible of his special and merited displeasure; and his truth and justice, and other attributes seem to require that this displeasure shall be executed. Haunted by the misgivings of a guilty nature, which tells us of our own danger and insecurity, we could no more delight ourselves in the general benevolence of God, than we could luxuriate ourselves among the beauties which far and wide range around the mountain's base, if a bursting volcano surrounded our heads. Even though reason were to give us calm and philosophical conviction, the agitation of terror grounded on the consciousness of our self-deserving, would disturb such conviction, or displace it altogether. This, as I have said, is not a mere alarm as the former, but has both a distinct object and cause; and instead of an airy imagination, is grounded on the universal sense we naturally have of our own actual state. We are conscious we have violated that law of right and wrong, and we are haunted with the imagination, and a very just one it is, that that law will be executed. We cannot but view ourselves as defaulters of that law, and hence a very distinct ground of terror and apprehension that God, instead of looking at us with love, is looking at us with displeasure

This apprehension is not more general than it is strong. I am aware that the strength of the apprehension is not at all applicable to those who live as they list, and never think of God. It were a great matter if we could stir up the apprehension in them, if we could make the law a schoolmaster to them, and reduce them to anxiety, and make them ask, What shall we do to be saved? The doctrines of the Gospel are thrown away upon them; but

in reference to those who have been visited with any earnestness of conviction, or any earnestness of feeling on the subject, the apprehension is not more general than it is strong, and not to be overcome by any eloquent or sentimental representation of Deity. There is a meagre theology that would fain resolve the character of God into one attribute of kindness; but there is a theology of conscience that maintains its ascendancy, and gives its frown against this vain imagination. To Him who is seated on the throne of the universe, we, in spite of ourselves, ascribe the virtues of the Sovereign, as well as the virtues of the Parent; and however much it might have suited our convenience and wishes that we could at all times have taken refuge in the general benevolence of God, there are certain immutabilities of truth and nature that cannot be thus disposed of; for, attempt as we will, we cannot think of a law without a lawgiver, of a lawgiver without authority, of government without sanctions, and of a sentence without effect; we cannot have the thought of guilt without the dread of the execution of its proclaimed and threatened penalty; and thus the ever-meddling conscience within, as irrepressible as importunate, keeps man in perpetual fear of God, and tells him with authority, that it is a well grounded fear. We cannot rid from our apprehension and correspondence a strict and accredited and awful correspondence, which enters into the relation between heaven and earth, and the orders of which cannot be let down without despoiling the sanctuary of God of all that is great and venerable. We cannot think of God with confidence or hope, while we think of ourselves as delinquents at the bar of that august tribunal, where he sitteth in judgment over us. We cannot even see him

to be love through the troubled medium of remorse and fear, and far less rejoice or take comfort in it as a love directed to ourselves.

We all know that we are sinners; and we cannot look on God as love to us, so long as that imagination affects us. How shall we rid the human heart of that imagination, and what is the precise counteraction by which we can get at the secret, why the mind views God as an object of fear? Now, as in counteraction to our first reason for viewing God with distrust, we adduced one peculiar doctrine of Christianity; so in counteraction to our second reason, we now adduce another peculiar doctrine of Christianity, and that by far the noblest and most precious of its articles. The one was the doctrine of the Incarnation, the other is the doctrine of the Atonement. "Herein is love: not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent his Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins." By the former, the doctrine of the Incarnation, a conquest has been made over the imaginations of the ignorant; by the latter, a conquest has been made, not over the imagination, but over the solid and well grounded fear of guilt. By the one, we are told of Deity embodied, and thus the love of God is made the subject as it were of actual demonstration. By the other, we are told of the Deity propitiated, and thus the love of God has been made to shine forth in the midst of the law's sustained and vindicated honours. It is this junction of mercy with truth, of mercy with righteousness—it is this harmony of all the Divine attributes in the scheme of reconciliation—it is this skilful congruity established in the Gospel between the salvation of the sinner and the authority of the Sovereign, which so adapts the evangeli-

cal economy to all the wants and exigencies of our fallen nature. Naked proclamations of mercy would never have set the conscience at rest—would never have permanently hushed those perpetual misgivings wherewith the heart of the sinner is haunted—who, by the very constitution of his moral nature, when he thinks of God, must tremble before him, as a God of justice; nor can peace be firmly restored to the sinner's distempered bosom—that which hindereth must be taken out of the way; and it has been taken out of the way, for now it is nailed to the cross of Christ. In this glorious spectacle we see the mystery revealed, and the compassion of the parent meeting in fullest harmony with the now asserted, now vindicated, prerogative of the lawgiver—we there behold justice and mercy made prominent. The Gospel is a halo of all the attributes of God, and yet the pre-eminent manifestation there is of God as love, which will shed its lustre amid all the perfections of the Divine nature. And here it should be especially remarked, that the atonement was made for the sins of the whole world; God's direct and primary object being to vindicate the truth and justice of the Godhead. Instead of taking from his love, it only gave it more emphatic demonstration; for instead of love, simple, and bending itself without difficulty to the happiness of its objects, it was a love which, ere it could reach the guilty being it groaned after, had to force the barriers of a necessity, which, to all human appearance, was insuperable. The law—the mountain of these iniquities that separated us from God—the high and holy characteristics of that Being who is unchangeable stood in its way; and the mystery which angels desired to look into was, how the Eternal who sits on heaven's throne could

at once be a just God, and the Saviour. The love of God, with such an obstacle, and trying to get over it, is a higher exhibition than all the love which radiates from his throne on all the sinless angels. For the achievement of this mighty deliverance, not only had the Captain of Salvation to travel in the greatness of his strength, but to sustain a dreadful endurance. The deliverance of man was wrought out in the midst of agonies and groans, in all the bitterness of a sore humiliation. He was bruised for our iniquities, on him the chastisement of our peace was laid, and in being so, he had to bear the awful burden of a world's expiation. The affirmation that God is love, is strengthened by that other, to him who owns the authority of Scripture, that God *so* loved the world—I call on you to mark the emphatic *so*—as to give his only begotten Son. He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; or that expression, "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." There is a moral, a depth, an intensity of meaning, a richness of sentiment, that Paul calls unsearchable, in the cross of Christ, that tells emphatically that God is righteousness, and that God is love.

There is a third head of discourse under which I am anxious to demonstrate to you that it is not a love just shed and spread over the world generally. A number of us are very apt to read the Bible generally, as if it did not bear any distinct reference to ourselves. We will admit the love of God towards the world; but what is there in the Gospel to convince that God specifically and distinctly holds out his love to each of us? The consideration of this we reserve till another opportunity.

SECOND PORTION OF SERMON ON "GOD IS LOVE."

(DELIVERED IN THE AFTERNOON.)

You will recollect that in the earlier part of the day I endeavoured to bring forward to your consideration the natural tendency or bias of the human heart to conceive of God in such a way as necessarily to inspire us with dread and distrust of him. Were one to go learnedly to work on this subject, I believe he would find ample confirmation of this; he would find that the natural judgment of all nations—of all pagan and idolatrous nations, for example—is of God rather as a God of vengeance who regards us with displeasure, than of God as a God of love. But without going learnedly to prove this, we may make a direct address to the consciences of those before us; and I refer to you, whether your first and natural notions of God are not such as to inspire you with a certain distrust of him. I do not say these were the original notions of humanity as constituted at first, but they are the notions which one and all of *us* when we come into the world have of God, as an awful, severe, and repulsive Being, and arising very much from two causes which I endeavoured to lay before you. Before man fell, God walked with man in the peacefulness and security of the garden of Eden, and man had a direct and, as it were, personal manifestation of Deity. Since that time man has lived at an inaccessible distance from God; and the first reason of that natural bias we have of Deity was, we stated, that recoiling fear which we have of any being of known power, but of unknown purpose. This is a general and natural cause of distrust.

In the second place we attempted to bring forward a sort of counter-argument to overcome this bias or apprehension of nature. The counter-argument is the incarnation of Christ, in whom we saw the Divinity embodied, and could join with our study of his character our study of the character of the Godhead; for he that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father also. We arrive in this way at a very deep apprehension of God as a God of love.

We stated that there is another reason for this selfish distrust—a reason which is not a mere imagination, but resting on a far more solid basis, the consciousness which one and all of us have of being defaulters of that law of right and wrong which God has put into our hearts; and, therefore, of being rebels against that Lawgiver who inserted the law in our hearts; and I endeavoured to bring forward the counterpart argument here also, an argument which could only be derived from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as was the incarnation. The former was brought to bear on the uniform apprehension we have of a Being who is armed with great power, and of whom we are at the same time ignorant, because invisible. The counteracting argument to the second reason is, the doctrine of the atonement, which we endeavoured to bring to bear on that second reason so as to expel from the understanding the tendency of the heart to conceive of God as a God of terror, that you might be conducted to the conclusion, that God is indeed a God of love.

I will say no more on that second argument. I wish you to advert to that noble peculiarity in the representation which Christ gave us of the Godhead, in that, while it sets him forth as a God of love, it does so without injuring, but rather with the highest possible enhance-

ment of all the other attributes of the Divine nature. When God is seen by us in the face of Jesus Christ, he is seen in the brightness of his mercy to sinners; but it is mercy so accompanied with holiness and truth—so enshrined, as it were, in the high honours of a vindicated law, as to throw over the character of the Godhead a deeper sacredness than before. In that halo which is over the mercy-seat of Christianity there is a radiance of all the attributes of the Almighty. Along with the love that gladdens the believer's heart there is an august and awful majesty that solemnizes it; and while in this wondrous spectacle we behold peace to the sinner, yet seen it is through the mystery of a world's atonement. We there behold the evil of sin in most awful and appalling manifestation. When the sinner looks on all this as the fire of Heaven's jealousy directed against himself to burn up and fiercely to destroy, there is but room in his heart for the one feeling of overwhelming terror; but when he sees this as it is averted from him, because of Him who, for his sake, sustained the agonies of the cross, he can look on without fear or terror; but at the same time it is impossible to look intelligently without feelings of deepest reverence. It is like the different sensations we experience from viewing a burning volcano from a place of exposure and a place of safety. In the one case there are emotions in the mind of terror; in the other there are emotions of admiring taste. For the full enjoyment of this scene a degree of conscious security is indispensable. A sensation of danger would disturb, and despair would utterly destroy it; and not without the certain belief of personal safety would the fine sensibilities of taste have their place in the bosom. The soul must be in a state of

repose ere it can view those characters of grandeur or of gracefulness, which lie in the panorama before it. Till the fear of danger was removed there would be a tormenting sensibility that would hush all other feelings; and neither the graces nor the sublimities of a prospect so marvellous would have any charms for the imagination.

I observed that the doctrine of the text ought to tell on you individually. I conceive it of the greatest importance, that you should think the Gospel as much intended for you individually, as if you were the only sinner in the world—as if you individually had been the only sinner that needed to be reclaimed. You should read the Bible, every one of you, as if it were directed to you alone; and I do think this the only profitable way of reading it. For example, when you read, "Whosoever cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out," just read it as if you were the only sinner in the world. In like manner, when it is said, "Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth," read it as if it were said, Look you, *you* unto Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. It will not land you into Antinomianism: go over the whole length and breadth of the Bible in that way, and you will come unto passages that will effectually guard you against Antinomianism. I wish the Gospel to tell on each of you, as if you were the only object of the Gospel message; and I am perfectly assured that, while it is the most effectual method of bringing home to your hearts all the comforts of the Gospel, it is, at the same time, the most effectual mode of bringing home to your hearts all the warnings and threatenings of the Gospel.

To apply this to the love of God, for the purpose of making the doctrine I insisted on in the earlier part of the

day available to ourselves personally, we must view the love of God not as a vague and inexplicable generality, but as specially directed, nay, actually proffered, and that pointedly and individually, to each of us. It is not sufficiently adverted to by hearers, nor sufficiently urged by ministers, that the constitution of the Gospel warrants this appropriation of its blessings by each man to himself. This all important truth, so apt to be lost sight of in lax and lazy speculation, may be elicited from the very terms in which the Gospel is proposed to us—in the very phraseology in which its overtures are couched. It is a message of good news unto all people: to me, therefore, as one of the people; for where is the Scripture that tells me that I am an outcast? Christ is set forth as a propitiation for the sins of the *world;* and God so loved the *world,* as to send his Son into it. Let me, therefore, who, beyond all doubt, am in the world, take the comfort of these gracious promulgations; for it is only to those who are out of the world, or away from it, as the devils who believe and tremble are away from the world, that they do not belong.

The delusive imagination in the hearts of many, and by which the Gospel is by them bereft of all significancy and effect, is, that they cannot take any general announcement or general invitation that is made or given to them, unless in virtue of some certain mark or certain designation by which they are specially included in it. Now, in real truth, it is all the other way. It would require a certain mark, a certain designation, to exclude them; and without some such mark, which should expressly signalize them, they should not refuse a part in the announcements or invitations of the Gospel. If

the Gospel has made no exception of them, they either misunderstand the Gospel, or, by their unbelief, make the Author of it a liar, if they except themselves. They demand the particular warrant for believing that they are comprehended within the limits of a gospel-call to reconciliation with God. Now, the call is universal, and it would rather need a particular warrant to justify their own dark and distrustful imagination of being without its limits. When in the spirit of a perverse or obstinate melancholy—and this is what we have sometimes to contend with in the case of Christians who shut themselves out from the whole comfort of the New Testament—they ask their Christian minister, what is the ground on which he would take them into the household of God's reconciled family? Well may he ask, what is the ground on which they keep themselves out? He stands on triumphant vantage-ground for his own vindication. His commission is to preach the Gospel to every creature under heaven, and that takes them in; or to say, that "Whosoever cometh unto Christ, shall not be cast out," and that takes them in; or, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open, I will enter into friendship and peace with him," that also takes them in; or, "Look unto me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth"—there is no outcast spoken of here—and that too takes them in; or, "Every man who asketh, receiveth;" and surely, if language has a meaning, that takes them in; or, "Christ came into the world to save sinners," and unless they deny themselves to be sinners, that takes them in; in a word, although they may cast themselves out, the primary overtures of the Gospel do not cast them out. They are not

forbidden by God; they are only forbidden by themselves. There is no straitening with him; the straitening is only in their own narrow, and dark, and suspicious bosoms. It is true they may abide in spiritual darkness if they will, even as a man may, of his own pleasure, immure himself in a dungeon, or obstinately shut his eyes; still it holds true, notwithstanding, that the light of the sun in the firmament is not more open to all eyes, than the light of the Sun of Righteousness is for the rejoicing of the spirits of all flesh. The blessings of the Gospel are as accessible to all who will as the water, or the air, or any of the common benefits of nature. The element of heavenly love is in as universal diffusion among the dwellings of men, as is the atmosphere which they breathe, and which solicits admittance at every door; and the ignorance and unbelief of men are the only obstacles it has to struggle with. It is commensurate with the species, and may be tendered, and honestly tendered, to each individual of the human family.

This brings us to the third head of discourse, proposed by us in the earlier part of the day. The object of the first head was to consider the kind of feeling man has naturally and originally towards God; the object of the second was to exhibit those Gospel arguments by which this feeling should be overcome, and by which we come to view God as a God of love, instead of viewing him as a God that has displeasure towards us; the object of the third was to consider what effect is produced on the feelings and conduct of him who had undergone that change. I consider it as one of the most important transitions in the human soul, when it comes to view God as a God of love. Give me that change, and I am not afraid of all

the rest following. I am not afraid of such a change taking place in the whole conduct and feelings of such a one, as to entitle any man, who saw him in comparison with his former state, to pronounce that he had become a new creature. Well, then, let us now suppose that, in any individual instance, (God grant that many such may occur under the ministration of the Gospel!) to the tender of forgiveness—of God's love to man on the one side, there is an acceptance on the other—God is taken at his word (for that is all that you have to do in the first instance), and, instead of being regarded with jealousy or terror, or as a distant and inaccessible lawgiver, he is beheld as a reconciled Father in Jesus Christ; or, that all that dark and impenetrable veil which hitherto had mantled the benign aspect of the Divinity is withdrawn—that the mercy-seat is seen in heaven, not the less to be relied on in its being mercy met with truth—the disclosure made of the love with its smiles of welcome, which beams and beckons there, not the less, but the more to be rejoiced in, in that it is a love in full conjunction with righteousness and love, consecrated by the blood of an everlasting covenant, and shining conspicuous and triumphant amid the honours of a vindicated law:—only imagine a translation of this sort—a translation truly out of darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel, and will you not perceive that, when the light of the Gospel is thus manifest, the love of the Gospel in the heart will follow in its train; and that the love and good-will of God, when once seen and recognized by us, will surely draw *our* love and gratitude back again? If we had but the perception, the emotion would come unbidden; or, in the words of the apostle John, "If we knew and believed

the love which God hath to us, we should love God, because he first loved us."

This is a most important translation then; and I would make no attempt to stir up the love of God in you, so long as you regarded God armed with displeasure—armed like a strong man to destroy. I cannot see how I could get the love of God established in your hearts, unless I first get your belief of God's love to you. If I could only succeed, in place of that cold representation of the Godhead, which stands before the eye of man as a God armed with displeasure, in finding a place for the Gospel, as God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and not imputing unto men their trespasses; then, to this change in you which the mind takes of God, there would be a corresponding change in the heart from the terror before; for the love would come unbidden, if we could only get the faith established within you.

Having gone thus far, we are within the operation of a certain law, which acts spontaneously. God is seen to be a God of love, and this calls back love and gratitude to him. "We love him because he first loved us."

We may here see what evangelical ministers mean, when they tell us of the regenerating power of faith. One of its functions is to justify, but its higher and greater function is to sanctify man. Let but the cold abstractions of unbelief be removed, and from that moment the emancipated heart, as if by the operation of a charm, will beat freely and willingly in love to God and love to all his servants. This new faith was the turning point of a new character, and on this single difference between God, viewed as an object of terror, and God viewed as an object of confidence, a complete moral

revolution is suspended. Let me be made to know and to believe that God loves me, and, by a law of my mental constitution, I shall be made to love him back again. The intellectual precedes the moral change. It is an article of doctrine, not in the place which it occupies as the dogma of a theological system, but which is actually seated in the heart, and the article thereof a substantial and living creed. It is this which subdues the whole man into a new creature. The executive power of working this great transformation lies in the truth. In other words, let the faith of the Gospel enter into the heart of any individual, and it will renovate the man. Let this faith be universal, and we shall behold a renovated world.

I might here indulge in the prolonged perspective of a regenerated species, and that through the practical stepping-stone of a declared Gospel, so that, if the first doctrine of God's loving the world were as generally accepted as it might be heralded, a nation would be born in a day; but let me urge a lesson, which each of you should carry personally and practically home, and feel how it is, that one might animate his own heart with the love of God, and keep this sacred affection glowing there. This is a frequent complaint among Christians, that their hearts are so cold and insensible, and destitute of love to God. How shall we go about it, to put the love where it is not, or to keep the love alive, which is in danger of going into extinction? It is not to be summoned into being and activity at a call. It is not by any simple or direct effort that you put it into operation within you. You can say to the hand, Do this, and it doeth it; but we have no mastery over the heart, nor can any of its movements be subjected to a volition or a pause. We cannot, by an

immediate plunge among the recesses of our constitution, conjure up any emotion in it. The true way of putting an emotion into the heart, is to put into the mind its appropriate and counterpart object. If I want to light up resentment in the heart, let me think of the injury which provokes it; or, if I want to be moved with compassion, let me dwell on some picture of wretchedness; or, to be regaled with a scene of beauty, let me look on the glories of a summer landscape; or, to stir up love, let me call up some kind and friendly benefactor; or, finally, to kindle in my cold and deserted bosom the love of God, let God's love to me be the theme of my believing contemplation. I shall never light up the affection by looking inwardly upon myself, but upwardly to the Gospel manifestation of the Divine character, and in bringing it down from the sanctuary that is above me. It is faith which elicits and calls out the feeling, and thus both the lessons of the Bible and the experience of the Christian are at one with the strict philosophy of the closet, when they attest, that the way to build up our hearts in the love of God is to build ourselves up in our most holy faith. Hence that scriptural expression, "faith worketh by love;" so that if you want the love of God in your hearts, there is no other way of getting at it than by thinking of God's love to you. Then the Divine love comes unbidden and spontaneous by a law in the constitution of the human heart. When you think of God's love to you, your love comes back to him in virtue of the faith working by love, which is not only announced in the Bible, but is also in strict accordance with all such processes of human affections. If you find your love waxing cool, you can light it up again by some of the affecting

truths of Christianity, and, more especially, the truth that God so loved you as to send his Son into the world.

Before I conclude, let me ground on this explanation two practical inferences with which, for the present, I shall conclude the whole of our argument on our text. In the first place, the way to call into your heart the love of God, and to keep it there, is to think on the love of God as manifested in the Gospel, and to dwell upon the thought. It were well if you knew precisely how to go about it, when you want to revive the extinct or languid affection in your bosom. I know of no other way by which you can kindle the love of God within you, than that you summon to the presence of your mind that object which, if only realized or believed in, will, of itself, and spontaneously, or without any further bidding of the will, inspire the sensibility you are in quest of. You cannot will the affection into your heart, but by willing into your mind its counterpart object. This reveals to us, and in an aspect in which you may not have been accustomed to behold it, the mighty importance of faith. It is only by thinking rightly, or believing rightly, that you can be made to *feel* rightly; and could we only prevail on you to dwell habitually on God's love to you, then should we find a sure highway to the result of your habitually loving him back again.

But, secondly and lastly, you will perceive from this the mighty importance of a free Gospel, and of your so understanding it, that you may embark upon it, each individual for himself, all your hopes and all your dependence. I trust I have said enough to convince you that none are forbidden, but that the overtures of reconciliation are so framed as abundantly to warn each man to

entertain them for himself, as much, in fact, as if he were the only sinner in the universe, and as if the whole apparatus of redemption had been set up for his special and solitary behoof.

I may have an opportunity, sooner or later, of unfolding at greater length the scriptural evidence for this right of appropriation, if we may so term it, when I shall take occasion more particularly to show that, while it gives all encouragement to the faith, it does so without prejudice, but rather with a more pointed and powerful call than before to the repentance and new obedience of the Gospel. The only additional testimony which I shall bring forward at present in favour of this distinct and individual application, by each man to himself, of the overtures of the New Testament, is that remarkable annunciation which was heard from the canopy of heaven, at the birth of our Saviour, not of good-will to certain men, to the exclusion of others—not an offer made only to some, and kept back from the rest of the species, but generally to all men; "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, and *good-will to men.*" The generality of the terms is enough for me to speak of; the generality of the terms is enough for me to impress upon each to proceed, as if he had heard, with an audible voice from the canopy of heaven, God's good-will to him, and all of you individually; the generality of the terms tells me that no individual needs to shut himself out from the good-will of his Father in heaven. Let him be who he may, we would cheer him on to the confidence of God's good-will to *him*, and purely and simply in virtue of his being a man. We see no exception in the text, and, therefore, we make no exception from the pulpit. We find a general assurance in

the Word of God, and we cast it abroad among you without reserve and without limitation. Where it is to alight, and whose bosom it is to enter as the harbinger of peace, we know not; but sure we are it can never alight wrong, and that, wherever faith in God is formed, it is followed with the fulfilment of all his purposes. We know well the scruples of the disconsolate, and with what success a perverse and melancholy mind can multiply its arguments for exclusion; but we look to the text, and by one comprehensive sweep it takes in the whole race of men, and empowers the ministers of God to ply with assurances of his good-will all the individuals of all his families. We see there is no straitening with God—favour and forgiveness are ready to come down abundantly from him on every son and daughter of Adam. His mercy rejoices over all, and may be poured out over the wide extent of a sinful creation. The unbelief of man is the only obstacle it has to struggle with. Tell us not in the obstinacy of your distrust, that you are such a sinner. All your sins, many and aggravated as they are, are the sins of a man. Tell us not of the malignity of your disease—it is the disease of a man. Tell us not that you are so grievous an offender, that you are the very chief of sinners—still you are a man. Jesus knew what was in man, and all the varieties of character that belong to him; and still there is something in the Gospel to meet all, and make up for all, for he impairs not by one single exception the universality of the Gospel message, which is "good-will to men." We again proclaim in your hearing, that the word may sink into all: "Look unto me, all the ends of the earth, and be saved." If the call be not listened to, it is not for want of freeness, and kindness, and

honesty in the call itself, but for want of confidence and belief in those called. There is no straitening with God —it is all with yourselves; it is all in the cold, and dark, and narrow suspicions which fill up and stifle your own bosoms. The offer of God's good-will through Jesus Christ, is unto all and upon all. The messenger of Christ wants to lodge that offer in your hearts, but you will not let him; he wants to woo you into confidence, but you remain sullen and inflexible; he wants to pass into your souls, but you refuse the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely; he stands before you the ambassador of a beseeching God, and is charged with the kindest and freest communication to one and all of you; and he does not exceed his commission when he tells of good-will to *you*, and that nothing is wanting but *your* good-will towards God, that you may obtain peace, and consolation, and joy. All of you may come and drink of the waters of life freely. God fastens a mark of exclusion on none of you. He bids us preach the Gospel unto every creature, and every creature who believes will be saved. He has no pleasure in any of your deaths. "Believe and ye shall be saved."—"Draw near unto God, and he will draw near unto you."—"Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" We speak to you in the very language of God, though we fall infinitely short of such a tone or such a tenderness as that with which he speaks to you. If you think otherwise, you do him injustice; you look on him with the jaundiced eye of unbelief; you are arraying him in a darker shroud than belongs to him; you mantle one of the attributes of divinity in the gloom of your own minds; you withdraw your faith from his own declaration, as the Lord God merciful and gracious. Instead of yield-

ing him the homage of the true God, you superstitiously tremble before a god of your own forming; you put all the earnest, repeated assurances of God's actual revelation away from you, when he swore by himself that he has no pleasure in your death, when he tries every expedient to quicken your trust in him, and does all that tenderness can devise to remove your every suspicion, and cheer you on to confidence in his good-will. He beseeches you to accept of consolation at his hand. He proffers to you a gift, and condescends so far as to knock at the door of your hearts and crave your acceptance. To do away with such obstruction as lay in the way of the access of the sinner to God, he set up the costly apparatus of redemption. A remission of sins without the shedding of blood is impossible; and he cleared the way of this mighty barrier. He sent his Son to pour out his soul unto death for you: and now that iniquity is put an end to, now that everlasting righteousness is brought in, now that every attribute of his nature has been magnified by the great sacrifice; now that the weight of that heavy burden which restrained the expression of his good-will to the children of men is done away by the chastisement of Him who bore our peace; now that there is nothing to intercept the glow of friendship from God, does it come down free as the light of day, and rich as the exuberance of heaven upon a despairing world. Amen.

SERMON II.*

THE USE OF THE LAW.

"*The law is good, if a man use it lawfully.*"—1 Tim. i. 8.

It would appear from this text that there is a way in which the law may be used lawfully, or rightly, from which we infer that there is also a way in which it may be used unlawfully, or unrightly—it may be put to a right use or to a wrong one. And there is a real distinction between this right and this wrong use of the law, which, if steadily kept in view, would be a perfect safeguard, both against the error of legality and the equally pernicious one of Antinomianism. The subject is one of great importance; for we reckon that the whole economy of the Gospel is pervaded by it; nor can we think of a likelier expedient for the illustration of the evangelical system, than just to lay hold of the statement we have now announced, and then to follow it out to its legitimate application.

First, then, we use the law unlawfully when we try to make out a legal right to the kingdom of heaven. We make a wrong use of the law when we try to make out, by our obedience to its precepts, a legal right to the kingdom of heaven. When this is our object we are actuated by the presumption that we can render, by our obedience,

* Preached in St. John's Chapel, Glasgow.

an adequate price for that glorious inheritance; and that the value given, and the worth of our performances, are equal to the value received, and to the worth of that eternal blessedness which we labour to realize. We proceed on the imagination of a contract between God and man—a fulfilment of the law's requisitions on the one side, and a bestowment of the law's rewards on the other,—the one, the purchase-money, the other the payment,—obedience is the allotted task—heaven is the stipulated hire. When this is the conception present to the mind, there is a going about to establish our own righteousness,—which is just going about to establish our own right to immortal happiness. As a servant who has accomplished his task can challenge from his master the covenanted recompense, so, it is affirmed by many, that after a course of virtue in this life is ended, he that has acquitted himself well may challenge from his Master in heaven that everlasting life which, under the law of "Do this and live," is held out as the reward of obedience. Now, this spirit of legality, nurtured as it is by our making a wrong use of the law, is merely the universal spirit of humanity—it is the universal spirit of our nature. They are not the Israelites only who go about to establish a righteousness of their own. The very same thing may be noticed among the religious of all ages and countries. The constant tendency is to bargain for heaven by their services; nor can they easily rid themselves of such mercantile imaginations. When they attempt the career of righteousness, it is to establish a right to win their salvation by merit; it is to constitute a claim which they shall prefer at the court of the Divine Lawgiver for payment, and which payment is held to consist in the favour of God, and in admission to

those realms of bliss where he reigns and holds unceasing jubilee among the choirs and companies of the celestials. This is the constant tendency of nature. It is in fact a disposition of the heart, which keeps its ground against all the articles of orthodoxy. And long after jurisprudence has made conclusive judgment of the shortness of human virtue; yet all men recur to the old view of this virtue being a thing of desert, and of heaven being the reward which is due to it. And if it be uncertain for a man to establish a right by jurisprudence, much more so in the face of all jurisprudence. Certainly when this is the object, he is using the law unlawfully—he indeed spends his money for that which is not bread, and his labour for that which satisfieth not—wearying and wasting himself in a thing impracticable; for if there be one characteristic of the law of God more distinct than another, it is the unbending assertion which it makes of its own authority, and in virtue of which it will stoop to no compromise with human disobedience. There may be, in some other way, acceptance for the sinner, but never by the admission of the sinner's right to the rewards of the law which he has violated. This is an assertion, which, whether in the dispensation of the Old or the New Testament, never once is receded from. Both the law and the Gospel alike disown man's legal right to the rewards of eternity. If man will persist, as nature strongly inclines him, in seeking to make out a title-deed to heaven by his own obedience, then that obedience must be perfect, else there is a flaw in the title-deed, which is held to be irreparable. It is thus that the law of heaven looks down upon earth in the unfaltering aspect of its own inflexibility, and on man's schemes in

establishing righteousness to establish a right. It becomes a question of equity, the principles of which are brought unrelentingly to bear upon him. Man, then, instead of suing from heaven, is demanding mercy in the attitude of a claimant for justice. Two parties are convened together, on the grounds of equity and truth; and the matter will be decided on considerations proper to these grounds, and no other. If man, on the one hand, has presumptuously lifted himself up to a claim that is above the merits of his obedience, the law will not, on the other hand, let itself down beneath the level of its own demands. Man has braved the combat in an arena of his own choosing, and it is by the rules of that arena that his claim must be determined. He has appealed to Cæsar, and to Cæsar he must go. He has maintained his right, and by the very terms, he has committed himself to a tribunal of justice. He has cited himself before God as a lawgiver, even the God who says he will not be mocked. It is thus, that in establishing a right by his righteousness—in making use of the law, he finds if he has committed one sin, that there is the barrier of what may be called a moral necessity in using that way which it is impossible to force. The Judge who gave the law cannot alter what he has said on the children of iniquity; and he has pronounced a curse on every one who continueth not in all the words of his law to do them: and so every sinner who goes about to establish a righteousness of his own, is either borne down by the misgivings of a conscience which only serves to haunt and paralyze him, or he lives at his ease, because living in a vain and groundless security; for one of two things must happen, either that he will sink in despair, or, what a low conception of the standard of obedience!—he, though but gro-

velling among the mere decencies of civil life, will aspire no farther, and yet count himself safe. There are two ways in which one may proceed who purposes to make out his right by his obedience to the law. If he have a sufficiently high conception of the standard, then he is paralyzed, and sinks into despair because of the discoveries that he is making of his exceeding distance and deficiency from that standard; and thus he is haunted at all times by a sense of his great insufficiency, and he never can attain to anything like solid peace. But there is another way—he may bring down the law to the standard of his own obedience, and may bring his conscience and conduct into terms of very comfortable equality with one another. But this is what the Bible calls a peace which is no peace. The ruin of the soul comes out in either way of the enterprise. He is haunted and paralyzed by a sense of his deficiency, if he has an adequate conception of the purity and extent of the divine law; but if not, then, by bringing down this law to the standard of his obedience, he counts himself safe, though miserably away from the will of God, and he dies with a lie in his right hand. The conversion of Paul illustrates this principle. Without the law I was dead. I went forward, on the ground of my meritorious obedience, to a safe and happy eternity; but when the law came, then I was conscious of my distance and deficiency therefrom, and I felt myself a helpless and hopeless outcast. Well, then, here lies the grand peculiarity of the Gospel: it pronounces on the utter insufficiency of all that man can do for establishing his right to the kingdom of heaven; and yet he must, somehow or other, be provided with a right. His own righteousness the Gospel most pointedly and peremptorily refuses to entertain as

of any consideration, and makes the full, unqualified denial of the efficacy of human virtue, when directed to the end of substantiating, through its own merits, a title—a legal claim to the rewards of immortality. This is one end of the law, that man might obtain for himself a right to its rewards; but this end of the law man has forfeited by his own disobedience. He has forfeited the right, and he cannot establish it with all his strenuousness, and yet he would fain make the trial. It is that to which nature is constantly prompting him. This legal spirit remains unquelled by the declarations of the Gospel from without, however responded to from within by the deposition of a conscience that cannot but feel the insufficiency of all our obedience. The absolute nullity of all human virtue is, in the records of evangelical dispensation, affirmed constantly, and at the same time the doctrine is as zealously preached by each zealous and orthodox minister. That righteousness of his own wherewith a man would set himself forth as a claimant for heaven, the Bible pronounces filthy rags; and nothing can exceed the terms of degradation with which it stigmatizes human righteousness, when aught like a right is founded upon it. Still there must be a right. It is not by an act of mercy alone that the gate of heaven is opened to sinners, but naturally there is, in some way or other, merit associated. It is not enough that he appear at the bar of mercy; he must have a plea that he can state at the bar of justice—not the plea of his own deservings; it is not the plea of his own deservings with which the Gospel holds any terms, and therefore a plea founded solely and exclusively on the deservings of another.

There are three ways in which a man can be conceived

to obtain admittance to heaven. He may conceive the obtaining admittance on the plea of his own righteousness. Now, we say that this is frustrated by man's disobedience, and is impossible; and that if you go about with this, the effort is vain. Now, this is the first way. You can conceive a man going about to get heaven by his own righteousness.

Then there is another way. There may be a simple act of forgiveness passed, and he comes without a plea at all. Now, this is not the constitution of the Gospel. It is not by an act of simple mercy, but it is mercy in connection with righteousness. He does not come unfurnished with a plea.

We stand up for the third footing, set forth by the uniform language of Scripture, and by all we learn from the New Testament, that it is a delusion that you can be admitted to heaven by a simple and gratuitous act of mercy on the part of God—you must come furnished with a plea which you can state at the throne of justice. Then the first supposition is already discarded.—It is not the plea of your own righteousness. The second also is discarded.—It is not a mere simple and gratuitous act of mercy. Then you are shut up, as it were, into the third—a plea founded solely and exclusively on the deservings of another. Now, what we conceive the very essence of the Gospel, is the offer to a sinful world of a pardon through Christ, and that every sinner is welcome to the use of it. He is told of an everlasting righteousness which another has brought in, and which he is invited, nay, commanded, to make use of. It is thus that Christ is made the end of the law for righteousness. This end of the law we had fallen short of, which we could only have achieved for

ourselves by our perfect unfailing obedience. Christ therefore has achieved it for us. By his sacrifice for us, he has borne the full penalties of the law, and won its rewards; and, by the condition of the Gospel, every one who believes is on this vantage ground. He is as much exempted from the vengeance of a broken law as if in his own person he had never broken it; he is as much exempted as if in his own person he had been faultless. He has attained a righteousness in Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness; and so this righteousness by faith is the frequent favourite theme of evangelical preachers. It may indeed be called the Shibboleth of their preaching. They are men who degrade to the uttermost the righteousness by works. This is not, as many imagine, because of the law, but because of the high esteem in which virtue is held by them. They first look to the law, that pure example of all righteousness, and there they learn what a noble, elevated, and perfect thing is that morality which is prescribed to us. They then look to the actual state of human obedience; and in proportion to their lofty estimation of virtue itself, is their lowly estimation of virtue in man; and the higher their regards are cast towards its supreme excellence, the lower must actual humanity appear in their eyes beneath the standard from which human nature has fallen. So far from these advocates for the righteousness of faith having lost all sense of morality or its importance, they have felt that this righteousness is their only refuge, just because a reverence for morality exists as a portion in their bosoms. Why do they prefer the righteousness of Christ as their only argument for heaven, to that righteousness of man which so many would found as their pretension for the

reality of heaven's blessedness? Just because they see perfection in the one, pollution in the other—in the one all perfection, in the other all the worthlessness of a lame and imperfect offering, and in which no right can be lodged without violence to the law's requirements. They are surely not the men in whom all sense of morality lies extinct in their bosoms. There appears rather the true spirit, a moral essence, in that doctrine which they hold. Under the feeling of their own distance from the law, they have laid hold of Christ as the end of the law for righteousness.

Having said this much on the wrong use of the law, I have only time in this discourse to instance one right use of it. When we compare our conduct with its commandments, we cannot fail, in our deficiency and in our distance, to be convinced of sin. The result of this comparison, if a just one, is to convince us of sin. It is then that the law performs the office of a schoolmaster, in bringing us to Christ. It is then that, to escape the terror of its penalties, we are shut up into the faith. You know, my brethren, how, for the marvellous design of securing this escape for sinners, the economy of grace has been formed. Knowing it though you do, there is not a believing soul that has experienced the power of this salvation, who does not love to be often told of it, to name which is as ointment poured forth; nor does it ever pall upon the spirit of him who has been visited with a sense of his sinfulness, and labours under the burden of it, although frequently offered. Unto him a Saviour has been born; on him did God lay the iniquities of us all: that sword of vengeance which should have been lifted against us, he warded off, in all its brightness, against his fellow-men, and Jesus Christ had

to bear the weight of a world's atonement. The righteousness of God, because of sin, was not relaxed: the displeasure of God, because of sin, was not relaxed, but only transferred from the head of offenders to the head of their substitute; and in the depths of Christ's mysterious sufferings has he made as full a display of the rigours of his inviolable sanctity, as if he had done the direct infliction of their doom upon the millions for whom the Saviour died. The qualities of holiness stand as conspicuously emblazoned forth in the Gospel, as in the old economy of the law. It is true that sinners are now permitted to draw nigh, but only in the name of him who has made full acquittal for offences. Full, therefore, and ample as is the pardon they have received, it is without the compromise of heaven's high sacrifice; for it is pardon, sealed by the blood of an everlasting covenant. The Holy One of Israel now sitteth on a throne of grace, but preached only by the accredited ceremonial of a priesthood, and of a consecrated Mediator. The sinner reads the instructions of peace between God and his own soul, but on that cross only on which the chastisement of his peace was borne. He is like the man who eyes the fierceness of a bursting volcano from a place of security; and so he whom the tempest of God's wrath has passed by, becomes now a changed person; he can now securely rejoice in the mercy, when, in the grace and goodness of the Redeemer, he beholds the justice of God.

I trust that you see the importance here of that peculiar constitution of the Gospel by which it provides acceptance for the sinner. Were it not for the august mode of approach through a Divine sacrifice and a consecrated priesthood, it would be a mere dispensation of mercy, but

then the justice of God would lie prostrate, as it were, under such an economy; and the excellent skilfulness of the Gospel economy lies in this, that the sinner may draw to the full of the mercy of God, but through the channel of such a mediatorial economy as the Gospel has made known: that is, he, in the very act of doing it, does homage to all the acts of the Godhead. If you refuse it on this, you will receive it on no other ground. God tells us that no man cometh unto the Father but by the Son, while all who enter into his presence by the open door of his Son's mediatorship shall be saved. You will never meet with acceptance with God on the ground of his general mercy; while, on the ground of his Gospel mercy, you will never miss it. Should you, in the distaste and disinclination of your spirit to the cross of Christ, keep by your original confidence—should you count only on God's goodness to sinners, while you shut your eyes on his displeasure against sin, as manifested in the death of his Son, then it remains that this displeasure must be manifested in your own death and everlasting destruction. It is the grand peculiarity of the Gospel scheme, that while God has come forth in love and tenderness, he has at the same time come forth in purity. On this footing he welcomes you, but on no other. He will not pass over your transgressions of his law but in such a way as will vindicate the law's infallible right to all your obedience. He will not lavish on you his attribute of mercy but in such a way as shall accord with all the other attributes of his nature. He will not let you off from the violation of his commandments, but in such a way as will stamp indelibly the lesson of the law's sanctity. The deepest stigma is attached thus on sin, and the guilt of the sinner is

done away. It is a way which God himself has found out; but if you do not conform thereto—if you will not consent to take his mercy in the shape in which he offers it, nought remains but that you be overtaken by the wrath and displeasure of God.

This view perfectly accords with the popular expressions on this subject: "Truth and mercy met together." The effect of mercy through the channel of that peculiar economy made known to us in the New Testament is, that the mercy is in awful conjunction with the truth. And to show the mercy of God, in the remission of sins, he has sent forth his Son Jesus Christ. The true purpose is to show forth the righteousness of God in it, and that God must be just while he is the justifier of them that believe in Jesus. And thus you can harmonize the declarations of the Bible, which would have been opposed to one another, had it not been for this peculiar method of exquisite skilfulness, by which all the attributes and ways of God to men are harmonized and made one consistent whole. The Lord God is merciful and gracious, and yet he says that he will not by any means clear the guilty. Well, then, how will you reconcile those two statements? Only by the Gospel made known by Jesus Christ, and in which he demonstrates that part of his character, that he will not clear the guilty, by opening up a channel through which he can pour out his loving kindness and tender mercy to all. Be assured that there is not another scheme of pardon that will clear all the misgivings of human conscience, and give the sinner a solid satisfying peace, when he trusts in the mercy of God as made known in the Gospel. Let me assure you, that there is a path of escape, and open to you, from the

guilt you have incurred by your disobedience to God's law. The flaming sword of Eden turns every way to prevent your entrance, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ turns every way save one, but that one is a way by which every one makes good his way to the paradise of God. So far from casting a shade over his mercy, it only heightens and enhances it the more. God's mercy has to struggle a way for the manifestation of itself, amid the conflict of all the other perfections of Deity. The mercy of God is mercy in its highest possible exhibition, for it is a mercy that had the skill which appeared impracticable to every other eye but that of infinite wisdom. It is a mercy by which God spares the guilty who had defied him—it is a mercy by which he spared not his well-beloved Son, but endured the spectacle—that deep and mysterious agony by which the penalties of a broken law were fulfilled; and by which the problem is solved of God being just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. And now that the mercy of God has found itself surely established on the foundation of his vindicated honour—now that the high demands of his authority and truth have all been provided for—now that the full demonstration has been given to men and angels of a sovereignty that could not be trampled on, and a jurisprudence that could not be violated — now that every hindrance has been removed, is a voice heard from the mercy-seat — the appropriate word is to recall to that house, from which they had departed, one and all of his families.

We shall now give a short practical application. This mercy of God overpays the guilt even of the most daring and stout-hearted sinner among us. Let him have even grown gray in iniquity, there is still held out to him the

offer of that peace-speaking blood in which there resides specific virtue, washing it truly away. These words, from the mouth of God himself, can yet be addressed to him; and any man that receives this word with gladness, or that expresses that answer with faith, according to his faith so shall it be done to him. "Come now, let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though they be red as crimson, they shall be whiter than the snow." There are none here whose transgressions are so vile and enormous as to be beyond the reach of the Saviour's atonement—none so sunk in indolence, or who has drunk so deeply of the spirit of this world, that he may not, through him who died, the just for the unjust, draw nigh unto God; there is none in whom the load of offences is so accumulated, that he may not cast it on that foundation which God has laid in Zion. The very worst among you are free to return to him—nay, you have the word and warrant of an express invitation; and however far you have wandered from the sanctuary of his unspotted holiness, still you are within the scope of this call,—"Look unto me, all the ends of the world, and be ye saved." But again, remember that in very proportion to the freeness where this mercy is set before you, will be the consequent displeasure of God against those who shall be found to have rejected it. There is consolation to all who will. We do not exceed our commission when we say so. The kindness of God is still unquenched by your multiplied aggravations of his broken law, but quenched it shall be by your continued rejection of his Gospel.

To conclude, let me warn you all, that no one embraces Christ truly as a Saviour that does not submit to him as

master in all. This would introduce me, had I time, to the consideration of another right use of the law. I have endeavoured to state to you what a wrong use of the law is. But then a great benefit that arises from the faithful preaching of the law, is, that you are enabled, when it is set up in all the purity of its demands, to measure your own deficiencies, and thus are shut up in the faith. Another, I fear, is too much overlooked, which I would call a still more important use. They who receive Christ as their Saviour, must submit to him as their Master and Judge. Now, to submit to him in this capacity, what is it? Jesus Christ is no other than the everlasting law, which took its rise in the righteousness of the Godhead. Now, here is a legitimate use of the law, if you make use of it as the standard by which to measure your own conduct—not for the object of establishing a right, but for the object now, of bringing yourselves near and nearer to the standard of Christ's will and example. For, wherein consists the excellence of Christ's examples? Merely that his history, and doings, and character, exhibit as it were a living transcript of the law of God. You may take your prospects from the Old and New Testaments, or by studying the law as it were by meditating on our Saviour, and taking it from the model of his example. This is the unceasing business of every Christian. Now that you have set it aside as the right of your getting heaven, it is yours that you constantly aspire to the height of its excellence. For what is the law but a transcript upon a tablet of jurisprudence of all that worth and excellence which previously existed on the tablet of the divine character? And in doing so you are bringing yourselves as nearly as possible to the character of God; and you are, by the use of Gospel

expedients, to make the law your constant standard. That is the legitimate use of the law. And therefore I conclude with warning you all, no one receives Christ as a Saviour who does not receive him as his Lord, and has made choice of the righteousness of Christ as his only availing plea for that kingdom. No one has done so truly who does recur to the law for that other object, by successive approximation, going on to perfection, till he has attained that perfection of a nearness and fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ our Lord. Now, no one has a true faith in Christ's promises who is not faithful in the observance of Christ's precepts. No one who still heedlessly and presumptuously gives himself up to the violation of that law; for then surely he will be judged worthy of a sorer punishment, seeing he has accounted the blood of the covenant an unholy thing.

It just occurs to me to point out for your example the example of David, with whom the law of God was his delight, who rejoiced in the judgments, the statutes, and the testimonies of God. This does not look like an utter disregarding of the law. I am afraid that many professing Christians misunderstand orthodoxy, so as to think that because the law is discarded in one particular object, it may be discarded altogether. Now, it must be discarded, as to establishing a right; but yet it is kept for another object—of bringing yourselves nearer to that heavenly character, without which you will never be translated to the heavenly kingdom. And, be assured that your orthodoxy is an abomination; your solemnities, your sacraments, your zeal in catechisms and confessions will only serve to mark the deeper hyprocrisy of your souls, if you do not conform yourselves to the will of Jesus Christ in all

things. If you draw near with a true heart, he will draw near to you. The exchange you will make of the spirit of bondage for that of adoption, will be the translation of you into a new atmosphere, when you will experience the difference that there is between the service prompted by affection and gratitude, and those mercenary sacrifices compelled from the unwilling by the rod of authority. As a proof of that regeneration which ever springeth from a real belief in the Saviour, you will serve him because you love and do his will—because you delight to do him honour. Amen.

SECOND PORTION OF SERMON ON THE "USE OF THE LAW."

(DELIVERED IN THE EVENING.)

We have endeavoured to expound at least half of this lesson—the wrong use that may be made of the law when we seek to establish a right to its rewards, and the right use that may be made of the law when, convinced of sin, we seek for refuge and acceptance only in the righteousness of Christ. But there is another right use to be made of the law, which I want to make the lesson of this evening, even that of most assiduously conforming our behaviour to its requirements—to qualify ourselves for the enjoyment of that heaven which Christ has purchased for us. When we try to purchase heaven by our obedience to the law, we use the law unlawfully; when we try to prepare ourselves for that heaven purchased for us by another, even by him who has brought in everlasting righteousness, and who alone could give

an adequate price for that glorious inheritance, then it is that we use the law lawfully; and the necessity of so using it I mean to make the subject of the present discourse.

Observe, then, of the law of God, that it has another and distinct object from that of holding out a method by which men acquire a right to its promised rewards, even that of holding out a method by which they acquire a rightness of character for the exercise of its fruits. The legal right is one thing; the moral rightness which obedience confers is another. For the former object the law must now become useless, and having fallen short of perfect obedience in ourselves, we must now found our whole right only in the righteousness of Christ. For the latter object, the law still contains all the use and all the importance which it ever had. It is that tablet on which are inscribed the virtues of the Godhead; and we, by copying these into the tablet of our own character, are restored to the likeness of God. We utterly mistake the design and economy of that Gospel, if we think that while the first function of the law has been superseded under the New Testament dispensation, the second has been superseded also. Obedience for a legal right is everywhere denounced as a presumptuous enterprise; obedience for a personal righteousness is everywhere said to be an enterprise, the prosecution of which forms the main business of every disciple, and the full achievement of which is the prize of his high calling. For the one end, the law has altogether lost its efficacy; and we, in order to substantiate its claim, must seek to be justified only by the righteousness of Christ. For the other end, the law retains its office as an exampler of all virtue, and when

empowered by strength from on high to follow its dictates, we must seek to be sanctified by its bidden authority, and bidden uprightness in our own characters. Under the economy of works, human virtue is said to be the price of heaven, but its power is lost, and lost irrecoverably, by ceasing to be perfect. But human virtue is still the indispensable preparation for heaven; that is, having, for the sanctuary above, to struggle with all the imperfection of our carnal nature below, we must, by a life of prayer and pains-taking, make way through the frailties and temptations of our sinful state in time, to a meetness for the sinless inheritance which is beyond it. To be meet in law, we must be invested with faith through the righteousness of Christ; to be meet in character, we must be invested with the graces of our own personal righteousness.

Let me now, then, expound more particularly the uses to which our observance of the law may be turned, in giving us not a right to heaven, but the indispensable character without which heaven never will be entered by us. If, after having laid hold of the righteousness of Christ, as your alone meritorious plea for the kingdom of heaven, you look to the law as in fact a transcript of the image of the Godhead, and by your assiduous keeping of this law, endeavour more and more to become like to God in Christ, this is the legitimate and proper use of the law, and by making this use, you use it lawfully. You must not discard the law as being a thing that has no place in the system of the Gospel. The great end of the Gospel is to work in you a life and law of God; and by impressing the traits of that law on your character, to make you more and more like the Lawgiver, and fit you

for his companionship. Therefore, although you discard the law in one capacity, that is not to say that you are to discard it altogether; for there remains this other capacity —the law is that to which you must conform yourselves, in order to render you meet for the inheritance of the saints. The society of heaven will be a congenial society —there will be a family likeness reigning through all its members, or, in other words, you must be like unto the spirits of just men made perfect; you must be like the angels; you must be like God himself, or you are altogether unmeet for admittance there. And, therefore, I say, though you cannot by the law purchase heaven as your right, you, through its medium, prepare yourselves for the enjoyment of this heaven; you acquire that family likeness which renders you fit for your admittance there. And be assured, that without this you never will obtain entrance. We see, then, that though this obedience of ours to the law of God never can make out for us a judicial right for heaven, yet that this obedience, and this alone, makes out our personal meetness for heaven. We can separate, in idea, the judicial from the personal meetness for heaven; and while we lay an entire stress on the former, we also count the latter indispensable. Now, what helps us to do this, is the arbitrary connection which obtains between a punishment and a crime in civil society. A violent temper is its own punishment, and the misery which it inflicts may be regarded as the necessary effect of the temper itself; but it may further urge a man under its power to the commission of an assault upon his neighbour, for which, by the law of the country, he shall be put into confinement. Being thus detached from society, he is certainly restrained from a similar act against another;

and when sent back from imprisonment, the fear of its recurrence may prevent him from committing a similar outrage again. The object of peace and protection to the community is gained by this proceeding, but nothing is done by it to modify the man's temper—something perhaps to repress the outgoings of mischief, but nothing to purify or dry up its source. The man may still continue to foster in his soul the miseries of fierce internal war; so that if the civil punishment were remitted, and if he obtained a full discharge of the penalties of the law, there are other penalties formed by nature from the mere infirmities of his character, from which the law can give him no deliverance whatever. It cannot save him from the misery of his own restless and ungovernable temper—from the wretchedness of being driven, and pursued, and agonized by the fury and disorder of his own passions, after releasing him from every legal chastisement, after it has pronounced upon him in such a way that in the eye of the law he is a righteous person—after it has snatched him from the hand of its own executioner, there may be the vengeance of an executioner within. In fact, there is distress which the law lays on, but there is a natural and necessary distress by law which will prevail so long as the character remains, arising from the heat and violence of an anger which the strength of the law can never extinguish—from the conflict and fermentation of passions which breed within the man's own heart—from the affronted, proud, unquelled resentment, ready to burst forth in fancied provocation from his fellow-men; this unhappy criminal, set free from all the penalties of the law, still feels a punishment heavier than he can bear.

I trust you see the relation of this to our present sub-

ject. One part of the law of God is, that we should be forbearing and forgiving one with another. The circumstance which leads us to transgress the law is just the natural heat and violence of our temper. Suppose a man set out on the enterprise of seeking to establish a right to heaven by his obedience to the law, then it is his duty to restrain all the outbreakings of a furious temper; but he sees he never can succeed in making out the right by his obedience to the law, and, transgressing in one particular, he has failed in all. Now, some thinking that they have discarded the law, in as far as its power to obtain for them a right to heaven is concerned, and that, in discarding it, they have gone to Christ, are apt to think they are quit of the law altogether. But we say they are not; because there still remains another end—another important capacity in which they are still to use the law, even after they have united themselves to Christ. What is this capacity? and of what use is the law after this step has been taken? Here is the use of the law. All that you have gotten by your faith in Christ is a right to the kingdom of heaven. But the kingdom of heaven is peace, and righteousness, and joy. The kingdom of heaven is within you, and the essential joy of heaven is that joy which springs from the exercise of good, and kind, and virtuous affections. You have obtained a right of entering heaven, and a release from the punishment of hell. But if the temper which prompted you to those transgressions of the law still remains within you, then the essential misery of hell remains within you. You are still exposed to all the misery that is incurred by the exercise of furious and malignant passions. You must have a rightness of character—you must get quit of all those immoral, vile,

and wretched things which by nature adhere to you, and your salvation is begun here by a gradual process of deliverance from the wickedness of your hearts and lives, and which, perfected, renders you meet for the inheritance of the saints; so that this use of the law is an indispensable thing, although the law has failed, or rather you have failed, in making out your right to heaven by your obedience to its precepts.

I have endeavoured to illustrate this by showing you the distinction between what is arbitrary and natural in the punishments which await certain kinds of wickedness in this life; but we have every reason to believe in an arbitrary and a natural misery in the punishments of hell. There is no natural connection between moral guilt and the application of intense heat to the material part of our constitution. Now it is the heat, the flame, the fire and brimstone, the everlasting burnings, which chiefly appal the fancy and increase the fears of the inner man, when he thinks of the place of condemnation. Now it is true, that by a bare act of justification he may be delivered from all that is gross and carnal in these torments, the fire may cease to burn and the body to be agonized; but if the character remains, the misery that it entails on the moral constitution will also remain. A mere deed of acquittal will never work out a deliverance from this misery. An arrangement has been made known to us in the Gospel, by which God has dissolved the alliance between love and enjoyment on the one hand, and hatred and wretchedness on the other. It has made no change on the character or tendency of what is right and wrong. The economy made known to us in the New Testament has no more broken up the association between benevo-

lence and pleasure, and malignity and pain, in a man's heart, than broken up the connection between the sight of beauty and emotions of pleasure, and the sight of deformity and emotions of disgust. If a believer could be delivered from the fear of hell, and were to remain in character and effect, just what he was, a portion of the misery of hell would still adhere to him. His mind, in respect of all these painful sensations, may be as unrelenting as ever. All this hell may still be attached to his person without mitigation. Let disdain, meeting with equal disdain, and hatred, exchanging its mutual coldness, of one unregenerate being to another; and remorse, and suspicion, and envy, and discontent, rankle in the hearts of creatures that vie in hostility towards God, and each other; if this were permitted, their bodies are enough to make a hell out of any habitation of assembled criminals, from the sharpest infliction of the worm that dieth not, and the fiercest material of fire that is not quenched. The man that has this unsanctified feeling in his heart, carries hell about with him. In respect of the material ingredients of torture, it is conceivable that he may be saved by being justified; but in respect of the moral ingredients, to be saved he must be sanctified.

Therefore we see that though the law is of no use, it is just by obeying this law that you make out your sanctification, and the one is just as indispensable as the other. The thing I want is, that you will not put asunder what God has joined. Although the law is of no use to justification, it is just as essential to your enjoyment of heaven as your justification is. It is not enough, then, to obtain a mere translation from what is locally hell to what is locally heaven. The misery of hell consists in the suffer-

ings which, by the unrepealed law, are attached to vicious propensities; and a great part of the happiness of heaven consists in enjoyments which, by the same law, are attached to kind, good, and holy affections; so that to have the full advantage of an inheritance among the saints, there must be a meetness of character. On that truth I stand, and I crave your attention for a little longer to the first of these statements: and however painful the imagery that is associated with such a contemplation, the importance of the lesson must be held as our apology. We are not to overlook the penal character of those sufferings which are endured in the prison-house of the damned; and we have every reason to believe that intense bodily pain forms one ingredient of the bitter and ever-enduring agony. But there are other ingredients; and to prove how these are fitted to bring a heavy load, we ask you to conceive of the horrors of an ill-regulated dungeon, where the wretched inmates are restrained only by the terrors of discipline from acts of violence upon each other. Let corporal punishments be withdrawn; still their enormities, working on their hearts, may beget such a mental wretchedness as may make it the most expressive way of expressing this scene of confinement on earth, to call it a hell. Well, then, in this jail, although there is no bodily pain, there is the wretchedness of a hell—mutual rage and mutual revenge, revenge unsatiated, or venting itself in ferocity —the prayer of bacchanalian levity mingling with all that is unhallowed—desire, passion raising a tempest in the soul before its gratification, or leaving after it the bitterness of remorse. There may be the unbridled selfishness of beings, each clamouring for his own object, and united only in one career of daring against heaven's law—stamp

immortality on these creatures that have a hell within them; and though you open the prison doors and set them loose from confinement, each would carry with him his own portion of hell. Travel with them from one end of the world to another, yet they would not escape from what is mainly hell. Even transport their persons into what is locally heaven, they would still continue to be hunted by the substantial wretchedness of hell. These are ills from which they cannot be saved by a mere act of transference from one abode to another. There must be an act of transformation from one character to another. Or, if faith is to save them, they must be sanctified by faith; and if it is not by the law that they are to obtain their right of entering into heaven, most assuredly it is by their obedience to the law that they have obtained that heaven shall be to them a place of enjoyment, for without it heaven itself would be turned into a hell.

And without going for illustration to the outcasts of exile and imprisonment, the very same thing may be exemplified in the bosom of families. It is not necessary that pain be inflicted on bodies by acts of violence, in order to make it a wretched family. It is enough that pain be made to rankle within every heart; from the elements of suspicion, hatred, and disgust, an abode of enjoyment may be turned into an abode of the intensest misery. The first ingredient of the place of torment may breed and break out in the dwelling places of the unregenerate in this world, so as that if the element of fire were altogether expunged in the future arrangement of nature and providence; yet God has other elements which he can wield to the eternal wretchedness of those who disobey him—he has other agents than that lake which

burneth with fire and brimstone. Our own passions will be to us the ministers of heaviest condemnation; and to save from these, there must be a meetness impressed on our characters; for it is not enough that we have that which the law cannot give us, even a right to the kingdom of heaven; but, on the other hand, we must, in addition to this, have that which the law alone gives us, even that meetness of character without which we are altogether unqualified for heaven's exercises and heaven's joys.

Having thus endeavoured to make palpable to you that the hell of the New Testament consists mainly in the wretchedness which attaches naturally and necessarily to character, let me touch on the opposite and more pleasing side of the picture—the heaven of the New Testament, as consisting mainly in the happiness which attaches, naturally and necessarily, to character. I have no idea of a man carrying in life with him the security that he is a justified person, and at the same time being a bad member of society, making his whole family miserable. If he perseveringly and presumptuously go on with his disobedience to the law, that man is not in the way of salvation at all. Were it real, the first doing of faith in Christ would be to work love in his heart. It would show itself in all sorts of ways in the walk and conversation. People are apt to think that heaven is a place of great splendour and spaciousness, and that there is music going on there, and the exhibition of all goodness; that it is a most delicious and most regaling place, and suited to all the physical wants of our nature. But the main happiness of heaven is just the happiness that springs from righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. And though you have the right of entering there, if you have not these things,

you have no heaven at all. If your life has in it the character of hell, taking you out of one place and putting you into another will not make you happy. The kingdom of God is not in you. Heaven is more a thing of character than of local condition; so that your heaven may begin now; and the great thing is your having heaven's purity —heaven's love for the brethren.

Well, then, this is one sample of how much happier a thing heaven is than hell; because heaven is the abode of love—hell is the abode of misery. It is a mere contradiction in terms to speak of salvation without a virtuous and good character, because the very essence of your salvation is that character. It begins here, and you perfect it hereafter. I want you to understand that the salvation of the Gospel mainly and essentially is moral salvation; and that heaven consists essentially in the happiness that attaches to the exercise and reciprocation of right moral feeling and conduct, one to another.

It were of incalculable use, were we to be familiarized with this view. Were men led to pursue an enlightened notion of the real character of heaven's enjoyments on the one side, and of hell's sufferings on the other, it would lead them to perceive what was actually meant by the term salvation. People often speak of salvation without meaning. If they understand the precise import of this term, they would see Antinomianism with such a right understanding of salvation, as would in fact make Antinomianism become a contradiction in terms. It would appear the same absurdity, as a heaven of splendour given as a reward to a man that is blind. Conceive a man blind and heaven promised to him, and this heaven to consist in the beauty and splendour of its sights, what is

that to a man that is blind? Just so; heaven to a man who continues wicked, is equally absurd as a heaven of sights as a reward to a man who is blind, or a heaven of melody to a man who is deaf, or a heaven of philosophy as a reward to a man who has no power to comprehend the true simplicity of its principles. We have only to think of the character of the heaven of the New Testament, that it is the land of uprightness; and then to reflect how utterly vain it is to hold up this as a reward to a man whose heart was still occupied with the love of sin, or who remained a slave to those lusts which war against the soul. To enjoy a brilliant and picturesque heaven, a man must be endowed with a seeing eye; to enjoy a musical heaven, he must be endowed with a hearing ear; to enjoy an intellectual heaven, he must be endowed with a clear and able understanding; and to enjoy the actual heaven of the New Testament, into which all who are meet on earth are soon to be transported, he must be endowed with a moral heart. So that the very essence of salvation shall consist in the personal salvation by which man is rendered capable of being a happy and congenial inmate of heaven. It shall consist in restoring to him the character he had lost, by the possession of which, and by renewal of which, through the power of the second Adam, he was capable then, and will again be, of the communion of God and of enjoyment the most pure and exalted, in the presence of a good, and righteous, and holy God. It consists in endowing him with what may be called a spiritual relish, and conferring on him the faculty of spiritual perception, and making his character concord with that of God. And this is what is called in the Bible renewing him in knowledge after the image of him who

created him; and it is this change and temper of soul by which alone a soul becomes suited to a celestial element —it is this regeneration by which it is made capable of breathing with comfort and rapture in an atmosphere of holiness. This is the change which begins on earth; and thus it is that the kingdom of God shall be set up on earth. The establishment of that kingdom is a personal operation, going on in the hearts and characters of people here below. The man the object of it is born again, and from being an alien, a sinner, he becomes an aspiring saint: he breathes in a new element of godliness, and it is only by his breathing this element, that heaven can be a blessing, a reward, or an enjoyment. In a word, the salvation by Christ Jesus consists in being restored to the perfection of his moral and spiritual nature, and thus made fit for the converse of those who cease not day and night in glorifying Him who is the fountain of all spiritual excellence, unto whom heaven is a paradise, not because of groves, rivers, and palaces, but because of glories, adorations, and its holy services.

This might be made obvious to you, in the lessons of your own experience with man—the connection between the character and the happiness of man. It is evidently verified in human life, and I should like to have your own experience to depone to the truth of what I am saying. If you live in a neighbourhood where all is civil, cordial, and kind, do you not see that there is a great deal of happiness there? Independent of all kindness to you, do you not see that there is something in feeling kindly to one another? You must be sensible how much enjoyment it is. Well, when carried up to heaven, all people are loving one another as themselves. Conceive how much

happier a neighbourhood is when all are well affected towards one another, to what it is when there is discord, jealousy, envy, and backbiting. This gives you a symbol of the difference that there is between heaven and hell, and it makes for my argument, which is, that although the law be set aside in as far as a right, you must not set it aside altogether, but it is just by obedience that you work yourselves up to the right character. There is a heaven without and another within you, and the whole effect of justification is to give a heaven without you. But then, you will not be happy with a heaven without you, unless there was within you the character of heaven, the affection and good feeling of heaven. I appeal to your own experience, if even in the most abject abodes of poverty, let but kindness operate, and there will arise a moral sunshine, wherein all the families may rejoice. We understand not human love and good-will but apart from all justice, and from all that ministers in this world, we can see, how, out of a moral economy alone, by mind acting on mind, there are materials enough out of which an Elysium might be formed; and as good-will and its corresponding affections oftentimes are multiplied on earth, in that proportion will we be assimilated in its joys to the paradise that is above.

Now it is equally true of the bad affections, that they have power to make you miserable. It is not necessary that one, under the principle of injustice, should entail on you a very heavy loss to make you wretched. Simply to have to do with unjust and dishonest people makes you wretched, independent of all loss—the very circumstance of breathing the air that they breathe, or of having to do with them at all, gives a misery which is mainly, I think,

the wretchedness of hell; therefore we have the counterpart of the good affections of our nature in the wrong affections of our nature: and by adverting to these we can illustrate still further the distinction between moral and physical. If there be an essential delight in the interchange of good feelings, there is an essential misery in the interchange of bad ones, and that apart altogether from the extreme harm experienced under the operation of them, just as in gratitude there is a joy independent of the gift that may have passed between them; so, in the reciprocal working of misery and anger, there is wretchedness distinct from any loss of property or physical pain inflicted on the person. There is uneasiness in both cases, but you must be conscious that the two kinds of mental uneasiness are totally adverse the one to the other, and that the moral smart is far the more pungent and intolerable. It is thus with an injury which, in respect of the person who offends, may transport the man out of all comfort for hours together;—he could have borne without a pang a far heavier deprivation from the hand of accident or misfortune, but from fraud or malevolence he cannot bear it. In a word—there are moral elements, purely by their own operation of acting and reacting, which can either minister to the utmost complacency of heart, or corrode that heart; there are virtues which of themselves, and separate from all consequences, are sweet to the taste of the inner man; and vices which of themselves, and separate from all consequences, have in them the bitterness of gall and wormwood.

Hell, without the help of sensible torments, can be formed from these materials. The true aspect of cruelty, without its inflictions—the very gall of hatred—the very

presence of treachery—the very juxtaposition of beings in whose bosoms you know there dwell all that is base and unfriendly, these and these alone are materials enough to constitute a dreadful Pandemonium. To be shut up in this were enough of itself to give man the anguish of the worm that dieth not, and to feel in all its fierceness the fire that is not quenched.

I sincerely hope that I have made out to your satisfaction that the law's character is most indispensable. I suppose that you have accepted of Jesus; that you are perfectly convinced that he took our nature and suffered in our stead; well, suppose all this, and now that you can look forward to heaven as your own, the proper and absolute distinction is, that you set out in the work of perfect holiness, you set the law aside as a right—you just revert to that very law again and for the purpose of giving you a heavenly mind. Christ's employment is two-fold; he is employed at this moment, we know not how, in preparing a place for us. But this he says—When I go, I shall send the Comforter. And what is the employment which Jesus Christ is discharging by means of this spirit on earth? On this we can speak more pointedly. He is employed in heaven in preparing a place for us; but his Spirit is sent down to earth in order to prepare us for the place; and without that preparation, we and the place will never come into contact with each other. Without holiness no man shall see God.

I have adverted to the spiritual character of hell, and have affirmed that the wretchedness of that place of torment is mainly composed of spiritual elements, and I shall just conclude with one reference more to the spiritual character of heaven—and I can assure you that this is a

happiness you will not reach unless you are made holy, and spiritual, and moral men; because the happiness which is there is mainly composed of spiritual and moral elements. It lies in the exercise and play of pleasurable affections—in the possession of a heart now thoroughly emancipated from all its idolatries, and which has attained to that which is most worthy of love. The song of gladness will truly in you be elevated there, and it will be the jubilee of spirits that is heard there, and the clear etherial element of holiness will be what is breathed there, and a moral Paradise will be there, where the serenities of joy will be the gradual and uniform tenor of the soul. And how can there be any other way to such a habitation than the way of progressive holiness here? What other education can fit us for such an eternity as this but the education of virtue? If heaven above would recoil from all contact with the pollutions of the world below, then surely we who are aspiring towards that heaven, should deny ourselves all ungodliness and worldly lusts. The way of the disciple here should be as distinct from that of a child of this world as the places are in which they are to spend their eternity; and if it be through the way of sin that the one reaches his abode of death and condemnation, so truly must the other keep in the way of holiness ere he reach the abode of life everlasting. Amen

SERMON III.*

ON THE SMOOTH THINGS BY WHICH MEN ARE APT TO BE DECEIVED.

"*Speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits.*"—
ISAIAH XXX. 10.

I PROPOSE in the following discourse to instance a few of those deceits and those smooth things which teachers may address to the people who love to be deceived, or wherewith the people themselves lay a flattering unction to their own souls. The first of these which, though not generally ranked among the smooth things, I hold to be the universal deceit, and that, in virtue of which we so magnify the present world, give such an exaggerated importance to things present and things sensible, regard time as if it had all the worth and endurance of eternity, and look on eternity as a thing of remote and shadowy insignificance, the care and consideration of which may be indefinitely postponed. This is the false security of all those who make the world their all, who account it their precious and enduring portion on this side of time. It is sometimes ministered to in sermons, and particularly by those clergymen who expatiate much on the respect of good neighbourhood, on the wealth and prosperity of this life, or on other temporal blessings, as great per-

* Preached in St. John's Church, Glasgow.

suasives to a life of virtue; and many are the sons of affluence who minister thus deceitfully to themselves, and like the man in the parable, say, "Soul, thou hast goods laid up for many years, take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry." Now this is a delusion which we would do well in giving no rest to, but should assail by all the arguments of reason and Scripture. Our hearers should be reminded, at every turn, of the rapid flight of time, of death, and of judgment, and of eternity. They should be told again and again of this, for, however often it be come back upon, men let it slip into forgetfulness, and upon them it comes always once more in the character of a new lesson they have yet to learn. They are the better of being again and again told, that even as manhood is come, so old age will come, and the last sickness will come, and the very last look they will ever cast on their acquaintances will come, and the agony of parting breath will come, and the time for the coffin that is to inclose them will come, and that hour when the company assembled will carry them to the churchyard will come, and that moment when they shall be thrown into the grave will come, and the spreading of the green sod over it—all, all will come, and in a few short years the minister who now speaks, and the people who now listen, will be carried to their long home. It is just that wealth and worldliness should be taught of their flattering hopes, and on this most levelling of all arguments, the argument of death; they who have even the greatest demand for smooth things from the preacher, of all others ought not to be spared. They should be impressively told, that they are building their chief good upon a foundation that is perishable, that they are labouring for one portion only, which will be speed-

ily wrested from them,—they are labouring for a portion in this world's substance, and in the possession of it they shall have their reward; but in regard to the substance which endureth, as for it they never laboured, so it they will never acquire. They have thought to be arrayed in perishable glory, and flutter for an hour in earthly grandeur, but that hour will soon come to its termination, and death shall leave all possessions untouched, but will lay his hard and resistless hand on the possessor. The house may stand in castellated pride for generations, but, alas! perhaps in half a generation, death may shoot his unbidden way to the innermost apartment, and without spoiling the lord of his property, he will spoil the property of its lord. Men yield, and perish, and fall like useless and forgotten things away from it. It is thus that death smiles in contempt at all human aggrandizement; he lays hold of the occupier, not the things occupied, and this is complete deprivation to him. He does not seize on the wealth, but lays his hard and resistless hand on the owner, and turns the soul adrift on the cheerless waste of an endless and neglected eternity. So much for the first of these smooth things that attaches to what may be called the carnality of our nature.

Now the second of these smooth things which may be addressed from the pulpit, or which men of themselves address to their own consciences, is a meagre and superficial imagination of their guilt, and proportionally to this, a slight apprehension of their danger. They hear a great deal of guilt and corruption and liability to a violated law, but they know not what they have done that should land them in so frightful a consummation. They know not how it is that they should be doomed

to eternal misery. They will admit that they have failings, but nothing commensurate to the punishment of hell. There may be some desperadoes in wickedness, a few men, stubborn-hearted men, of fiend-like atrocity, whom the children of this world so little resemble, that the world, that all, would shudder at them. These may be fit inmates of that dire pandemonium, but surely, as to those kind and companionable men of our own daily walk, with whom we exchange the offices of hospitality and the smiles of benignity and good-will, you could not assimilate their guilt with that of the daring outcast who passes through life in utter recklessness of all its duties and decencies. This cause of peace is distinct from the former cause. It is a judicial principle that is quite current among men that are at peace, because they do not see that theirs is at all a guilt so heinous as to bring down upon it the burden of a wounded conscience, but they see a peace which is no peace, for there is in all this a very complete delusion. For a man to be executed he must have outraged the laws of society. Now, if men have acquitted themselves in a tolerable way, what, they will think, have they to fear? But there is another relation to which belong distinct duties, we mean the relation in which man stands, not to each being of his own species, but to the Being who created him. He may have disengaged himself of all he owes to his fellows on earth, and yet be utterly unmindful of what he owes to heaven. He may have a liking to his fellow-men, and yet have felt no attraction to him who is the great Creator and Preserver of men. There may be many a close and mutual reciprocation of mutual esteem and tenderness, and yet the whole of this terrestrial society be in a state

of utter disruption from Him who is at once the source and centre of the created universe. The matter of this world might retain its cohesion, but, loosened from its attraction to the sun, it becomes an outcast from the movements of the great mundane system. This is precisely the case with the men of this world. They have broken their affinity to God. They retain many of their affinities to each other, but they live in a general departure from God. It is experimentally true, that the men of compassion and cruelty, who are so differently affected at the sight of distress, may be in the same state of practical indifference to God. It is in the spirit of sound philosophy that humanity, with all her complexional varieties of character between one specimen and another, may be throughout impregnated with the deep spirit of ungodliness. This is the representation of that Scripture which speaks to us from heaven. When brought to the bar of public opinion, of social and conventional morality among men, you may be fully and honourably acquitted, yet when brought to the bar of higher jurisprudence, there may be laid on you the burden of an overwhelming condemnation. Then ungodliness stands forth, and then the Being who made you takes up His own cause; and then the question is made, not of the claims which men have upon you, but of those peculiar claims which God has upon you. Then you are met with the question, what have you done unto God? In reference to the moralities, which custom enjoins, there is perhaps not an earthly tribunal before which you might not stand. In reference to that transcendent morality which the Gospel enjoins, man's boasted righteousness melteth away. This language is not too strong for the guilt and turpitude of

that enormity wherewith humanity is chargeable, yet the majority of our world are all unsuspicious of having a heart so vile and enormous. When a son feels a scowl on his countenance, or a disregard in his heart towards his earthly parent, you then can readily admit that no constrained obedience of the hand can atone for the disaffection of the heart; and the parent now feels it the sorest agony of nature, that he should have brought up a family who do not love him. Then neglect has a painful effect upon him. Yes, we are capable of feeling the utmost indignation when an earthly parent is thus robbed of that moral property which belongs to him: and how then shall the far more emphatical obligation to a Father who is in heaven be regarded? What can be made of that great human family which hast cast off the allegiance of their hearts from him, and turned every one to his own way? Do ye call it nothing that man, if not lifting up the cry of positive rebellion, should be losing all sense of his own universal regardlessness? What think you of man walking through life so heedlessly and independent of his Creator, receiving from his hand the inspiration and breath he draws, but with an habitual separation of the soul from him—nourished from his cradle to his grave, by the gifts of an all sustaining Providence, and reckless all the while of the giver—selfishly revelling in the midst of the thousand gratifications, but without any gratitude to Him who has poured forth such luxuriance—being every hour under the guardianship of a God who watches over him, and yet with his own eyes almost continually averted from him—looking abroad upon a glorious panorama, but without the recognition of his unseen benefactor—inhaling fresh delight through every organ

of his sentient economy, yet having all his senses steeped, as it were, in forgetfulness of that great Being who has so adapted him to the theatre which he occupies, that the air, the water, the earth, and all the elements of surrounding nature are administering to his enjoyment! You know how is denounced the ingratitude of a child to his earthly parent; and is there no denouncement against the ingratitude to our unseen, but constant benefactor? You know how to feel for the agony of a parent's wounded bosom; and is there nothing in that voice which says, Behold I have stretched forth my hand, and no man regarded? With what feelings should we regard the guilt of creatures who have dishonoured their Creator? the deep criminality of that soul that has departed from its God? I consider the acceptance of this smooth thing as the greatest bar in the way of gaining acceptance to man from the ordinances of religion. If people are under the imagination that there is a slight disease, they will be satisfied with a very slight remedy, and the connection between the application of a slight remedy and the failure of the cure, is obvious. That man will not see his need of a severe application, who does not see his disease to be of an aggravated nature. He will only consent to a cure that will be superficial also—and it is with the hurt of the soul, as with the hurt of the body, the malady may be fatal; but if the patient think not so, he will be glad to put out of the way the very mildest of sanatives. And thus it is with those who slightly and smoothly feel the hurt of their own souls. They will not go to the physician with them. The Lamb of God tells them to wash out their sins in his blood, and beckons their approach to that fountain of perfection which has

been opened in the house of Judah; but they care not for the virtue of that atonement through which the foulness of guilt may be done away, and still less for the operation of that regenerating power which shall reach the heart, and turn all its affections from the world unto God. They will look for safety in another way than by a dark and dreary passage of spiritual distress, than in a translation into the marvellous light of the Gospel, and than by a general reformation of character, so as to form them a peculiar people, whose converse is in heaven, and whose great business on earth is to perfect their holiness. They would, therefore, decline the whole question of their eternity, or take their own way of salvation, and wish upon a slender reformation to get to heaven as comfortably as they can.

Now, it strikes me, that this second is very nearly connected with the third of the smooth things which I shall instance. A man who feels his disease so slight, will be satisfied with a very slight remedy; and accordingly the remedy which men are satisfied with, is resting on the general mercy of God. God is represented as a being full of tenderness, thus making it the whole character of the Godhead, and in this way lulling themselves into a deceitful security—not thinking of one set of attributes, justice, truth, and righteousness, but keeping these in the background, and bringing in the foreground, God being of universal tenderness and benignity, and who will not be severe on the follies of his poor erring creatures. The third, then, of the smooth things, is a false trust in the general mercy of God. They who are under this delusion, look unto God as a God of tenderness, and nothing else. In the employment of the imagery of domestic life,

they ascribe to Him the fondness rather than the authority of a Father. In the ingenuity of their imagination there is not the slightest approach to severity, and far less to sternness of character. There is but one expression they will tolerate, that of gentleness and complacency—all else is banished from their creed, and is no sooner offered to their notice, than all their antipathies are put in arms against it. The smile of an indulgent Deity is that with which they constantly regale themselves, while the scowl of an indignant Deity is that upon which they would most carefully shut their eyes. They would admit of no other aspect of religion than that of uniform blessedness, and they appeal to all that is mild and merciful. They look on the soft and flowery landscape, or towards that evening sky, behind the inimitable touches of whose loveliness one could almost wish to rest, and infer all that is benignant in the Creator. Confining our prospects to the realities with which earth is peopled, and leaving the fields of poesy, and viewing the waving field or placid lake, it is most readily thought, that surely he from whose creating touch all this loveliness has arisen, must himself be altogether gracious, benignant, and merciful. At present, we do not stop to observe, that if the Divinity is to be interpreted by the spirit of nature, nature has earthquakes, hurricanes, and thunders, as well as the other things on which they love to dwell, but we hold it of more importance to remark, that the delusion which is thus fostered, is not confined to the sons and daughters of poetry. It is a delusion that may be recognized in humble life, and which we believe to be of standing operation on our most untutored peasantry. I have often heard from people in humble

life, such expressions as, We are poor frail creatures, and God never made us to die. There is a disposition even among the poorest of society to build upon the goodness of the Divine character. They ascribe a certain facility of temperament to Heaven's Sovereign, a sort of easy good nature of which they avail themselves. They fondly dwell on the maxim, that God is ever ready to pardon. It is this beholding of the goodness, without along with it the severity of God, that lulls the human spirit into a fatal complacency with its own state and prospects. It is this in virtue of which man may take to himself the privilege of sinning just as much as he pleases. From this fearful state of relaxation arise this dislike for a religion of gloom, and this demand for a religion of cheerfulness and pleasure. It is thus that men keep out of view the holiness and justice and high sovereign state which compose the awfulness of the character of Deity. It is this that serves to break down the fence between obedience and sin, to nullify all moral government, and, by tampering as it does with the authority of the Divine jurisprudence, to overspread the face of our world with a deep and erroneous security, at the very time that each may be walking in the counsel of his own heart. Now, this delusion requires very strenuous management on the part of the minister who is faithful, for its exposure. In expounding the character of God, and more especially his ways to men, the faithful minister cannot too frequently enter his protest against the smooth thing which I have noticed. He cannot too loudly and frequently maintain to his hearers, that there is a righteousness on the part of God—that there is a law that will not be trampled upon—that there is a lawgiver that will

not be insulted—that there is a throne of high jurisprudence that is guarded and upheld by all the secrets of truth, and a voice of authority of which we are told that heaven and earth shall pass away, ere one of its words pass away. In the economy of the government under which we sit, there is no compromise with sin—the face of God is unchangingly set against it. There is no toleration with God for what is impure or unholy. There may an access be found in his goodness towards the sinner, but towards the sin there is nothing save unsparing warfare. Sitting, as he does, in lofty and unapproachable sacredness, he cannot feel the least toleration for sin, but in that way in which his justice shall be vindicated. And surely, my brethren, were we to read the Bible, we would be convinced that these views accord with the real nature of God. What displays, for example, have we in Scripture history of God's hatred of sin, from which the august Being who presides over the world has never once been known to change! In the whole history of God's ways, we cannot light upon a single instance of his falling back from the severity of justice—not from the hour of the one transgression of our first parent—not from the flood which rained down from heaven to wash away wickedness from the face of a world that Heaven could no longer tolerate—not from the promulgation of the law from Mount Sinai, when the thunder and lightnings gave awful demonstration of its authority—not from the entrance of Israel into the promised land, when God, to avouch the truth and terror of his judgments, gave forth his edict to exterminate the nations who were before him—not from the subsequent dealings of many centuries with his own perverse children, among whom he sent famine and pes-

tilence, and against whom all his prophecies of evil were felt; and, lastly, not from that terrible period when the Jewish economy was swept away, and even the cries of a compassionate Saviour did not avert the approaching overthrow. In all this there is a lesson for us. How awful are the threats of Heaven against impurity! Let us then beware of laying any flattering unction to our own souls. But while we thus expose the vanity of this confidence in the general mercy of God, the Gospel mercy cannot be too freely and fully and affectionately urged on the hearts of sinners.

I do not like to pass from the third to the fourth delusion, with the view of exposing it, without one passing reference, at least, to the sure and infallible way in which all who put their trust in God's mercy, on the footing on which he proposes it, will most certainly be saved. You should be told, then, that though God is a God whose justice must be vindicated, it is not because of his delight in the sufferings of his creatures, but because of his justice, and holiness, and truth. His delight is in the happiness of that sentient nature which he himself has formed, and except it be to the injury of those high moral attributes, he ever rejoices in scattering the fruits of his beneficence over a grateful and rejoicing family. When he is vindictive it is because of the righteousness of his character, and because the stability of a righteous character demands it. Could he so manage it as that this lofty connection would not suffer by it, could the sacredness of the Godhead, of which so direct a manifestation is given in his work of vengeance, be carried forward to a work of mercy, then would we be assured that he who has no pleasure in the death of his children, after such a way

had been opened up and cleared of all its impediments, would appear alone causing his grace and goodness clearly to descend and spread over even to the utmost limits of his sensible creation. It is this which distinguishes the evangelical mercy, which is gratuitously held out to the acceptance of all, from that general mercy in which so many confide, but by which none can be saved. Were we asked, in brief definition, to state what that is which embraces in the Gospel its essential characteristic, we should say a mercy in awful conjunction with righteousness. It magnifies and does honour to the law in which it cancels the guilt that has been incurred. All the exhibition that God could have given of his character is still given unmutilated. The mercy of the Gospel mixes with the truth of the law.

The fourth and last, and here I shall be brief, of the smooth things which I shall instance, is that which many, and some of those who are called the professing people of God, love to be told of from the pulpit, or to cherish, in the secret complacency of their own hearts, a certain Antinomian security which they connect with the doctrines of grace and justification by faith. This is a delusion which cannot be too frequently protested against. It stands opposed to all the tenor of the New Testament, and Christianity is everywhere represented as a busy, laborious, ever-doing, and painstaking service; and, therefore, when we see people reposing on their orthodoxy, and making use of it as a soporific to lull themselves, we should ply them with questions founded on the true representation which the New Testament gives. Are they running so as that they may obtain? Are they fighting so as that they may gain a hard won victory? Are they

striving so as that they may force an entrance at the strait gate? Where, we ask, are there any symptoms of warfare? There is a whole host of people who do stand forth and signalize themselves as the religious of the day; but amid all their appearance and profession, where is the practical result? Where is the strenuous, the sustained effort that cometh out from the heart and willing hands? How few are there who are labouring for heaven, as if pressed with the conviction that without labour they will not obtain it, and that even after the utmost labour they will scarcely reach the goal? Surely, if they proceeded on this view of the matter, the appearance would be that of men upon the stretch, of men in a state of constant and great urgency, and who are beset with many obstacles. Now, we scarcely meet with this degree of intensity, not certainly among all, if indeed among any, of those who are called the professing Christians. They have more the semblance of men who have been lulled asleep by the sound of a pleasant song, than of men roused to action. Their orthodoxy acts rather as a sedative than a stimulant. They are more like men under the power of a lethargy than in readiness for service, having their loins girt and their lamps burning. Christianity is deeply injured whenever it is imagined that all this activity and labour is not needed. They are sadly misled in creeds who fancy that the death of Christ is that in which the believer has only to rest and do nothing. Instead of this it is the starting post. "Christ gave himself for us," says the apostle, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The faith of the Gospel so enlarges the heart as to make him on whom it

has acted run in the way of its commandments. The work which is given a Christian to do is not a work done so easily that it may be lightly, carelessly, or superficially gone about, but of such difficulty that they who do accomplish it, accomplish it scarcely. Keep thy heart with all diligence. To keep a strict and resolute guardianship over the inner man amid the temptations by which he is plied from without, and most insidiously operated on from within—to follow after peace when surrounded by provocatives for war—to maintain charity—to be patient under calumny and injustice, and master that most difficult of all achievements, the love of enemies—to put away all the incitements of sensuality, is at once difficult and arduous. In addition to the labours of the unseen spirit, we have to labour in our closets, in our families, in the ordinances of religion, in attention to offices of social intercourse, in the visitations of liberality and kindness. These are the toils of Christianity here. These are the treasures laid up for us in heaven, but not as forming our title-deeds to the glorious inheritance of the saints. All the possible acts and virtues of humanity cannot build up a claim, but they form an indispensable character—they compose not that imputed righteousness of Christ, but that personal righteousness of his disciples, which is their essential qualification. These mark the work and labour of Christianity such, that it scarcely can be done. These give emphatic truth to the saying, "That the righteous can scarcely be saved." Awake, therefore, if you would escape the fearfulness, the doom of those who say, Lord, Lord, while they do not the will of their Father who is in heaven. I add no more. Amen.

SERMON IV.*

THE MISERY OF THE UNJUST AND IMPURE, AND THE HAPPINESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS AND THE HOLY.

"*He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.*"—Rev. xxii. 11.

Our first remark on the passage we have now read is, how very palpably and how very nearly it connects time with eternity. The character wherewith we sink into the grave at death, is the very character with which we shall reappear on the day of resurrection. The character which habit has fixed and strengthened through life adheres, it would seem, to the disembodied spirit through the mysterious interval which separates the day of our dissolution from the day of our account, when it will again stand forth, the very image and substance of what it was, to the inspection of the Judge and the awards of the judgment-seat. The moral lineaments which be graven on the tablet of the inner man, and which every day of an unconverted life makes deeper and more indelible than before, will retain the impress they have received unaltered by the transition to the future state of our existence. There will be a dissolution and then

* Preached in St. John's Church, Glasgow.

a reconstruction of the body from the same dust into which it had mouldered; but neither a dissolution nor a renovation of the spirit, which, indestructible both in character and essence, will weather and retain its identity in the mid-way passage between this world and the next, so that at the time of quitting its earthly tenement we may say, "That if unjust now, it will be unjust still; if filthy now, it will be filthy still; if righteous now, it will be righteous still; and if holy now, it will be holy still."

Our second remark suggested by the Scripture now under consideration is, that there be many analogies of nature and experience which even death itself does not interrupt. There is nought more familiar to our daily observation than the power and inveteracy of habits, insomuch that any decided propensity is strengthened by every new act of indulgence; any virtuous principle is more firmly established than before by every new act of resolute obedience to its dictates. The law which connects our actings of boyhood or of youth with the character of manhood, is the identical law which connects our actings in time with our character in eternity. The way in which the moral discipline of youth prepares for the honours and enjoyments of a virtuous manhood, is the very way in which the moral and spiritual discipline of the whole life prepares for a virtuous and happy immortality; and, on the other hand, the succession of cause and effect from a profligate youth or dishonest manhood to a disgraced and worthless old age, is just the succession also of cause and effect between the misdeeds and depravities of our history on earth, and our endurance of worthlessness and wretchedness for ever. The law of continuity between the different stages of life is also the law of continuity between

the two worlds, which even the death that intervenes does not violate. Be he a saint or a sinner, he shall be followed with his own ways, so that when fixed in his own place of fixed and everlasting destiny, the one shall rejoice in eternity in the pure elements of goodness which here he loved and aspired after; the other, the helpless and degraded victim of those passions which lorded over him in life, shall be irrevocably doomed to the worst of all torments—the torments of his own accursed nature, the inexorable tyranny of evil.

Our third remark suggested by this Scripture is, that it affords no very dubious prospective of the future hell and future heaven of the New Testament. We are aware of the material images employed in Scripture by which it embodies forth its representations of both—of the fire and brimstone, and the lake of living agony, and the gnashing of teeth, and the wailings, the ceaseless wailings, of distress and despair unutterable, by which the one is set before us in characters of terror and most revolting hideousness; of the splendour, the spaciousness, the music, the floods of melody, the rich and surpassing loveliness by which the other is set before us in characters of bliss and brightness imperishable, with all that can regale the rejoicing senses of an imperishable creature rejoicing for ever in the presence and before the throne of God. We stop not to inquire, and far less to dispute, whether these descriptions in their plain meaning and to the very letter are to be realized, but we hold that it would purge theology of many of its errors, and guide and enlighten the practical Christianity of many an honest inquirer, if the moral character of heaven and hell were more distinctly recognized, and held a more prominent place in the regards

and contemplations of men. If it indeed be true, that the moral rather than the material be the main ingredient, whether of the coming torment or the coming ecstasy, then the hell of the wicked may be said to be already begun, and the heaven of the virtuous may be said to be already begun in the breast of the good man. The one, in the bitterness of an unhinged and dissatisfied spirit, has a foretaste of the wretchedness before him; the other, in the peace, and triumph, and complacency of an approving conscience, has a foretaste of the happiness before him. Each is ripening for his own everlasting doom, and, whether in the depravities of the one or in the graces of the other, we see materials enough either for a worm that dieth not, or for the pleasures that are for evermore.

But, again, it may be asked, will spiritual elements alone suffice to make up either the intense and intolerable wretchedness of a hell, or the intense beatitudes of a heaven? In answer to this question, let us go in detail over the different clauses of the verse now submitted to your consideration, and let us first turn your attention to the former of these receptacles; and we ask you to think of the state of that heart, in respect of sensation, which is the seat of a concentrated and all-absorbing selfishness, which feels for no other interest than its own, and holds no fellowship of truth, or honesty, or confidence with the fellow-beings around it. The owner of such a heart may live in society; but cut off as he is by his own sordid nature from the reciprocities of honourable feeling and good faith, he may be said to live estranged in the midst of it: he is a stranger to the day-light of the moral world, and instead of walking abroad on the open platform of his fellows, he stands, a cold and heartless existence, in the

hiding-place of his own thoughts; and you are in a mistake if you think of this creature that he knows aught of the real truth or substance of enjoyment, or, however successful in the wiles of his paltry selfishness, that a sincere or solid satisfaction has been the result of it. On the contrary, if you enter his heart, you will there find a distaste and disquiet in the lurking sense of his own worthlessness—dissevered from the respect of society without, he finds refuge nowhere; within he is abandoned by the respect of his own conscience. It does not consist with our moral nature that there should be internal happiness or harmony when the moral sense is made to suffer perpetual violence. The man of cunning and concealment, however dexterous or triumphant in his wretched policy, is not at his ease. The stoop, the downcast regard, the dark and sinister expression of him who cannot lift up his head among his fellow-men, or look his companions in the face, are the sensible proof that he who knows himself to be dishonest feels himself to be degraded; and the inward sense of dishonour which haunts and humbles him here, is but the commencement of that shame and everlasting contempt to which he shall awake hereafter. Now, this is purely a moral chastisement, and, apart altogether from the infliction of violence or pain on his sentient economy, is enough to overwhelm the spirit that is exercised by it. Let him, then, that is unjust now, be unjust still—and in stepping from time to eternity he carries in his own distempered bosom the materials of his coming vengeance along with him. Character itself will be the executioner of its own condemnation; and instead of each suffering apart, the unrighteous are congregated together as in the parable of the tares, where, instead of each plant being

separately destroyed, the order is given to bind them up in bundles and burn them. We may be well assured that, when the turbulence and disorder of unrighteous society are superadded to those sufferings that prey within the heart of each individual member, a tenfold fiercer and more intolerable agony will ensue from it. The anarchy of a state, when its government is for a time suspended, forms but a feeble representation of that everlasting anarchy which ensues when the unrighteous are let loose to act and re-act with unmitigated violence on each other. In this fierce and fell collision between the outrages of injustice on the one hand, and the outcries of resentment on the other—though no pain were inflicted in this war of passions and of purposes of violence, the passions and purposes of violence in one creature call forth the passions and purposes of keenest vengeance back again—though no sentient agony were felt in the war of disembodied spirits, yet in the wild tempest of disembodied passions alone, the hatred, the envy, the burning recollection of yet unfulfilled retaliation—in these and these alone do we behold materials enough of a dire and dreadful pandemonium; and, apart from corporeal suffering altogether, may be beheld in the full development of character alone enough for imparting all its corrosion to the worm that dieth not, enough for sustaining in all its fierceness the fire that is not quenched.

But there is another moral ingredient in the future sufferings of the wicked, besides the one we have now spoken of, suggested by the second clause of our text, and from which we learn that not only will the unjust man carry his fraud and falsehood along with him to the place of condemnation, but that also the voluptuary will carry

his unsanctified habits and unhallowed passions thitherward. "And he who is filthy, let him be filthy still." And here I take the opportunity of exposing what I fear is too frequent a delusion in society, who give their respects to the man of honour and integrity, and he does not forfeit that respect though known at the same time to be a man of dissipation. Not that we think any one of the virtues which enter into the composition of a perfect character can suffer without all the other virtues suffering along with it. We believe that the connection between a habit of unlawful pleasure and the maintenance of strict, resolute, exalted equity and truth, is very seldom, we could almost say, never realized. The man of forbidden indulgence, in the prosecution of his objects has a thousand degrading fears to encounter, and many concealments to practise, perhaps low and unworthy artifices to which he must descend; and how can either his honour or his honesty be said to survive, if at length, in his heedless and impetuous career, he shall trample on the dearest and most sacred rights of families? We think it has all the authority of an aphorism, that the sobrieties of human virtue can never be invaded without the equities of it being invaded also. The moralities of life are too closely connected with each other, as that one could be touched and the other could be left uninjured or entire; and so no man can cast his purity away from him without violence done to the moral consistency of his whole character. But be this as it may, we have the authority of the text for declaring, and oft-repeated affirmations of the New Testament for saying, of the voluptuary, that if the countenance of the world be not withdrawn, the gate of heaven is at least shut against him, that nothing unclean or unholy

can enter there; and that, carrying his uncrucified affections into the place of condemnation, he will find them too to be the ministers of wrath, the executioners of a still sorer vengeance. The loathing, the remorse, the felt and conscious degradation, the dreariness of heart, each following in the train of guilty indulgence here—these form but the beginning of his sorrows, and are but the presages and precursors of that deeper wretchedness which, by an unrepealed law of our moral nature, the same character entails on its possessor in another state of existence. They are but the penalties of vice in embryo, and may give at least the conception of what these penalties are in full. It will add inconceivably to the darkness and disorder of that moral chaos in which the impenitent shall spend their eternity, when the uproar of the bacchanalian and licentious passions is thus superadded to the selfish and malignant passions of our nature, and when the frenzy of unsated desire, followed up by the languor and compunction of its worthless indulgence, shall make up the sad history of many an unhappy spirit. We need not to dwell on the picture, though it brings out into bolder relief the all-important truth, that there is an inherent bitterness in sin; that, by the very constitution of our nature, moral evil is its own curse, its own worst punishment; that the wicked on the other side of death but reap what they sowed in this, and that whether we look to the tortures of a distempered spirit or to the countless ills of a distempered society, we may be very sure that to the character of its inmates—a character which they have fostered upon earth, and which now remains fixed on them in eternity—the main wretchedness of hell is owing.

Before quitting this part of the subject, we have just one remark to offer. It may be felt as if we had overstated the force of mere character to beget a wretchedness at all approaching the wretchedness of hell, seeing that that character is often realized in this world without bringing along with it intolerable discomfort or distress. Neither the unjust nor the licentious man is seen to be so unhappy here as to justify the imagination, that there these characteristics will have the power to effect such anguish and disorder of spirit as we have now been representing. But it is forgotten, first, that this world presents in its business, its amusements, and its various gratifications, a refuge from the mental agonies of reflection and remorse; and, secondly, that the governments of the world offer a restraint against those outbreakings of violence which would keep up a perpetual anarchy in the species. Let us simply conceive that these two securities against our having even now a hell upon earth are both taken down—that there is no such a world as ours, affording to each individual spirit innumerable diversions from the burden of its own thoughts, and no longer such a human government as ours, affording to general society a defence against the countless ills that would otherwise rage within its bounds—then, as sure as a solitary prison is felt by every criminal to be the most dreadful of all punishments, and as sure as upon the authority of law being suspended the reign of terror would commence, and the unchecked passions of humanity would go forth over the face of the land to revel and destroy, so sure are we, out of moral elements and influences alone, might an eternity of wretchedness and despair be entailed on the rebellious. And only let all the

unjust and all the licentious of my text be formed into a community by themselves, and that Christianity, which now acts as purifying and preserving salt on the earth, be wholly removed, and then it would be seen that the picture has not been overcharged, but that the wretchedness is intense and universal, just because the wickedness reigns uncontrolled, without mixture and without mitigation.

But we now change this appalling picture for a delightful contemplation. The next clause of the verse suggests to us the moral character of heaven. We learn from it, on the universal principle, that as they that are unjust shall be unjust still, so also the righteous now shall be righteous still. We no more dispute the material accompaniments of heaven than of the place of condemnation; but still we must affirm of the happiness that reigns and holds unceasing jubilee there, that mainly and pre-eminently it is the happiness of virtue—that the joy of the eternal city is not so much a sensible, or tasteful, or even an intellectual, as it is a moral and spiritual joy—that it is a thing of mental, infinitely more than of corporeal, gratification; and, to evince how much the former has power and predominance over the latter, we bid you reflect, that even in this world, with all the defects of its materialism, the curse on its ground, inflicting the necessity of sore labour, and the angry tempest from its sky, often destroying or sweeping off the fruits of it; the infirmities of this feeble and distempered frame, often devoted to sickness and sore agony; yet, in spite of these, we ask, Whether it would not hold nearly, if not universally true, that if all men were righteous, then all men would be happy? Just imagine, for a moment, that honour, and integrity, and benevolence, were perfect and

universal in the world; that each held the property, the rights, the reputation of his neighbour to be dear to him as his own; that the suspicions, and the jealousies, and the heart-burnings, whether of hostile violence or envious competition, were altogether banished from human society; that the emotions, at all times delightful, of good-will on one side were ever and anon calling the emotion, no less delightful, of gratitude back again; that truth and tenderness held their secure abode in every family; and, in stepping forth among the wider companionship of life, that each could confidently rejoice in every one he met with as a brother and a friend, we ask of you if, by this simple change—a change, you will observe, in nothing else than the *morale* of humanity—though winter should repeat its storms as heretofore, and every element of nature were to abide unaltered, yet, in virtue of a process and revolution altogether moral, would not our millennium be begun, and a heaven on earth be realized? Now, let this contemplation be borne aloft, as it were, to the upper sanctuary, where, we are told, "there are the spirits of just men made perfect; where those who were once the righteous on earth are righteous still." Let it be remembered that nothing is admitted there which worketh wickedness or maketh a lie; and that, therefore, with every virulence of evil, detached and dissevered from the mass, there is nought in heaven but the pure, the transparent element of goodness. Think of its unbounded love, its tried and unalterable faithfulness, its confiding sincerity; think of the expressive designation given it in the Bible, "The land of uprightness." Above all, think of the revealed and visible glory of the righteous God, who loveth righteousness, there sitting upon his throne in the

midst of a rejoicing family, himself rejoicing over them, because formed in his own likeness; they love what he loves; they rejoice at what he rejoices in. There may be palms of triumph, I do not know; there may be crowns of unfading lustre; there may be pavements of emerald; there may be rivers of pleasure, and groves of surpassing loveliness, and palaces of delight, and high arches in heaven, which ring with sweetest melody; but mainly and essentially it is a moral glory which is lighted up there; it is virtue which blooms, and is the myrtle there; it is true goodness by which the spirits of the holy are regaled there; it is thus it forms the beatitude of eternity. The righteous dying now, when they rise again shall be righteous still—have heaven already in their bosoms; and when they enter its portals, they carry the very being and substance of its blessedness along with them—the character which is the whole of heaven's worth—the character which is the very essence of heaven's enjoyments.

The last clause of the verse is, "Let him that is holy be holy still." The two clauses descriptive of the character and the place of celestial blessedness, are counterparts of the two clauses descriptive of the character and the place of eternal woe. He that is righteous in the one, stands compared with him that is unjust in the other; he that is holy in the one, stands contrasted with him that is licentious in the other. But I would have you to attend to the full extent and significance of the term *holy*. It is not abstinence from outward deeds of profligacy alone; it is not a mere recoil from impurity in action. It is a recoil from impurity in thought; it is that quick and sensitive delicacy to which even the very conception of evil is offen-

sive; it is a virtue which has its residence within, which takes guardianship of the heart, as of a citadel or inviolated sanctuary, in which no wrong or worthless imagination is permitted to dwell. It is not purity of action that is all we contend for; it is exalted purity of heart—the etherial purity of the third heaven; and if it is at once settled in the heart, it brings the peace, and the triumph, and the untroubled serenity of heaven along with it. In the maintenance of this, there is a conscious elevation; there is the complacency, I had almost said the pride, of a great moral victory over the infirmities of an earthly and accursed nature; there is a health and a harmony in the soul, a beauty of holiness which, though it effloresces in the countenance, and the manner, and the outward path, is itself so thoroughly internal, as to make purity of heart the most distinctive evidence of a work of grace in time—the most distinctive evidence of a character that is ripening and expanding for the glories of eternity. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "Into the holy city nothing which defileth or maketh abomination shall enter." These are distinct and decisive passages, and point out the consecrated way through which alone the gate of heaven can be opened to us. On this subject, there is a remarkable harmony between the didactive sayings of various books in the New Testament and the descriptive sayings laid before us in the Book of Revelation. However partial or imperfect the glimpses there recorded of heaven may be, one thing is palpable as day, that holiness is the true atmosphere—it is the only element in which its inhabitants breathe, and it is their supreme and ineffable delight to breathe in it. They lux-

uriate therein as in their best loved and most congenial element. Holiness is the elixir, if I may use the expression, the moral elixir of glorified spirits; and in their joyful hosannas, whether of "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty," or of "Just and true are all thy ways, thou King of saints," we may read, that, as virtue in the Godhead is the theme of their adoring song, so virtue in themselves is the very treasure they have laid up in heaven—the riches, as well as ornament, of their now celestial natures.

I would once more advert to a prevalent delusion that obtains in society. We are aware of nothing more ruinous than the acquiescence of whole multitudes in a lame standard of qualification for heaven. The distinct aim is to be righteous now, that after death and resurrection we may be righteous still; to be holy now, that we may be holy still. But we hold it not enough that you are free from the dishonesties which would forfeit the mere respect and confidence of the world, or from the profligacies which even the world itself would oppose; for there is a certain amount of morality which is in demand on earth, but which is immeasurably short of the requisite portion for heaven. The holiness indispensable there is a universal and unspotted holiness, and withal a moral and a spiritual holiness. It is this which distinguishes the morality of a regenerated and aspiring saint from the morality of a respectable citizen, who still is but a citizen of the world—who has his conversation not in heaven—who has neither his heart nor treasure there. The righteous of my text would recoil from the least act of unfaithfulness, from being unfaithful in the least, as being unfaithful in much. The holy in the text would shrink

in sensitive aversion and alarm from the first approaches of evil, from the incipient contamination of thought, and fancy, and feeling, as from the foul and final contamination of the outward history. Both are diligent to be found of Christ without spot and blameless in the great day of account, glorifying the Lord with their souls and spirits, as well as with their bodies, aspiring after those graces which, unseen by every earthly eye, belong to the hidden man of the heart, and, in the sight of heaven, are of great price, and so proceeding onward from strength to strength in this lofty path of obedience, till they appear perfect before God himself.

I feel that I have not nearly exhausted the subject of the text by these brief and almost miscellaneous observations. The truth is, it is a great deal too unwieldy for a single address, and I shall, therefore, conclude with a brief notice of one specimen that might be alleged for the importance of the view we have just given, of purging theology from error. If the moral character, then, of these future states of existence were distinctly understood and constantly applied, it would serve directly and decisively to extinguish Antinomianism; it would reduce that heresy to a contradiction in terms. (You are aware that Antinomians are people who think they have obtained a gift through legitimacy; and, consequently, if they have but pocketed their title-deed to heaven by that Son who justifies the sinner before God, think they may give themselves perfect relaxation from all moral and religious restraint, and impunity from all moral evil. They thus conceive Christ to have been the minister of Satan; and, because we are justified by faith, think they may sin, because grace may abound.) I have said that the view we

have now given would, in fact, reduce that heresy to a contradiction in terms. There is no sound, no scriptural, Christian who would ever think that his virtues constitute the price of heaven. This error of laying down virtue as the price and gate to heaven, is exceedingly noxious; and, therefore, Luther has well denominated justification by faith the article of a standing or falling Church. It is important to know that we are justified by faith—that our meritorious claim to heaven is in the righteousness of Christ alone. It is very important that we should have a legal, a meritorious claim—that we are gifted by it in Christ, and because of the righteousness of Christ, which is to, and upon all that believe. It is of importance, however, that you should keep your own righteousness clear from that. It is important you should not count upon trifles, or suppose that you can make up a right to heaven by your own obedience. Keep in their respective provinces the two circumstances of justification and sanctification Is it not looking to Christianity with half an eye, cutting asunder the testimony of God, to concentrate your whole view upon the justification, and keep your eye shut to the sanctification, which is laid alongside of it, as it were, in the records of heaven? Well, then, keep your sanctification, by which your personal holiness is brought up as the absolute end, but not as the price of heaven, as your indispensable preparation for heaven, or as something still nearer heaven, the very essence, the very substance, of heaven's happiness, which lies in the exercise of good properties and good affections. There is no sound Christian who ever thinks of virtue being the price of heaven. It is heaven itself, the very essence, as already said, of heaven's blessedness. It occupies, therefore, a much

higher place than the secondary and subordinate one ascribed to it, even by many of the writers termed evangelical, who mention it as the token, the evidence, that heaven will be theirs; instead of which it is the very substance of heaven—a sample on hand of the identical good which, in larger measure and purer quality, is afterwards awaiting us. It is an entrance on the path which leads to heaven, or rather an actual lodgement of ourselves within that line of demarcation which separates the heaven of the New Testament from the hell of the New Testament; for heaven is not so much a locality as a character; and we, by a moral transition from the old to the new character, have, in fact, crossed the threshold, and are now rejoicing within the confines of God's spiritual temple. By the doctrine of justification through faith, we know that Christ purchased our right of admittance into heaven, or opened its door for us. Is there aught Antinomian in this? The obstacle, the legal obstacle, between us and a life of prosperous and never-ending virtue, is now broken down; and is it upon that event that we are to relinquish the path which is just opened to welcome and invite our approach upon it? The doctrine of justification by faith is not an obstacle to virtue, but the introduction to it. It is the removal of the obstacle—the unfastening of that drag which before held us in apathy and despair, and restrained us from breaking forth in that career of obedience in which, with the hope of glory set before us, we purify ourselves, even as Christ is pure. The purpose of Christ's death is only to stimulate our obedience. He gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, to "purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." The object of his promise is not to lull our indo-

lence, but to rouse us to activity. "Having received this promise, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

I shall expatiate no farther, but shall be happy if, as the fruit of these imperfect observations, you shall be made to recognize how distinctly practical the business and the work of Christianity is. It is simply to destroy one character, and to build up another in its room—to resist the temptations which vitiate and debase, and make all the graces and moralities, which enter into the composition of perfect virtue, the objects of our most strenuous cultivation. In the expediting of this enlightened transformation, we have need of divine grace, of thorough renunciation of all dependence on our own strength, of a thorough reliance on the proffered aid of the upper sanctuary, of a deep sense of our infirmities, and a constant application for that Spirit which is promised to help us. In the language of the apostle, we must strive mightily—strive according to his grace, which worketh in us mightily. I add no more. May God bless his Word, and to his name be the praise and the glory! Amen.

SERMON V.*

THE RIGHTEOUS SCARCELY SAVED.

"*And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?*"—1 PETER iv. 18.

THERE are men of no less than three different classes of character, who have all a part in this brief but most impressive warning. *First*, the *righteous*, of whom it is said, that they "scarcely shall be saved;" *secondly*, the *ungodly*—and, *thirdly*, *sinners*, of whom it is asked, "where shall they appear?" These two last have one common resemblance, but withal they have certain separate characteristics, which it may be well to notice upon the present occasion.

First, then, the RIGHTEOUS, of whom it is said, that "they scarcely shall be saved." It is unnecessary to dwell on the signification of the term righteous in the passage before us, or to insist at any great length upon the distinction that obtains between the imputed and the personal righteousness of those who believe. The one, *i. e.*, the *imputed* righteousness, is perfect, and from the very first there is in it no sinfulness, no shortcoming; the second, *i. e.*, the *personal* righteousness, is frail and humble in its commencement, doubtful and various in its

* Preached at the Scotch National Church, Regent Square, London.

progress, and has to struggle some certain way through defeats, and difficulties, and discouragements, ere it reaches its final consummation. By the one, *i. e.*, the *imputed* righteousness, we are delivered from the guilt of sin—by the other, the *personal*, we are delivered from the power of sin. In virtue of the *imputed* righteousness our names are blotted out from the book of condemnation which is kept in the judicatory above—in virtue of the *personal* righteousness the pollution of sin is washed away from the heart, and there is a busy work of holiness going forward in the sincere and aspiring pilgrim below. It is affirmed, on immutable certainty, that if a man believe, he obtains a judicial righteousness in Christ, but it is just as firm a certainty, that if a man believe, he obtains a personal righteousness in his own character. The one is just as indissolubly connected with salvation as the other; and if, because justified with the former, he can rejoice in hope, and have a peace in his heart which passeth all understanding; then, because justified also with the latter, he plies with the utmost diligence and labour all the activities of the Christian service, alike instant in piety, and watchfulness, and prayer.

Now it is obvious, both from the text and the context, that it is by the personal righteousness in this place that the righteous are contrasted with the "ungodly" and the "sinners." The judgment which begins with the former and ends with the latter, is a judgment which takes cognizance of personal qualities alone. In that day we shall be reckoned with, not for our dogmata but for our doings; and the respective awards of the judgment-seat will proceed on the distinction—on the personal distinction—which there is between them who obey, and them

who obey not. So that, in looking forward to the judgment-seat, our great aim should be to perfect our obedience, and to be diligent that we may be found of Christ in peace, without spot and blameless. It is thus, in fact, that we work out our salvation—not salvation from the punishment of sin, for this is achieved by the blood of Christ's atoning sacrifice—but salvation from the pollution and the power of sin, which is effected by our own striving with it according to the grace of Christ which worketh in us mightily. It is in the arduous prosecution of this work that a man presses onward to a mark for a prize; and feels, how all his power and strength must be embarked in the undertaking, lest he should fall short of it—that with much fighting and much strenuousness, he tries to bring himself nearer every day to an object which lies in the distance before him; that far beneath the summit of moral or spiritual distinction to which he is aspiring, he plies his toilsome ascent along the narrow and the rugged path by which he is led to it. And so the images employed in Scripture for the work of Christianity are expressive of most intense and sustained effort towards an attainment which after all may not be realized. A battle which requires complete armour, and the busy use of it in order to secure the doubtful victory—a race which all run, but in which few will gain the prize—a narrow path by which many shall seek to pass through the gate of life, but shall not be able, and by which the few only who strive shall make good their entrance into the paradise of God. It is by dint of painful and assiduous striving that salvation is at length carried;—and just as the courser may be said scarcely to have won, who with the utmost of his force and fleetness hath made good his

distance, at a hair-breadth of distance, or within a moment of time, so is it said of the righteous, by the apostle in our text, "they scarcely shall be saved."

Now the question we have to put on all this is, whether the righteous of our day, or those who deem themselves to be so, are really comporting themselves in a way conformable to such a representation. Are they running so as that they may obtain?—Are they fighting so as that they may gain a hard-wrought victory?—Are they striving so as that they may force an entrance of great obstruction and difficulty? Where, we ask, are there any symptoms of a work and of a warfare, or of that busy earnestness, which a state of probation like ours would seem so imperiously to demand? There is a whole host of persons, we are aware, who do stand forth and signalize themselves as the religionists of the day, but amid all the pretence and profession by which they are distinguished—where is the practical exercise—where the strenuous, the sustained effort which cometh forth of sincere hearts and doing hands? How many or how few are there that are diligently plying at the real passport of Christianity?—who are making a business of their sanctification—who are labouring for heaven as if pressed by the conviction, that without labour they will never win it, and that even after their utmost labour they will but scarcely reach the goal which they are tending to? Surely if they proceeded upon this view of the matter, their appearance altogether would be that of men upon the stretch—of men all whose faculties were pressed into a busy service—of men in a state of contest and great urgency, in a way beset with many obstructions, and progress through which required the forthputting of all their strength, and of all their

busy expedients. Now we scarcely see this degree of intensity anywhere—not certainly among all or indeed among many of those who are called the professing people. They have more the semblance of men who have been lulled to sleep by the sound of a pleasant song, than of men who have been roused into action by a spirit-stirring call. Their religion has acted rather as a sedative than as a stimulant—it has cajoled them into a state of repose, rather than brought them out into a state of exertion—they are more like men under the power of an opiate, than of men who have awoke from slumber, and in the act of readiness for service, have their loins girt about and their lamps burning.

Christianity is greatly misunderstood whenever it is imagined that all this activity and labour are not called for. They are sadly misled by their creeds and their systems who fancy the death of Christ to be that terminating object in which the believer has only to rest and do nothing. Instead of this it is the starting point of a busy career, whence the Christian breaks forth with hope and alacrity in all the services of new obedience. "Christ gave himself for us," says the apostle, "that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." The faith of the Gospel so unlocks the heart, as to make him who is actuated by it run in the way of all his commandments. There is nought surely of indolence in this—the work which is given a Christian to do, is not a work done so easily, that it may be lightly, or carelessly, or superficially gone about;—a work done with such exceeding difficulty, that they who do accomplish it, accomplish it but scarcely, and so it is but "scarcely that they are saved."

To keep the heart with all diligence—to keep the heart in the love of God—to dwell with ever-recurring contemplation on those objects of faith, by which gratitude and affectionate loyalty, and all the purposes of new obedience are upholden—to keep a strict and self-guardianship over the inner man, amid the temptations by which it is both plied from without, and most insidiously operated upon from within—to watch over the infirmities of temper, the perpetual operations of selfishness and vanity—to follow after peace when surrounded by provocatives to war—to maintain charity in the midst of cruelest provocations—to be patient under calumny and injustice, and to master that most difficult of all achievements, the love of enemies who have hurt, or affronted, or beguiled us—to bid away all the encitements to sensuality, so as to have purity in the heart, and diligence in the habits, in the midst of a thousand besetting solicitations; in addition to those labours of the unseen spirit—to fill the whole history with the doings of a visible obedience—to labour in our closets—to labour in our families—to labour in the ordinances of religion—to labour in the attentions and the offices of social intercourse—to labour in the visitations of kindness and liberality—to labour, yet with a spirit schooled out of all its worldliness in the business of our callings—*these, these* are the toils of Christianity here, and these, when done to the glory of God and in the name of Jesus, will be the triumphs of Christianity hereafter. These are the treasures laid up for us in heaven, not as forming our title-deed to that glorious inheritance of the saints, but as forming our meetness for its exercises and its joys. All the possible acts and virtues of humanity put together cannot build up

a claim to heaven, but they build up the indispensable character of heaven. They compose not the imputed righteousness of Christ, which is the meritorious plea, but they compose the personal righteousness of his disciples, which is their indispensable preparation; and it is the magnitude of this preparation, it is the loftiness, the spirituality of this law, with the graces and perfections of which they are called upon to clothe themselves. It is the mighty range and extent of that commandment, of which the Psalmist says that it is exceeding broad, that makes the work and labour of Christianity such that it scarcely can be done—this, as constituting the salvation of the believer from sin unto righteousness, gives emphatic truth to the saying, that "the righteous scarcely shall be saved."

Now, my friends, the men who certainly ought to feel the force of this representation are just they who have embraced, or think they have embraced, the faith of the Gospel. What an impressive warning to all such, that it is but *scarcely* they shall be saved! You may win, but most hardly, as if within a hair's-breadth. Now to make this out, are you striving hardly? Does your seeking amount to anything like striving? Are you at all like men putting forth your whole might for securing some point of difficulty? When the fortress stands in a position that is nearly impregnable, we find that all the strength and all the tactics of besiegers are put forth in the business of storming it. Is the kingdom of heaven, we ask, suffering this violence at your hands? And where are your high resolves, your busy expedients, your struggles, and your onsets for taking it by force? Where are your ardent prayers for strength?—and where the stirring up

or the putting forth of that strength which is in you for great and arduous performance? And do you watch as well as pray? It is not the devotion of a little time of a morning followed up by an entire relaxation of spirit through the day,—it is not the observation of all the Sabbath punctualities, followed up by a week of earthliness,—it is not the sacramental decency, or even the sacramental fervour, followed up by a year throughout the general tenor of which you breathe like other men the air of this world's business and this world's companionship. It is not thus that you acquit yourselves like servants who, as if under the watching eye of Heaven, are awake and waiting for their Lord. Awake, awake, then, all ye who sit at ease in Zion, if ye would escape the fearfulness which shall surprise the hypocrite—the doom of those who say, Lord, Lord, while they do not the things which he says! Be assured, my friends, that in this age of ostensible profession, this call to consistent activity is most urgently required. Profession brings a world of delusion in its train—the form of godliness without the power—a mere taste for the faith—the Sabbath ordinances of religion without the week-day services of religion,—a pleasure, it may be, in the society of those called Christians, but without the experience of that self-denial and that steadfastness in the work of the Lord, which our Saviour hath laid upon Christians. To a man such as any of those whom I am now describing, the kingdom of God hath come in word only and not in power—delighted with the sermon, I grant you, but not one inch of progress made towards the clean heart and the right spirit,—lulled, Sabbath after Sabbath, as if by the charm of a pleasant sound, and yet the old man

thriving in all the unsubdued obstinacy of his dead and inborn principles,—joining once a-week in the services of the sanctuary as if that were enough, and throughout the whole week long giving his entire heart to the world—running after Gospel ministers, and sitting in all the complacency of approbation under them, and yet an utter stranger to the devotedness, to the spirituality, to the clean heart and the right spirit of the altogether Christian. O my friends, it bids so flattering to hear the city bells, and to see every house pouring forth its family of worshippers—to look upon the avenue which leads to the house of prayer, and see it all in a glow with the crowd and the bustle of passengers—to enter the church, and see every eye fixed attentively on the eye of heaven's messenger as he tells of the mighty wonders of salvation, or presses home the preparation for eternity upon an arrested audience! Oh! if the charmed ear were a true and unfailing index to the subdued heart, the business of the minister would go on so prosperously! But there is a force of resistance within, which is above our efforts and beyond them; there is a spirit working in the children of disobedience, which no power of human eloquence can quell; there is an obstinate alienation from God, which God alone can subdue; and unless he make a willing people in the day of his power, the influence of the preacher's lesson passes away like the music of his voice—the old man will be carried out as vigorous and as entire as he was carried in—the eloquent speeches may play upon the fancy, but will not reach the deeply-seated corruption that lies in the affections and in the will—the seriousness which sits so visible on every countenance will be dissipated into nothing in half an hour,—the men of

the world and the things of the world will engross and occupy the room that is now taken up with something like Christianity; and all will be dissipated into a thing of nought, when you go to your shops, and your families, and your market-places. We now proceed to the

Second head of this discourse, and propose to address ourselves to the second description of persons in our text, I mean the UNGODLY.

It may be thought that the ungodly and sinners may be comprehended under one head. But on the principle that there is no superfluous word in the Bible, we may be very sure that some modification is intended, when the sinner is mentioned as distinct from the ungodly. We shall endeavour to ascertain what that modification is. The most effectual method of doing so, is by grouping the ungodly and the sinners into two classes. The second class of hearers, then, whom we propose to address, is the ungodly. And the obvious sentiment which must occur to you all, is—if such be the ordeal which even the righteous must undergo, what must become of the ungodly?—If the former can scarcely pass the judgment, how is it possible that in that judgment the latter can stand? It begins, it would appear, in the house of God, and there it so searches and scrutinizes, that it is but hardly and by a little way that the many even of Christ's disciples shall be found on the right side of the line of demarcation—it ends with them who stand afar off from the precincts of holiness and of heaven, and among them it will be a consuming fire. If the saints, with all their prayers, and pains, and struggles upon earth, shall have but won their distance by a hair-breadth, and by their much strenuousness have forced, and scarcely forced, their admittance

within the door of the kingdom, oh! what will become of those sinners, the care of whose souls costs them no strenuousness, who live here as they list, and make this evanescent world their resting-place, without one effort or wish beyond it! Surely, if among God's own people the secret glance of his countenance acts as a refining fire, to separate the almost from the altogether Christian, it must go forth in one mighty and devouring tide of conflagration among the hosts of the rebellious.

Our purpose in distinguishing the "ungodly" and the "sinners" into two classes, is, if possible, to excite salutary alarm in the breasts of those who imagine of themselves that they are not sinners, or who at least imagine of themselves that they are not in danger, because in reputation and good-will among men, they are free from the disgrace of all gross and nefarious delinquencies. They lie not, they steal not, and they oppress not the poor, nor do they violate either the equities of business or the proprieties of good neighbourhood. It is a most frequent, nay, a most natural delusion among such, that they are not great sinners, and for this best of all reasons, that they are not chargeable with any great sins. They will not admit the magnitude of their guilt, neither will they admit the magnitude of their danger, till some specific or definite transgression can be alleged against them. In the absence of this they feel a complacency in their present state, and are visited with no disturbance at least, in the contemplation of their future prospects. They stand alike exempt from remorse and from fear; and it serves to foster this tranquillity of spirit more, if to the absence of all which they deem positively bad, they add the presence of much that is positively good in their

characters. If they be amiable in the relations of social and domestic life—if they be kind and companionable among their fellows—if they be erect and untainted in honour—if they be trusty in friendship—if they be devoted in patriotism; these are the virtues which uphold, nay beautify the societies of earth; but what we affirm of one and all of them is, that they consist with ungodliness. Along with the presence of all these social moralities there may be the absence or total destitution of all the sacred moralities. That is a pleasing light which is struck out by the mere working of instinct in the hearts and among the habitations of men, but it differs from that light which cometh down from the upper sanctuary. The one is no more like to the other than the tiny lustre of the glow-worm is like unto the firmament's meridian splendour. There may be nought of the celestial in this earth-born virtue, and it is a possible, nay a frequent thing, that men should live and breathe in its atmosphere, and yet live without God. Now it is for the sake of putting these men into a company by themselves that we view the ungodly of our text as separate from the sinners of our text. They in truth form a different class of society. Accomplished, perhaps brilliantly, in the moralities of earth, yet without one thought, or one visitation in their spirits of a practical earnestness about the heaven that lies beyond it. Free of all those sins which would be termed delinquencies in the world, yet most surely as free of all devotedness in their hearts to Him who made the world. Surrounded by the regards of acquaintances, and the obeisance of respect in their neighbourhoods below, yet living in a perpetual exile of the affections from Him who is at once the Father and the Judge of the human

family. Lulled into complacency by the thought of the many duties and the many decencies whereof they acquit themselves, yet hastening onward to that day of account, when tried by the question, What have ye done to God?—they shall be left without a speech and without an argument. Surely if they who have cried, and striven, and sought after God all their days, yet after all are but scarcely saved, well may it be asked, what shall become of those who never called and never sought after God? If with the one such be the difficulty of salvation, what are we to conclude of the other but that with them there is the certainty of damnation? If it be with so much ado that the righteous pass through the ordeal of this coming judgment, how is it possible that in that judgment the ungodly can stand?

We are not charging—I address myself still to the second class of hearers—we are not charging you with aught which the world calls monstrous—we charge you only with the negatives of Christianity. You have no practical, no perpetual sense of God. We are not speaking of your vices, we speak only of your defects. You are deficient from sacredness, and this is the one thing that you lack. It is not by your profligacy, but simply by your negatives that we describe you. You have no godliness, for ye are "ungodly." Your consciences can best tell whether this be a just representation of you; it can make palpable the difference between the habit of your soul and that of those whose eye, and the aspiration of whose heart, are ever towards the upper country—whose delight is in communion with God, and whose greatest dread it is to offend him—who bear upon their spirits at all times a reverential impression of his sacredness, and

who strive, with all their vigour and all their vigilance, to uphold that frame of the affections which most befits the expectant for heaven, and best prepares for its holy exercises. You can best say if it be thus with you, and whether you now realize this longing, and this labouring, of the life of faith, by which all the feelings of the inner man, and all the doings of the outer man, are consecrated to the business of a high calling. Even they who are most strenuous, and the most devoted in this business of piety, even they shall but scarcely be saved; and what, we repeat it, shall become of those who, from their cradle to their grave, do but grovel in the dust of the earth which they tread upon, and live without God in the world!

Think not, then, that you may sleep on in safety, because you have been guilty, as you imagine, of no crime. I may here state, as a very common delusion, that Christianity and crime are looked upon as two alternative terms. Now they really are not so. Crime takes up a certain proportion of the species, and relatively to the whole but a small proportion—comparatively there be but few enormous sinners in the world. Christianity, at the other extreme, takes up another proportion, a small proportion too—so that there are few Christians in the world. But, then, the Christians, on the one side, and the sinners on the other, do not comprise the whole;—there is a large intermediate population which constitutes by much the majority of our species, and it is next to impossible to convince them of their need of practical Christianity. Now, it is this large intermediate class that we are now addressing, and that we now seek to arouse from that moral lethargy which has laid hold of them.

The judgment, which shall at length awaken you, will fall in mightiest vengeance on your head if it find you in a state of negation and nakedness. You fancy that you have done nothing against God, but it is enough that you have lived without God;—you are not conscious of any such disobedience as a distinct specific act of rebellion, but it is enough that you have not yielded obedience to his reign. It will be in vain to allege that you never were a rebel against him, if he can allege that he never had the rule over you;—it is your own will that has ruled you—it is by the waywardness of your own affections that you have walked; it may not have been a way of profligacy, or of monstrous wickedness, but still it was your own way and not his way—you have carried it all your lives long independently of God;—perhaps without any gross violation of the decencies of life—you may have a taste for decency; perhaps without any glaring infraction upon the integrities of business, but unmindful you have been of the relations you sustain to God;—perhaps with a watchful homage to the voice of your own conscience, but reckless all the while to the voice of God,—and, relative to Him, in as deep a slumber of unconcern as if he were a nonentity or a phantom. Now ye refuse to hear the voice of his rightful authority, and so afterwards ye shall be made to hear the thunder of his righteous condemnation.

Before concluding the second head of discourse, and passing on to the third class, let me state, as a practical lesson from this second head of discourse, the utter improvidence of all those men for eternity whose affections are settled upon this world, and who possess not one wish or practical interest beyond the limits of this sensible world.

That, indeed, is a meagre theology which would look upon the outcasts of human society as the only outcasts from heaven, and that would represent the path that leadeth unto spiritual and eternal life to be so gentle and so accessible that few do miss it; instead of representing it as that arduous and narrow path of which our Saviour hath said that there be few who find it. It is an awful delusion, and, we fear, the undoing of many an immortal spirit—that nought will shut us out of Paradise but such literal and violent offences against the law of rectitude, as would degrade us beneath the average character of those decent, and respectable, and neighbour-like families by whom we are encompassed; and that if we but acquit ourselves with tolerable fairness upon earth, we are fit for being translated, when we die, among the choirs and companies of the celestials. Now, it is true that we may stand exempted from all gross and outrageous delinquency—we may fulfil all the exigencies of social intercourse—we may have even more than an average share of its accompaniments—the cordialities of domestic affection may flow down our bosom in a stream as warm and as kindly as does the blood that circulates through our veins. And to many of the graces of private life, there may be added the activities of public life and of trade—the pulse of high and honourable feeling—the blush of unviolated delicacy—the sincerity of nature's truth—the sensibilities of nature's tenderness. And with all this, there may be a taste most finely and feelingly alive, if not to the spiritual beauties which irradiate the works of God, at least to those sensible beauties, wherewith the face of his goodly creation hath been decked so profusely by his hands. And there may be sense and imagination,

and towering intellect, and sublime thoughts of truth, and of the universe, and all that philosophy and all that science can achieve. And I would just put it to your own sense and experience of our common nature, if you think it impossible that a man so gifted shall breathe the element of irreligion?—that from morning to night that God, amid the glories of whose workmanship he all the day rejoices, shall be to him like an unknown or a forgotten thing; that satisfied, and in full occupation with the business of the bright region in which he dwells, he should cast not one look beyond the death to which his footsteps are carrying him; nor heave one aspiration through the illumined curtains that are above his head; and that thus that Being who created and invested nature with all that so brightly and pleasingly adorns her, should be habitually and wholly disregarded by him whom the hand of the Almighty Sovereign hath called forth and exalted into the noblest of her specimens—and if, indeed, a creature so accomplished, might, nevertheless, live and die an infidel! O, my friends, let us not be deceived into fatal security by the virtues of an average and every-day world. They may, one and all of them, consist with ungodliness, with alienation from God, and from that spiritual economy which he has instituted. A man may perform all the requirements of business, and companionship, and pleasure, while he makes this earth, this perishable earth, the scene of all his joys, and of all his expectations. The whole drift and fervency of his affections are to the things that are beneath. The effort, the anxiety, the longing of his heart are all towards the accommodations and interests of time. He is carnally minded, which is death; he sows unto the flesh, and of

the flesh he must reap corruption. And this is the consummation of their present being, not because they have lived in profligacy and wickedness, but simply because they have lived without God. Because they have made earth their resting place, and altogether pleased with what is perishable, the general habit of their souls has marked them to be citizens of earth and not of heaven. This world is the alone repository of their interests and hopes, without one pilgrim's sigh, and far less one pilgrim's step, towards the land of eternity. Were you to put it to their choice—and this, by the way, is a scrutinizing and effectual test by which to estimate your state—were you to put it to their choice whether, if all were prosperous here, it is not here that they would like to live for ever, it would bring the state of their affections to the test, and decide the question of their being carnal or spiritual men. Let the proposal be made, that with health, and fortune, and friendship, and the blush of perpetual youth, and the blessings of a joyous companionship and an affectionate family, there should be the elixir of immortality poured into your cup, and on the face of this goodly world, so full of sweets and of sunshine, you should be permitted to expatiate for ever,—tell me if on these terms you would not cleave with fondest grasp to your present habitations, and be willing to live all reckless, as heretofore, of the God who upholds you? Would you not be glad to take an everlasting leave of your Maker? And could you only be spared the inconvenience of that hideous death which disembodies the soul and conveys you to the land of spirits, would you not choose far rather to spend your eternity in this more congenial land? In other words, would you not prefer that God and you should be ever-

lastingly quit with each other, rather than be wrested from your tenement of clay, and from that territory where alone those earthly enjoyments are to be found that are suited to your earthly nature? Tell me, if you would not give heaven with all its glories, for this smiling world, and agree that God should withdraw himself, in eternal oblivion, from your thoughts, and that you should remain eternal outcasts from his spiritual family?

You may plead in apology, that in such a choice of earth rather than heaven, you just make the universal choice of nature. I think that the utmost theological use ought to be made of this necessity. It just proves the truth of the great Bible position, that nature is in a state of exile from God, and that there is, indeed, a wide disruption between the planet on which you dwell and the rest of God's unfallen universe. It would only prove that you are yet of the flesh and not of the Spirit, and that you have not made that mighty transition by which the affections are carried upwards from the dust of this perishable world to the upper sanctuary, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God, and where God sitteth on a throne that is at once a throne of grace and of righteousness. Be assured that if so, you are not in a state which it will do to die in. There will be no such earth as the one that we inhabit, after the present economy is dissolved, and succeeded by a heaven where all is perfect holiness, and peace, and safety, and pleasures for evermore; and by a hell where all is misery and torment, and rooted and irreconcileable ungodliness. Such a middle region as the one we now occupy, where the creature enjoys himself amid the Creator's gifts, and cares not for the giver, cannot long be tolerated; it is an anomaly on the face of creation,

and as such will soon be swept away. They, therefore, who limit their desires within so ephemeral a world as ours, are rearing their chief foundation on a good that is perishable. They are labouring for one portion only that will speedily be wrested from them by the grasp of another, who will leave them without a portion and inheritance for ever. They are labouring for a portion of this world's substance, and in this they may have their reward; but in regard to the substance which endureth unto eternal life, that they have never laboured for, and so that will never be acquired. They have sought to be arrayed in perishable glory, and, perhaps, may find a little hour of earthly grandeur; but the hour is at hand when they must bid to this an eternal adieu. Death, my friends, will leave all their possessions untouched, but he will lay his rude and resistless hand upon their possessor. He may build for himself princely dwellings to endure for many generations, and smile for a season as though he had, indeed, covenanted with death; but in less, perhaps, than half a generation, death will shoot his unbidden way to the inner apartment, and without spoiling the least of his possessions, he will snatch the possessor from his all. It is not his way to tear the privileges and the rights of individuals from their owner's hand, but he palsies and paralyzes the hand itself, and they fall useless at his feet. It is thus that death smiles in ghastly contempt at all human things; he lays hold of the occupier, not of his possessions—he lays his arrest on the owner—he forces away his body to the grave, where it moulders into dust; and in turning the soul out of its material and well sheltered tenement, he turns it adrift on the cheerless waste of a desolate and neglected world.

Thirdly, I address myself to the SINNERS of our text.

I trust you are now sufficiently aware of the distinction between these two classes of individuals, the "ungodly" and the "sinners." The ungodly is to the sinner what a man who has not broken the laws of his country, and at the same time feels no loyalty in his breast, is to the criminal. The ungodly is without the feeling of loyalty, the sinner more daringly hath committed what may be called the overt acts of rebellion—he has transgressed the laws. I forbear here to expatiate at that length I wished to have done on the character of the ungodly, only stating that there is something remarkable in what our Saviour has said to the scribes and Pharisees, that publicans and sinners should enter into heaven before them. I would say, that visible and notorious sinners are sometimes more easily set upon that way which leadeth unto heaven, by leading unto reconciliation with God, than the "ungodly" who are not "sinners" in this sense of the term. The reason is, their transgressions are manifest, and can be more easily set to the conviction of their own consciences. And thus it is far more difficult to convince the middle and upper classes of society than the lower classes, of their total destitution of the great master virtue, even the virtue of godliness. The more the pity, then, that the ecclesiastical provision for christianizing our cities is so scanty—that the poor, speaking generally, are almost entirely excluded. We know not a more hopeful influence for the reformation of a city than to extend the means of Christian instruction to the lower classes, because, in point of fact, the plain and simple doctrines of the Gospel tell more effectually upon them than upon those who are within the reach of Christian instruction; and upon the principle I have

just adverted to. They are more easily convinced of sin, and consequently more ready to accept of the overtures of reconciliation brought forward in the Gospel.

I regret that I should not be able to overtake fully what I meant to say on the subject of the sinner, but you see in general what the leading idea is, upon which the distinction turns between the ungodly and the sinner; and, in conclusion, I would just again urge upon you the lesson of the text, "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" We are called to "kiss the Son whilst he is in the way." It is a short and a little while; the season of offered mercy is speeding onwards to its close. In a few years the likeliest of us all will be swept away from the land of Gospel calls and Gospel opportunities. The voice of a beseeching God is upon us only until death, after which the voice ceases to be heard, and the light of the Sun of Righteousness is lifted up no longer, and the fountain that is opened in the house of Judah for sin and for iniquity has an everlasting seal set upon it, and a great impassable gulf of separation opens asunder between the souls of the impenitent and the blood that cleanseth from sin. "Kiss the Son, then, while he is in the way;" or mark the alternative—"his wrath will begin to burn." He who now is all meekness and gentleness, and kind entreaty, will then look upon us with an altered countenance. And oh, that is indeed a striking expression, "the wrath of the Lamb!"—the wrath of him who is represented by that which is the emblem of patience, and innocence, and timidity,—a wrath, then, to the excitement of which there must have been a series of deep and bitter provocations. A wrath, ye careless and ye worldly, that ye are now

treasuring up unto the day of its outpouring, when "ye shall cry in vain to the hills and to the mountains to fall upon you, and hide you from the wrath of the Lamb;"—and you will then be made to feel that no indignation burns more fiercely than the indignation of slighted tenderness, and no vengeance more overwhelming than the vengeance of offered and rejected mercy.

Nor should we marvel at such a catastrophe; for only think of the way in which it is provoked. That Christ should have so toiled and suffered for our sakes—that he should have descended on our miserable world from that eminence of power and peaceful glory which he before occupied—that he should have put on the infirmities of our nature and shrouded his Godhead in a tabernacle of flesh which he took with him to heaven, and which, for aught we can tell, will adhere to him throughout all eternity—that amidst the agonies of a mysterious conflict, he should have poured out his soul, and for the guilty millions of our world should have borne the whole weight of their chastisement—that during the hour and the power of darkness, he, in the depths of a passion that well nigh overwhelmed him, should have weathered such an endurance when the sword of righteous vengeance was awaked against him, and the cup of awful retribution put into his hands. That the phials of an incensed lawgiver should have been poured forth by the Father upon the Son,—that thus he should have travailed and put forth all the energies both of strength and of suffering, that the mountain of iniquity might be levelled, and that we all might be brought in peace and safety unto God,—that after having made reconciliation, he should rise again to the place from whence he came, and be hailed by the shout-

ings of the celestials as the author and finisher of a mighty enterprise,—that after he had entered there he should turn his face on that world for which he had done and suffered all this, and mark how the men of it were disregarding and rejecting all. Just think of this, and call you it no provocation that after all the labour of such a salvation, the overtures thereof should fall in listlessness, and without efficacy, on the hearts of our alienated species—that this great work of deliverance should be accounted as a thing of nought, and by the very creatures for whose deliverance and whose welfare it was accomplished—that we should slight these tidings of the Gospel as insignificant, or impatiently spurn them, as an offence away from us! O think of all this, and you will be at no loss to comprehend how he, who now stands out in the winning gentleness of his nature, and bends with longing compassion over you, should then come forth in vindictiveness and fury on all who have put to mockery their great privileges, and despised that great salvation. Despise not thou the richness of God's forbearance and long-suffering, but know that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance. Avail yourselves of the precious moment that is now passing over your heads. Christ is offered—salvation is at your choice—forgiveness, through the blood of a satisfying atonement, is yours if you will. God does not want to magnify the power of his anger, he only wants to magnify the power of his grace upon you. Try to approach him in your righteousness, and you will find yourselves at an immeasurable distance away from him; but come with the righteousness of Christ as your plea, and you will indeed be permitted to draw nigh, for the sake of him in whom the Father is always well pleased.

Could I state the thing more plainly I would. I want to bring you into the condition of a simple receiver of God's pardon—a simple holder on the truth of his promises. It is on this footing, and on this alone, that you will ever be clothed in the garments of acceptance, or stand firmly and securely on the ground of reconciliation in him. O turn, then, into this peaceful haven, and, in the act of so turning, God will pour out his Spirit upon you, and enable you to walk before him without fear, in righteousness and holiness, all the days of your life. **Amen.**

SERMON VI.*

GOOD GIFTS.

"*If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him.*"—MATTHEW vii. 11.

IN the proposed treatment of this verse, we shall *first* advert to some of the general doctrines that may be deduced from it, and then conclude with a few lessons of practical application.

The *first* thing to be noticed, is *the designation "evil"* given by our Saviour to men of whom he nevertheless admits that they possess a habit, and are prompted by an affection, both of which are unquestionably good. It is surely a good thing for man to have a parental fondness towards his own offspring. We cannot doubt that there is much of loveliness in the various manifestations of this inherent principle of his nature. We feel as if it had a moral beauty even when we observe it among the inferior animals, and still more when we rise to those more touching and graceful exhibitions of it which occur every day in our own species—whether we read it in the delight of a mother's eye, when she looks around on the health and

* Preached at the Scotch National Church, Regent Square, London.

happiness of her children; or when disease has entered the household we read it more unequivocally still, in the agitation and alarms of a mother's tenderness. In the shade, as in the sunshine of domestic history, does this affection give proof the most conclusive, both of its reality and force, and we are not sure if there be not even more of what may be called the picturesque of human virtue in its darker passages—as when a mother manifests the care and labour of an untired watchfulness over the death-bed of her dying child. Now there never was a heart that could be less unmoved by such a representation than that of our pitying Saviour, and we may be very sure, that he who wept at the grave of Lazarus, would have given both his sympathy and approval to this agony of afflicted nature.

He would recognize it to be good, to be unquestionably good, and still we have to ask, what it was in these parents, that notwithstanding all this tenderness and delicacy of affection which they possessed, could have led him, who knew what was in them, to denounce their character as "evil." The devotedness of a parent to his children surpasses by much anything which history has recorded of the sublimest heroism; for them, he makes surrenders of his ease, and time, and fortune, and for their sakes he will nerve himself against the buffeting of all the elements; at one time adventurously ploughing the ocean in their behalf, and at another living in the exile and the estrangements of a foreign clime, with nought to soothe him amid his voyage but the imagery of his dear and far distant home. It is the strength of this family affection by which the great society of mankind is upheld, made up as they are of families; it is this which nourishes them in child-

hood, which counsels and cares for them in youth, and which, even after the profligacy or the losses of their manhood, welcomes them back again to the roof of their nativity, and throws them as before on the yet uncooled and unextinguishable kindness of the parents that gave them birth, and which even in the winter frost of their now declining years, and perhaps the hardship of declining circumstances, still find the love of offspring all alive in their aged bosoms. It is, indeed, one of the strongest and most enduring of nature's affections, as beautiful in its exhibitions as it is important in its exercise; and still the problem remains to be solved, why he, whose discerning eye beheld this in their bosoms, did nevertheless stigmatize all men as "evil." For an answer to this question, we may draw aid and illustration still from the case of a family; we admit the whole truth and tenderness of parental affection, it were a libel on humanity, it were in the face of all experience to deny either the reality or the strength of this instinctive principle which flows from a father's or a mother's heart upon their own offspring, and we need but now advert to the weight of gratitude which so rightfully lies on those children who are the objects of it. Surely if the spectacle of tenderness on the one side be so very pleasing, the spectacle of disobedience or neglect on the other is most offensively revolting; in proportion as the father lavishes of his ceaseless and untired generosity upon the son, in that proportion do we look with moral antipathy to the disdain or the distance, or the reckless independence of the son to the father; if he bear in his heart either a cold indifference, or a positive distaste of the person and society of his own parent, this were enough to convict him of a moral perversity, the

most monstrous and unnatural. We cannot refuse that undoubted good-will which flows undiminished and perhaps undiminishable in the bosom of the one, and all that we ask of you is just to form a right estimate, when, instead of being met by the other, by returns of good-will back again, it is only responded to with contempt or with carelessness, or with the selfish acknowledgments of one who can ravenously seize upon the gifts, but without one movement of grateful or of duteous inclination towards the author. In looking to this domestic relationship it were a libel on humanity to affirm that there is not among parents much of that love and liberality to their children which is undoubtedly good, but if, on the other hand, it will be found that any of their children can trample all their beneficence under their feet, and hearken unaffected to the claims of a father's tenderness, and turn unimpressed away from the earnestness of a father's voice, say, is there not here the manifestation of a perversity alike hideous and painful? Now we admit, in favour of our species, we admit that the love of parents to their offspring is nearly universal, and we venture not to affirm how often, or how seldom it may be, that the ingratitude of offspring to parents is exemplified within the limits of an earthly household, or how often violence is done to this relationship in separate and earthly families; but viewing creation as that spacious household which is presided over by a universal parent, and peopled by a universal family—looking to the relationship in which all the men of our earth stand to their Father who is in heaven, we affirm that there is none exempted from the guilt of having done most outrageous violence to this relationship—no, not one. The charge which we distinctly

prefer against every son and daughter of the species, is their heedlessness of God; for let them but examine their own hearts, and they will find there a cleaving and a constant ungodliness. The fondest and the most unnatural mother are alike in this; the one differing wholly from the other in relation to their own family, but viewed as members of the universal family, each deformed by vilest ingratitude to the common parent of them both. Not chargeable in common with want of love to their own offspring, but in reference to Him of whom themselves are offspring, individually chargeable with most flagrant defects both of love and of obedience; not a feeling, it may be, in regard to that instinctive affection which binds them to their own little ones, yet not good, but evil and unquestionably evil in regard to their distaste—and disinclination for God. Look to them again as the head, each of his own household economy, and they have at least one property of good parents—look to them as members of that great community, whose habitation is the universe, and whose head is the Creator of all, and they have all in their spirits the delinquency of evil children. Our Saviour saw the one thing they had and pronounced it to be good, even as when he looked to the young man in the Gospel, he loved him; but he also saw the one thing they lacked—the great master virtue of every creature, both in heaven and earth, and without which all other virtue is baseless and perishable; and so they who knew to give good gifts unto their children, were nevertheless evil and accursed children themselves. This language is not too strong for the guilt and the turpitude of enmity, wherewith mankind is chargeable. Yet the majority of our world are all unsuspicious of having aught so vile and so enormous

about them; they conceive and are impressed by it as a moral delinquency, when a son bears either a scowl upon his countenance or an antipathy in his bosom towards his earthly father; and they will even readily admit that no constrained obedience with the hand can atone for the disaffection of the heart evidently in a state of hostility and revolt against the parents who gave him birth; and even should there be no positive hostility, but should the heart be in a state of indifference only—the indifference, you will observe, of a child to that parent, who tended him from infancy to manhood, and who now feels it the sorest agony of nature, that he should have brought up a family who simply do not care for him—this neglect merely, even should there be no hatred, is enough of itself to fasten the imputation of a foul depravity on him who is chargeable therewith. Yes, we are capable of feeling most vivid indignation when an earthly parent is thus robbed of the moral property that belongs to him in the love and morality of his own offspring; and how then can you miss the far more emphatic application of a principle the very same in kind, though far more intense in degree, to our Father who is in heaven.

What are your feelings when assured that the great human family have cast off their allegiance from God, and have turned every one to his own way? Do you call it nothing that this great parent of man should be provoked with a race sunk in deepest apathy towards God, and if not lifting up the cry of positive rebellion, yet losing all sense of his kindness in universal regardlessness? What do you think of man—that derived and dependent creature—walking through life so heedlessly and so independently of the Creator who gave him birth; receiving

from his hand the inspiration of every breath which he draws and with no humble aspiration of love to him back again;—curiously fashioned by the skill of that mighty Architect who formed him, yet bearing it as proudly as if all his parts and all his faculties were his own;—nourished from his cradle to his grave by the gifts of an all-sustaining providence, and forgetful all the while of the giver who bestowed them;—revelling in the midst of a thousand earthly gratifications, but without any returning gratitude to him who, out of the treasury of his own fullness, hath poured them forth in such luxuriance upon our world;—living every hour under the guardianship of a God whose eye watches him continually, yet his own eye is continually averted from his God;—looking abroad on a glorious panorama, with heaven's illumined concave above his head, and around him the scenery of a smiling landscape, and yet regardless of that hand which hath penciled it with all its beauties and lighted it up with innumerable splendours—all his senses steeped, as it were, in the utter oblivion of Him who furnishes him with his various capacities of enjoyment, and so adapted him to the theatre which he occupies, that the air and water, and the earth, and all the elements of surrounding nature, are the ministers of his enjoyment? You know how to denounce the ingratitude of a child towards its earthly parent—but is there no term in your vocabulary of crime or condemnation for outrage like this? And you know how to feel for the moanings of the parent's wounded bosom—and is there no force in the complaining voice of Him who saith, "All day long I have stretched out my hands, but no man regardeth?" There is a moral lethargy that has laid hold on our species, and we feel not the evil

of that which in the upper sanctuary is felt to be enormous—the guilt of creatures who have disregarded their Creator, the deep criminality of a world who have departed from their God.

Now you will perceive how Jesus Christ, while he admitted candidly that they possessed one thing which was good, even the parental affection, yet he denounced them in the general as evil. He had recently come from that place where that evil was felt in all its enormity. He had just left heaven, where, on the one hand, he witnessed the strength and warmth of that parental affection which radiated from the throne of God among all his creatures; and he had now lighted upon earth, where he further witnessed the total heedlessness and ingratitude of creatures back again. Possessing as he did the intelligence and sympathies of that celestial family where he had been, he could not pronounce otherwise than in our text. The love of parents to their children he could not but approve—a virtue which graces the character even of God in heaven, and which still surviving the fall of our species, in the shape of a constitutional instinct, operates strongly and universally among the families of earth. Yet just in proportion to the admitted affection of parents, would he abhor the disaffection of children; he expressed the very same feeling which yourselves have when you look to the earthly relationships; but he looked also to the heavenly relationship, and there he clearly and immediately saw that the parental love of the one relationship had, in the shape of an instinct, remained unbroken in the world, while the filial loyalty and gratitude of the other relationship had not survived the moral ruin of our species, but in the shape of a *principle* had totally disappeared; and

therefore, when he witnessed among men their strong devotedness to their offspring, and on the other hand, as strong a disaffection to their God, he both would admit that one thing which they retained to be good, and yet wanting, as they did, that great virtue which links the creature to the Creator, he denounced them as "evil."

This ought to teach us in what terms we should speak of that undoubted doctrine—as true in the eye of sound philosophy as it is in the eye of sound faith—the depravity of our nature. Now I admit that this doctrine is sometimes proposed by theologians in a way most unnecessarily revolting; this depravity does not lie in the utter destitution of all that is amiable in feeling, or of all that is useful in the practical and kind properties of our nature; it may be expressed in one word, it lies in ungodliness. This is the quintessence of that great moral disease under which we labour; a disease, however, which prevents not humanity from giving forth many beauteous exhibitions; whether at one time of sentiments of noblest honour, or melts at another with sympathies of a most grateful tenderness. There might be beauty of character even as there is beauty of colour and form where there is no religion; there might be a moral as well as a material loveliness apart from any love of God in the heart, or from the moving efficacy of God's law upon the conduct. There is beauty in the blush of a rose, and there is beauty of a higher order in the blush that mantles the cheek of modesty; and yet there may be just as little of love to God in the living as in the inanimate subject. It is pleasing to the eye of taste, when we behold the attachment of a mother to the young even among the inferior animals, but

that same attachment is still more exquisitely pleasing, because enhanced to us by all the home sympathies of our felt and common nature, when we behold a mother of our species lavishing her endearments and her smiles on an infant family, and still, as before, might the rational be as destitute of any inclination towards God as the irrational creature; and while we refuse not to nature a most gracious affection, we affirm of both, that they are alike dead to the power or the principle of sacredness. And it is the same with all other propensities of our constitution; there might be the cordiality that delights in the virtues of good fellowship; there might be the compassion that rejoices in the relief of misery; there might be the delicacy that would refrain from what is hurtful and offensive to a neighbour's feelings; there might be a high-minded integrity of truth that would spurn away the temptations of unnumbered artifices; in a word, there might be all those native moralities which uphold the economy of an earthly state, and all those native affections between man and man which shed a pleasure and a brightness along the way of our earthly pilgrimage. All these we see existing and in busy play among the members of that terrestrial community below, among whom, at the same time, the religious principle was entirely unfelt, and godliness, that morality which binds earth to heaven, was neither recognized nor acted upon. This we deem the right way to propound the depravity of our nature—to affirm, as we are fully warranted by observation to do, that there exists in the bosom of unregenerate man no affection and no outgoing of heart to God; but not to refuse many of the graces and many of the virtues which flourish even in the bosom of earth's unregenerate families. On the subject of man's

daring and desperate wickedness, there is a certain sternness of asseveration not fitted to advance the cause for which it is employed; for independent of its hideousness, there is want of experimental truth in it which must revolt the human mind in contemplating it; sound faith is one with sound experience, and therefore, we should at all times mix the intimations of experience with the zeal of orthodoxy. Ere we leave this part of our argument we have one observation more to offer; the reason why in the multitude of man's natural virtues we lose sight of his ungodliness is, that in point of fact, God wills our most busy and strenuous cultivation of them all. This gives rise to confusion of sentiment in the minds of many, respecting that entire depravity which Scripture everywhere ascribes to man, and which, if we did but study her lessons aright, experience would confirm; there is spontaneous compassion in many a bosom, and God wills us to be compassionate; there is instinctive affection in almost all for their children, and God tells us to love our children; there is an inborn uprightness in some, in virtue of which, they would not lie, and could not steal, and God bids us to lie not, and to steal not; and hence that perplexity of thought which we are now trying to unravel; they delude themselves into the imagination of a certain godliness within them, because they do many things, the matter of which is the very matter of God's own commandment; the difficulty is to make them perceive how two actions which in respect of *material* are the same, that in respect of *moral* they may be wholly dissimilar, nay, opposite. An action may give the same exhibition of conduct, but not of character; it may be the same in respect to performance, and yet not in respect of principle: thus it

is that a man, because of a harmony in action which is merely external, may confound the different affections from which they have sprung, and which are internal; and merely because of certain doings, which in the letter and outward description of them are so many conformities to heaven's law, he may congratulate himself with the possession of godliness, when in fact, and within the whole compass of his moral economy, there is no godliness to be found; in this way we would convince him of sin: we dispute not that he has many good points, many desirable properties, but he wants the principle, the property of a reigning and ascendant godliness; he may be in a state of high moral accomplishment, but substantially and really he is in a state of practical atheism.

I have been the longer upon this point than I would have been disposed, because of the error which prevails on this subject; because I conceive it an error that in the most proper sense of the term may be called a fundamental one: your view of all the other fundamental doctrines of Christianity will observe a sort of proportion to the view you entertain of this doctrine. I take this to be the grand and most prevalent error, more particularly in the middle and upper classes of society. They understand not how it is, that any sin of theirs could have lighted the fires of the future world. They will admit that they have failings, but surely not such as to expose them to a vengeance so relentless and so interminable as this;—there may be some desperadoes in wickedness—there may be a few stouter and more stubborn-hearted than all their fellows, for whom such punishments may be reasonable; these may be the befitting inmates of that dire dreadful pandemonium, where the spirits of the accursed dwell—

surely the kind, the courteous, and the companionable men of our own daily walk, and our own familiar neighbourhood, with whom we exchange the visits of hospitality, and the smiles of benignity and good-will, could not assimilate their guilt with that of the daring reprobate, who passes through life in utter recklessness of all its duties, and of all its decencies; this produces a false peace in the heart of men, it is a peace which takes possession of their hearts, because they do not see that theirs is aught like a guilt so enormous, as to bring down upon it the burden of a grievous condemnation. Now in all this, my brethren, there is indeed a very complete illusion; for a man to be execrated as a monster in society, he must have outraged the duties of that relation in which he stands to his fellow-men; now of all these, he may have acquitted himself in a tolerable way, and yet, there is another and a distinct relation to which also belong other duties, which also arise from the relation in which he stands—he may have discharged himself of all that he owes to his fellows upon earth, and yet have been utterly unmindful of what he owes to God in heaven—he may have felt the force of all those moral and sympathetic ties, which bind men together into a common policy, and yet felt no attraction whatever to Him who is the first parent and preserver of the human family—there might, my friends, be many a close and kindly reciprocation of mutual esteem, and mutual tenderness, and all the virtues of good neighbourhood among ourselves, and yet the whole of this terrestrial society be in a state of utter destruction from Him who is at once the centre and the source of the created universe; it is just as if a stray planet (to make use of an illustration) might retain its

cohesion and its chemistry, and all those laws of motion and plastic influence which would continue to uphold many of the processes of our present terrestrial physics, but which loosed from its gravitation to the sun, would drift widely in space, and become an outcast from the harmonies of the great mundane system. Now this is precisely what the Bible affirms of the men of this world—what the Bible affirms of the spiritual world. The men of this planet have broken off their affinity to God—they retain many of their wonted affinities for each other, but they have made disruption and a wide and general departure from God—they have yet a terrestrial ethics, all the graces and morality of which seem so richly adorned as to shine in beauteous lustre before the eyes of their fellows—while others, even in reference to an earth-born virtue, are so marred and mutilated, that they are looked upon by all as objects alike degraded and revolting;—of the great principle of celestial ethics, both may be alike destitute; it is experimentally true that the men of compassion and generosity, whose hearts are so deeply affected by the sight of distress, may be in the same state of unpractical alienation from God—it is in the spirit of a sound philosophy, as well as of a sound faith to affirm, that humanity with all its companionable traits of character between man and man, may yet be impregnated with a deep spirit of ungodliness: such are the representations given to us from heaven, and to these every enlightened conscience upon earth will re-echo. The Bible charges not injustice upon all—it charges not inhuman barbarity upon all—it charges not gross and abominable licentiousness upon all—but it charges *ungodliness* upon all. When brought to the bar of civil and

criminal law—when brought to the bar of public opinion—when brought to the bar of social and conventional morality—mankind may be most fully and honourably acquitted; yet when brought to the bar of a higher jurisprudence, there may be laid, and most righteously laid, the burden of an overwhelming condemnation. It is thus, and thus only, that ungodliness stands forth as an article of indictment against you, if that Being who made you appear in support of his own controversy, and of those peculiar and transcendental claims that God has upon you. In reference to the moralities of your human companionship, there is, perhaps, not one earthly tribunal before which you could not stand in the attitude of the proudest integrity. In reference to that transcendental morality which relates the thing which is formed to him who formed it, there is the overthrow of every pretension. As it is in physics, so it is in morals, a man may have an accurate perception of earthly mysteries who has never lifted his thoughts to the higher distances of astronomy, and so be insensible to the relation of this world to the universe which surrounds him; and a man may have accurate performance of earthly duties, who has never directed his view to the higher duties and demands of theology, and so never have discovered the relation of our species to the universal family of God, or the relation that time bears to eternity. It is by science in the one case, and by Scripture in the other, that the magnificent systems of the material and moral worlds have been alike revealed to us. The system of Christianity has done for the spiritual what Copernicus did for the physical world, and branded, as it has been, with every condemnable epithet of methodism and folly, it nevertheless remains the

only true and practical system of philosophy fitted for the character of man.

We have adverted to the foundation of that fundamental error, which prevails so extensively in reference to the depravity of our nature, and which is the chief ingredient in that false peace, so injurious to the best interests of the immortal soul, and plainly bespeaks a generation fast rocked in the insensibility of spiritual slumber—nor do the terrors of the law shake this false tranquillity, nor do the still more awful terrors of the judgment-seat—that day of man's dissolution which is so near at hand—which sends before it so many intimations—that the day of this world's dissolution, when the trumpet shall be sounded, and the men of all generations rise from their ancient slumbers—and this earth, and these heavens shall be engulphed in the ruins of one general conflagration—and the wrath that is now suspended over such men, shall at length burst forth into open manifestation on all the sons and daughters of ungodliness—this day, which, when it cometh, will absorb every heart in one fearful and overwhelming desolation, now that it is seen through the imagined vista of many successive centuries, has no more effect than a charm of poetry;—and whether from the dimness of nature's sight to these futurities of the spiritual world, or from its slight apprehensions of that guilt, which is so abominable in the sanctuary of heaven—certain it is that man can trifle in regard to the solemnities of a judgment-seat, and say to his soul, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

Secondly, We have left ourselves little room for that which is, nevertheless, the main lesson of our text—a lesson of the kindness and liberality and good-will of our

Father who is in heaven, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask him." In this delightful assurance he avails himself of imagery at once most pathetic and appropriate—he announces himself to us in the familiar character of a parent—he steps forward, as it were, from the deep and awful mysteries of his unfathomable character, and tells us that within its recesses there are all the sympathies of a father's kindness. To beget a trust in those bosoms, where else there would have been a dark and overwhelming terror, he enlists on his side the dearest and the gentlest of all human affections; and there is not a man, who, looking back on the days of his earliest boyhood, who feels reminded by our text of the guardians of his early moments, but is told that there is a tenderness which far surpasses theirs, and which now beckons and beams upon him from heaven. It is thus that the unseen God looks out upon the world from the shroud of eternity, and as if to relieve our imaginations from the fears and the horrors of a tremendous undoing, he seizes on the most intelligible of all earthly relationships, through which he represents himself to our species, not as a master over his household, but as a father at the head of his family. To dissipate the injurious suspicions of our hearts, he is fain to divest himself of all that is alarming, by likening himself to those parents who have kept by us and tended us through all the difficulties of our early years; he is thus disarmed of all those fears, when he thus lets himself down as it were among our earthly tabernacles, and tells us that the instinct which he has planted there, but feebly represents the affection that is in his own breast to the

family of mankind. It is true that in the same text, he characterizes mankind as evil—but not as a denunciation—but as a device to win our hearts. The love of offspring is, as it were, a beauteous flame, that still gleams and gladdens throughout the ruins of fallen humanity, and casts a remaining brightness on the population of an outcast species; and the argument is—if such be the mighty strength of this principle in our nature, that it still keeps its ground even after the mighty havoc of so wide and so wasteful a disorder, how freely and how powerfully must it operate still in the unaltered heart of Him who formed man at first after his own likeness—in that inviolate sanctuary, which neither darkness nor disorder can possibly enter, even in the essential nature of the Godhead. There it still burns undiminished and undisturbed, with all its original power; and thus much more powerfully is the appeal carried home to all the experience we ever had of love and liberality from our earthly parents.

Before I conclude, let me endeavour very briefly to protect your minds from a delusion which, we greatly fear, has proved the undoing of many an immortal spirit. The reason we have insisted so long upon the demonstration of human guilt, ere I made declaration of the Divine benevolence, is because that benevolence directed towards the sinful, is directed to them in such a way, though unequivocally stated in the New Testament, as it is painfully offensive to the disciples of a meagre and sentimental theism. We have expatiated so much on this one article of orthodoxy—the depravity of our nature, that we may reconcile you, if possible, to the other article of orthodoxy—the doctrine of the atonement. A confi-

dence in the mere general mercy of God, without any reference to the atonement that has been made for sin, is a confidence that must assuredly yield to disappointment. There is a law that will not be trampled upon—there is a law given that will not be insulted—there is a throne of high jurisprudence that is guarded and upheld by all the sacredness of truth and of firm empire; and there is a voice of authority, that issues therefrom, of which we are told that "heaven and earth may pass away, ere any one of its words can pass away." In the economy of that moral government under which we sit, there is no compromise with sin,—there is no letting down of the judgment against it. The fear of God is unequivocally set against evil, and either the evil must be sanctified into that which is good, or wholly swept away. It were a violence to his nature, that iniquity should pass either without a punishment or without an expiation. There may, by some mysterious conveyance, an egress be found for his goodness towards the sinner, but towards the sin, there is nought in God but the most unsparing and implacable warfare. With sin he can descend to no compromise; and in saving us, he dwells in lofty and unapproachable sacredness; he cannot dwell with the guilty, but in that act by which his justice shall be satisfied, and his law magnified and made honourable.

Now it is this, and this precisely, which distinguishes the *evangelical mercy* that is gratuitously held out for the acceptance of all, from the *general mercy*, in which so many people confide, but by which no man can possibly be saved. Were we asked, in briefest possible definition, to state what that is which impresses on the mercy of the Gospel its essential and specified characteristic, we

should say of it, that it is a mercy in full and visible conjunction with righteousness. With the pardon which it deals out for sin, it makes most impressive demonstration of the evil of it, and magnifies and does honour to the law, by the very way in which it cancels the guilt that has been incurred by the law's violation. All the exhibitions that God could have given of his character by the visitation of his severity upon the rebellious, are still given unmarred and unmutilated, when, under the peculiar economy of redemption, he lavishes upon man of his loving kindness and tender mercy; and such is the constitution of the Gospel, such is the exquisite wisdom of its contrivance, that the mercy of the Gospel mixes with the truth of the law, and "God can at once be just and the justifier of the ungodly who believe in the Saviour." You know, I trust the great majority of you know, how for this marvellous design the economy of grace has been formed. If you know it, as I trust you do, there is not, I believe, a soul that has experienced the power of its salvation, and felt its preciousness; who does not love to be often told of it. That name which is as ointment poured forth, will always bear to be repeated in the hearing of the faithful; nor does it ever pall upon the spirit of him who has been visited with a sense of his sinfulness and labours under it, to affirm more frequently that unto him "a Saviour has been born;" that upon him did God lay the iniquities of us all; that the sword of vengeance which should have been lifted against us he awakened in all its brightness against his fellow; and that in bowing himself down unto the sacrifice, Jesus Christ had to bear the weight of a world's atonement. The severity of God because of sin was not relaxed, but only transferred from

the head of the offender to the head of his substitute; and in the depth of Christ's mysterious sufferings has he made as full a discovery of the riches of his inviolable sanctity, as he could have done by the direct infliction of their doom on the millions for whom the Saviour died. The claims of truth, and justice, and holiness, instead of being effaced from the administration, stand as conspicuously blazoned forth in the new economy of the Gospel as in the old economy of the law; and with all the freeness and exuberance of its mercy there is preserved the inviolate majesty of a jurisprudence that cannot be insulted—of perfection that cannot be violated. It is true that sinners are now permitted to draw nigh, but it must only be in the name of Him who hath made full acquittal from heaven's insulted authority; and ample as is the pardon which they receive, it is without the compromise of heaven's justice, and sealed with the blood of its everlasting covenant. The Holy One of Israel now sitteth on a throne of grace, but approached, as it were, only by the august ceremonies of a priesthood and a consecrated mediatorship; and there is none who draws nigh but must feel in his heart the homage and reverence which are due to a throne of righteousness. He reads the proclamation of peace between God and his soul—but he reads it on that cross upon which the chastisement of his peace was borne. He is like the man who eyes the torrents of a bursting volcano, in a place of security where its flames cannot possibly envelop him: so he whom the tempest of God's wrath has passed by, rejoices and feels himself secure under the shadow of the Redeemer's wings.

I know not any affirmation which the Bible more fully and directly warrants a preacher of the Gospel to make

than this—if you refuse the mercy of God upon this footing, you will receive it upon no other. It is for Him the *offended,* and not for you the *offending* party, to dictate the terms of reconciliation; and he tells us that no one cometh unto the Father but by the Son, while all who enter into his presence through the appointed door of the Saviour's mediatorship shall be saved.—In other words, you will never meet with acceptance from God on the ground of his general mercy—while on the ground of his Gospel mercy you will never lose it. He is most ready to pardon, not so as to extenuate the malignity of sin, but to stamp the expression of an utter hostility to an evil whose guilt on you he is most willing to pass by.

Should you, in the distaste and disinclination of your spirits to the cross of Christ, keep by your general confidence, and forget that evangelical confidence of the Gospel,—should you count only on God's goodness to the sinner, while you shut your eyes upon his severity against sin, as manifested in the death of his Son—then there must still remain this severity in your own death and everlasting destruction. It is the grand peculiarity of the Gospel scheme, that, while by it God hath come forth in love and tenderness to our world, he hath, at the same time, made full preservation of his justice; and, along with the freest overtures of peace and reconciliation, there is the fullest reparation for every outrage which they have inflicted upon his government. On this footing he welcomes you, but on no other. He will not pass over your transgressions of his law, but in such a way as shall compel you to hate sin. He will not lavish upon you of his attribute of mercy but in such a way as will secure your homage to all the other lofty attributes of his nature.

These are the characteristics of the Gospel—by which sin, and the guilt of it, are done away. It is a method which God himself has found out; but if you conform thereto, be sure it is only in the way of reconciliation; and if you will not consent to take the goodness of God in this shape, nought remains but that you shall be overtaken by the severity of the law.

But, once for all, let me not leave the subject without assuring you, once more, that there is a path of escape open for all. The flaming sword, at the gate of paradise, turns every way to intercept your approach to the tree of life; and the Gospel of Jesus Christ turns every way but *one*, but that *one* is a passage by which every creature, who now hears me, might make good his entrance into the paradise of God. The severity of God, so far from lessening or casting a shade over his goodness, only brightens and enhances it the more. This goodness had to struggle a way for the manifestation of itself, amid the conflict of all the other perfections of his character. The mercy of the Gospel is mercy in the highest possible exhibition; for it is mercy that had to scale the barrier of such difficulties as to every other eye, but the eye of Infinite Wisdom, looked impassable. It is a mercy that ere it could reach, the world had to wait the undertaking of Him whose embassy was to seek and to save,—it is a mercy by which God spared not his only begotten Son, but endured the spectacle of that ignominious and accursed death, by which the penalties of a broken law are repealed, and by which God is declared to be just even when he justifies the ungodly who believe in Jesus. And now that the mercy of God hath been established on the foundation of his vindicated honours—now that the high demands

of justice and truth are fully satisfied—now that full demonstration has been given to men and angels of a sovereignty that could not be trampled on—of a jurisprudence that could not be violated—a voice of mercy is heard, the sound of which reaches to the most distant race of our world, and the burthen of which is to call to that Father's house, from which they have departed, one and all of its alien families.

Let me, therefore, conclude, with assuring you, that every preparation has been made for your return, and that God rejoices over man as if man had never fallen. Sin has been expiated by the sacrifice that has been made for it; and now, with a clear conscience, because now, in a consecrated way, may the guiltiest of our world draw nigh, and make his requests known unto God. Pardon is yours if you will—the clean heart, and the right spirit, are yours, if you will,—heaven with all its glories, is open to receive you; and holiness, which is the dress of heaven, is ready, like Elijah's mantle, to fall from heaven upon you. For thus saith the Scripture, "Turn unto me and I will pour out my Spirit upon you—I will make known my words unto you—a new heart also will I give you, and a right spirit will I put within you; and ye shall walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them."

SERMON VII.*

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE TRUTH TO THE CONSCIENCE.

"*By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.*"—2 Cor. iv. 2.

There is nothing that is wont to be more frequently alleged by the enemies of missions, than the utter hopelessness of the enterprise, and that for the want of those miraculous powers wherewith the first teachers of Christianity were invested. We can remember the day when able men associated the utmost folly and fanaticism with the cause. Yet, believing as they do, on the strength of prophecy, that the knowledge of the Lord will, at some time, cover the earth as the waters cover the channels of the deep, they seem themselves to be actuated by the imagination which they, of all others, thought to be most fanatical, that the Church was again to be visited with the supernatural endowments of another Pentecost, for the further extension of the Gospel into the territories of heathenism. Meantime, they seem to have rested in a state of indolent or mystic quietism; and, while they

* Preached in behalf of the India Mission, in the National Scotch Church, Regent Square, London.

denounce as enthusiasm the confidence of those who count on the miracles of grace, which may well be termed the miracles of every age, they will denounce it as weak enthusiasm to look for the arrival of those miracles which, now extinct for many ages, have ceased to be anything but matters of solid history since the outset of the Christian dispensation.

For ourselves, we are sanguine as to the effect of missionary exertions, but not so confident as many that the gift of sensible miracles is again to be restored. We hold that, however essential such miracles may have been to the first establishment of Christianity, this system of faith contains an evidence within itself, for its own ample and indefinite diffusion, even to the uttermost limits of the habitable world. We reckon that in the very economy of the Gospel there is provision made for the spread of the Gospel, and that without any delegated virtue from on high to its messengers, by which they may lay an arrest on the known laws and processes of visible nature. In short, it is our opinion, that, for the conversion of men to Christianity, either at home or abroad, there is another power at work than that of achieving present miracles, and even another evidence than that which lies in the history of past miracles. We think there is an evidence, distinct from this, adverted to in the text; and the sermon and the text may contribute something, perhaps, towards its elucidation.

But, here again we are brought to the experience how inadequate the opportunity of a single and occasional sermon is for the full, and thorough, and radical exposition of any one topic in theology. At the best we can but undertake to offer a few slight touches of an argument,

the inherent worth of which is not to be measured by the effect of any brief or hurried demonstration. A reason, however valid and invincible in itself, may suffer from the dense, rapid statement we are compelled to make of it: in which case you may be presented at once with a good reason, yet with a feeble and impaired reasoning.

Let us endeavour, *first*, to give some account of the evidence presented before us,—that is, the manifestation of the truth to the conscience. *Secondly*, we shall at least assert, and, as far as we can, establish the assertion, that it is the great, if not the only, instrument of Christian missions, both in and out of Christendom. And, *lastly*, we see the prospect of success in our missionary enterprise,—a prospect confirmed, as we hope to show, by the actual and historical success which has already attended it.

I. If by CONSCIENCE be understood the moral faculty, or that which takes cognizance of, and makes distinction between, the morally good and evil, this may safely be regarded as a universal and inward feeling in man, to be met with throughout all the members of the human family, under all the varieties of light and obscuration: and, with allowance for every modification of sentiment, still, there is a general sense of right and wrong, which is characteristic of our species; a feeling of approval and complacency associated with the former,—a feeling of shame, dissatisfaction, and remorse, associated with the latter. This peculiarity of our nature obtains in all countries, and among all conditions of humanity. Whatever the practice may be, there is a certain perception of truth as to the difference between good and evil; everywhere there is a law of rectitude, to which, in every nation, how

degraded soever, a universal homage is yielded by the sensibilities of the heart, however little it may be yielded to by the practical habit of the life. In a word, there is a morality recognized by all men, imprinting the deepest traces of itself on the vocabulary of every language, and marking the residence of a conscience in every bosom; insomuch that, go to any outcast tribe of wanderers, and, however sunk in barbarism, if you will tell them of right and wrong, they will meet your demonstration with corresponding and intelligent sympathy. You do not speak to them in a language unknown; there is a common feeling, a common understanding betwixt you,—one ground of fellowship, at least, on which the most intelligent missionary from Europe might converse with the rudest savages of the desert.

But, again: this conscience, this sense of morality, does not exist alone in the breast; it is, more or less, followed up by a certain conception of some rightful Sovereign who planted it there. The feeling of a judge within the breast is in no case altogether apart from the faith of a Judge above, who sits as Overseer upon the doings, and as Arbitrator of the designs of men. The moral sense does not terminate or rest in the mere abstract relation of right and wrong, but is embodied into the belief of a substantive Being, who dispenses the rewards that are due to the one, and who inflicts the penalties that are felt to be due to the other. It is this which gives rise to the theology of natural conscience, more quick and powerful far than the theology of academic demonstration; not so much an inference from the marks of design and harmony in external nature, as an instance suggested from what is personal, and what is felt within the recesses of one's own bosom, because lead-

ing from one effectual step from the felt supremacy of conscience within, to the feared supremacy of God, the Author of conscience, and who knoweth all things.

It is a mistake to imagine of this theology that it is not universal, or that any decree, whether of ignorance or of corruption, can fully obliterate it. It was not stifled by the fables of Greece and Rome; nor was it extinct, as may be seen by their invocations to the Great Spirit, among the tribes of the American Indians. In short, wherever men are to be found, there is the impression, at least, of a reigning and righteous God. When utterance is made of such a Being, by a missionary, in the darkest places of the earth, they are not startled, as if by the sound of a thing unknown; there is a ready acquiescence with him; and, as he speaks of God, and sin, and vengeance, there is a felt harmony between the conscience of the savage and the sermon of the missionary.

But, further still: conscience, in the sense that we have hitherto used the term, is that faculty by which cognizance is taken of the good or the evil desert of conduct in general: but, conscience, by the use of language, has obtained a meaning more extended than this. It is implicated with the faculty of *consciousness*, and so is made to take a special cognizance of one's character—of one's own conduct. One man is said to speak to the conscience of another man, when he speaks to the independent sense or knowledge which the other has of the state of his own heart, and his own history; and certain it is, that never did we feel profounder veneration for any wisdom, than for that which searches and scrutinizes among the arcana of one's own nature, and comes to a right discernment thereupon. The man who can pro-

nounce aright on my character, and accurately read on this inner tablet the lineaments which I know to be graven there,—the man who shows to me the picture of what I am, and I believe it to be at all points the faithful reflection of what I feel myself to be,—the man whose voice without is thus responded to by the echo of conscience, or consciousness, within,—the man who can awaken this inhabitant of my bosom from his slumbers, and make him all alive to the truth of such a representation as he now perceives, but never before adverted to,—to such a man we render the homage due to an insight and a sagacity so marvellous. And at length,—to border on our argument,—this sagacity we may conceive enhanced into a discernment supernatural, which may amount to such a divination of the thoughts of the heart as nought but the interposal of the Divinity can explain: it might announce itself to be a higher wisdom than any upon earth,—to be a wisdom from above; and so draw the very acknowledgment which the first teachers of Christianity drew; to whom, when an unlearned hearer listened, he was judged of all, and convinced of all, and thus were the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so, falling down on his face, he worshipped God, and reported that God was in them of a truth.

After these preliminary observations, we now feel ourselves somewhat prepared for stating the argument of the text. The substance of the apostle's testimony, whether as orally delivered by himself to the people of his own age, or as transmitted in a written record to the people of all ages, is such as might manifest its own truth to the conscience of every man. When making demonstration of human guilt, there might be such an accordancy with

all that nature felt of its own guiltiness—when making demonstration of the offered atonement, there might be such an accordancy with all that nature felt of its own necessities—as first to draw the attention, and then to compel the belief of all who were thus aroused. The felt force of the difficulties on the one hand, the felt suitableness of the remedies on the other, might send them, and rightfully send them, on such a consummation. It is not the view of these naked propositions that can evince or establish the general truth of the system which contains them; but they are variously and repeatedly set forth in the sacred record. And this gives rise to innumerable touches of descriptive accuracy, in the multiplied and sustained harmony between the inner tablet of the heart, and the outward tablet of the presented revelation. There is an evidence offered by the agreement between a complex tally and its alike complex, but accurately resembling counterpart: and there may be a like evidence in the countless adaptations which obtain between a supernatural application from heaven, and the human one beneath upon which it has descended. And besides these, there are many other symptoms or signatures of truth which the conscience can lay hold of. It can discern the apparent honesty of any communication; it can take cognizance of all that marks the worth or simplicity of its bearings; it can feel, and be impressed by, its aspect of undoubted sacredness; it can distinguish the voice of God, or of an ambassador from God, in its promulgation of a righteous law, and in the sustained dignity and effect wherewith it challenges a rightful authority; it can perceive all which appears in and about the message, to be in keeping with the high original which it

claims; and whether we look to the profoundness of its wisdom, or to the august and inviolable purity of its moral character, it will be so plainly perceived, when these evidences are so enhanced and multiplied on the professed messenger from heaven, as to announce its descent from a God of knowledge and a God of holiness.

You will now understand what is meant by the self-evidencing power of the Bible. The evidences of Christianity might be variously distributed—into external, internal, and historical evidences. Well—you will understand from these what is meant by the *self-evidencing* power of the Bible—strictly an internal evidence. It is that in virtue of which it announces its own authority to the understanding of the reader. It is not only the bearer of its own contents, but is the bearer also of its own credentials. It is by the external and the historical evidences of Christianity that we are enabled to maintain its cause against the infidel, the lettered academic man; but it is another evidence that recommends it to the acceptance of the general population. Their belief in Scripture, and we think all Scripture belief whatever, is grounded on the instant manifestation of its truth to the conscience: and thus without the aid of sensible miracles in the present age, and without even the scholarship which ascertains and verifies the miracles of the past age, do we hold that the divinity of the Bible may be read and recognized in its own pages, and that in virtue of the evidence which might be addressed with effect to the moral nature of man in any quarter of the world.

But what gives complete and conclusive effect to this evidence is the revelation of the Spirit. For the under-

standing of this, there is one thing of prime importance to be attended to. The Spirit, when he acts as an enlightener, presents us with no new revelation of his own; he only shines on that revelation which is already given in the Bible. He brings no new truths from afar, but he discloses the truth of that word which is nigh to us. It is true that he opens our eyes, but it is to behold the wondrous things contained in this book. It is true that he lifts up a veil, but it is but the veil which hides from our view the secrets of any distant or mysterious region. He taketh away the veil from our hearts, and we are made to behold that which is within, and also to behold that which is without, and become alive to the force and fullness of that evidence which lies in the manifold adjustment between them, convinced at once of the magnitude of our own sin, and of the suitableness and reality of the offered salvation. In this process there is no direct announcement made to us by the Spirit of God; there is neither a voice nor a vision, no whisper to the ear of the inner man, no gleam either of sensible or spiritual representation. There is light, it is true, shining out of the darkness; but it is the light of the Bible now made luminous, reflected from the tablet of the conscience now made visible. It is not a light shining directly upon us from the heavenly objects themselves; but it is a light shining on a medium, the proof by which we are made sensible of its reality. He who has been visited by this manifestation can say, "I was blind, but now I see." He may remember the days when a darkness inscrutable seemed to hang over those mystic, those then unmeaning passages of the Bible, that he now perceives to be full of weight, and full of significancy. He

may remember the day when, safe in himself, he neither saw the extent nor the purity of God's lofty commandments, nor his own deficiency and distance therefrom. Though now burdened with the conscious magnitude of his guilt, he now sees the need of a Saviour, and feels his preciousness. He is now brought within full view of the argument of my text, and the transition—the personal or historical transition—which himself has undergone, is to his mind an impressive argument; it forms to him an experimental evidence of the truth of Christianity, and may be regarded as another appeal to his conscience, or his consciousness in its favour. He has become a Christian in the true sense and significancy of the term; the Gospel has entered his mind in the demonstration of the Spirit and in power. He rejoices in the hope of this bright fulfilment; and untutored though he be in the scholarship of its argumentative or literary evidence, he with an humble education, and in humble circumstances, can give a reason of his hope.

I am quite sensible that this cannot be fully accorded to by the sympathy of those who have not required the transition. I have great hope of those who remember the time when a veil of hieroglyphical obscurity seemed to be over the pages of the New Testament; who did not feel the sense of its adjustment to the felt moral and spiritual wants of their own nature; and who now feel a weight and see a significancy on every page, which they did not come at by any logical process, but which has been the result, in all probability, of great moral earnestness, giving rise to a devout perusal of the Scriptures accompanied with prayer, in answer to which the Spirit has opened their understandings to see the Scriptures:

and they appeal to this as a tangible method of proof, that whereas they were blind, now they see. Even those who have not undergone this transition may be made to conceive the evidence by imagining the possibility of that which they now nauseate, perhaps as mysticism, or as something which cannot enter into our sympathies. Let us suppose that they have been roused with the obligation of devoting themselves to the perusal of these Scriptures, and have poured forth their hearts in prayer to God that he would reveal these Scriptures to their understandings—if they are made to feel their weight, and their manifold application to all the peculiarities of their own heart and history, they may at least conceive this would be very effective evidence.

But, doubtless, it would require the illustration of a volume instead of the view which can be given in the limits of a single sermon, to follow out this question through all its bearings. In one sentence we shall now state what the evidence is, on which we would vindicate the rationality and the hopefulness of the missionary enterprise.

We have the Bible which can be multiplied indefinitely and sent to all countries. We have the conscience universal as human nature; and in virtue of which every possessor of this nature, whether Greek or barbarian, might respond to the word which is there addressed to them. We have the Spirit of God given in answer to prayer, and promised to accompany and abide with us even to the end of the world. And what we affirm is, that having these, we have means for the christianization of the whole earth — a mighty yet marvellous achievement, wrought with the simple apparatus of a Bible and a con-

science, and the evidence that is struck out between them by the light from the Spirit of God irradiating them forth. You have the whole philosophy of this evidence condensed in a very narrow compass in those beautiful lines of Cowper, when he compares the Christian intelligence of a poor aged female, with the accomplishments of the philosopher Voltaire :—

> " She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
> With little understanding and no wit,
> Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible true,—
> A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew;
> And in that charter reads, with sparkling eyes,
> Her title to a treasure in the skies.
> O, happy peasant! O, unhappy bard!
> His the mere tinsel—hers the sure reward!
> He praised, perhaps, for ages yet to come;
> She never heard of half a mile from home!
> He, lost in errors, his vain heart prefers;
> She, safe in the simplicity of hers."

II. Having now said all that we can afford on the manifestation spoken of in the text, we now pass on to the *second* head of discourse, under which we propose that we should at least assert, and, as far as we could establish the assertion, that *the evidence addressed to the conscience was the great, if not the only instrument, of christianization, both in and out of Christendom.* And here we think it must be quite palpable, that it is at least to some such evidence we owe the great bulk of our home Christianity. We on this subject make our confident appeal to the ministers of the Gospel who are now present and bid them tell what that is which originates and which fashioned the Christianity of their own people. Was it a series of lectures on the Deistical controversy?

Was it the arguments of Paley, or of Leslie, or of Butler, that germinated their faith? Was it the doctrine *in* the book, or the history *of* the book, that was the instrumentality of their conversion? That they might see the truth of the Gospel, had you to plant an historical ladder, ascending from the present age to that of the apostles; or by the light of criticism had you to guide them by a series of indices along the historical pathway, till they could lay their hands on the authenticity of the books of the New Testament, and the certainty of the narrative contained in it? If these people have faith at all, they have a reason for their faith. They do see the truth of the Gospel; and the question is, whether they see it immediately in the light of Scripture doctrine, or mediately in the light of historical demonstration. When you enter the house of one of your cottage patriarchs, and explore the library which lies in little room upon its shelves, you may there find what that is which has begun, and what that is which sustains his Christianity. Let me speak at least with confidence of the state of matters in our own land. Such books often met with, even in the lowest hovels of our peasantry, are not books on the external history of the Bible—they are the Bible itself, and books on the internal substance and contents of the Bible; they are the Flavels, the Guthries, and the Richard Baxters, of the patriarchal age, which are his favourites—men who say little or nothing on the argumentative evidence of Scripture, but who unfold the subject matter, and who urge, and urge most impressively, on the consciences of the reader, the lessons of Scripture. In a word, it is by a perpetual interchange between their consciences and the Bible, that their Christianity is

upholden by a light struck out between the sayings of the one and the findings of the other. It is not a light which is out of this book, but a light which is within the book, that commences and sustains the Christianity of our land—the Christianity of our ploughmen, our artizans, our men of handicraft and hard labour: yet not the Christianity theirs of deceitful imagination or of implicit deference to authority; but a Christianity of deep, I will even say of rational belief, firmly seated in the principles of our moral nature, and nobly accredited by the virtues of our well-conditioned peasantry. In the olden time of Presbytery—that time of Scriptural Christianity in our pulpits, and of psalmody in all our cottages—these men grew and multiplied in the land; and though derided in the heartless literature, and discountenanced and disowned in the heartless politics of other days, it is their remnant which acts as a preserving salt among our people, and which constitutes the real strength and glory of the Scottish nation.

We now begin to feel ourselves on firm vantage ground for the maintenance of our cause, and on which the reasonableness, I would say the philosophy of missions might be vindicated. It is an axiom in philosophy, that we should look for a like effect from a like cause, and like manufacture from like materials. In the work of conversion, the material on which we operate is the same, whether at home or in India—the identical human nature that is characteristic—I say the identical human nature that is characteristic, not of tribes or nations, but is characteristic of the species. The instrument by which we operate is the same, the identical message from heaven to all the people that be upon the earth. The power which gives the instrument its efficacy is the same, even that

Spirit which bloweth where he listeth; and who, with but the Bible to pioneer his way, disowns all the distinctions of savage or civilized life, and all the barriers of geography. In the prosecution of this cause we transfer to other lands the very machinery that is at work in our own parishes. We translate the sacred volume, and circulate it amongst them. We send schoolmasters who might teach them to read their vernacular Bible. We send ministers who expound it. We knock at the door of heaven's sanctuary that a virtue may descend from on high, that God may add the grace of his Spirit to the testimony of his word. You cannot overthrow the efficacy of this process, but by an argument that would nullify all the Christianizing process of our land. You cannot put down our cause without passing sentence of extinction on the religious light of all Christendom. You cannot rightfully charge the work of missionaries beyond this limit with fanaticism and folly, without fastening the brand of these very imputations on the work of ministers within. If no Christianity can be formed there without the power of working present miracles, or the power of evincing to the belief of savages the reality of past miracles, then no Christianity can be formed here throughout the mass or great majority of our own population.

But if Christianity can be formed here by the simple power of the truth on the conscience, this is the principle which opens the world to the enterprise of missionaries. Wherever there is a human being there is a conscience; and on this ground alone the message might circulate around the globe, and be carried with acceptance through all its nations, and tribes, and families. And if it were not so, if there were no such evidence as that for which

we are contending, by what practical avenue could the faith of the Gospel be made to find an entrance and an establishment among the great mass of our population? Take away from us the self-evidencing power of the Bible, and you lay an interdict on the Christianity of workshops, on the Christianity of crowded and industrious establishments, on the Christianity of nearly all our cities and all our parishes. That the hope which is in us may have the property of endurance, there must be a reason for the hope; and where, we ask, in the whole field of their habitual contemplation, are the toil-worn children of poverty to find it? Are they to search for this reason among the archives of history? Are they to gather it out of the mouldering erudition of other days? Are they to fetch it up from the profound and puzzling secrets of argumentation? Are they to encounter the toil of scholarship; and, ere the light of revelation can guide or gladden them, think you that they must learn to number, and to balance, and to confront the testimony of former generations? Refuse us the evidence we insist on, and in doing so you pass over nearly all the Christianity that is in our own land. It may still continue to be talked of in the cloistered retirements of literary debate and speculation; but the mighty host of our people could take no more rational interest in its questions, than they would in any controversy of the schools; and if the authority of this volume be not legibly stamped on its own pages; if all the evidence by which we can affirm it to be most thoroughly and visibly impregnated be a delusion; if all the varied points of accordancy between the book of revelation and the book of human experience be not felt to attest the divinity that formed it; or if this attestation

be far beyond the understanding of an ordinary peasant; then must Christianity be ever shut up from the vast majority of our species, nor do we see one possible way of causing it to circulate at large among the families of our land.

On this subject, therefore, we again with confidence appeal to the experience of any Christian minister within the limits of his own parish. Did he ever witness the conversion of one of his own people, and more especially in the humble classes of society? and what then, we ask, was the instrument cause in that conversion? Did it lie, we ask, in anything external to the subject matter of the Gospel; or did it lie within the subject matter of the Gospel itself? Did the light lie in that history which the documents of antiquity enabled him to give of the book; or did it lie in that doctrine and information which stands engraven upon its pages? Did it lie in the exhibition he made of the proof of the communication; or did it lie in the exhibition he made of the substance of the communication? Let him tell us the argument of that awakening sermon, under which he remembers some secure hold of infidelity to have been stormed. Was it in combating the hostility of nature's blindness? Was it in combating the hostility of literature, when, in all the pride of erudition, he demonstrated the faithful conveyance of the Scriptures of truth from the first ages of Christianity? Or was it in the act of combating the hostility of nature's blindness, and nature's opposition; when he opened the Scriptures, and made the truth itself manifest to the consciences of men? This last we imagine to be the only way of converting the human soul. It is not done by descending into the depths of the earth, and there fighting the battles

of the truth against the dark and gloomy spectres of theology: it is not done by ascending up into the heavens, and fetching from these wondrous regions some sublime illustration; it is done by bringing the word nigh to them, by entering with it into the warm and well known chambers of their own consciousness; by making them feel the full force of its adjustment with all their wants and experience; by telling them of that sin, under a conviction of which nature tries to forget God, or would flee affrighted from his presence,—and of that Saviour who alone can hush the alarms of nature's philosophy. These are the lessons which have done to this very nature what they did in the days of the apostles. They can make the unbeliever and the unlearned feel himself to be judged of all, and convinced of all, and thus can manifest the secrets of his heart, so that they shall acknowledge God to be in them of a truth.

III. We would now come to our *third* and last head of discourse, in which, as briefly as possible, we would consider *the likelihood of success in the missionary enterprise*, and, more especially, *the actual and historical success which already has attended it.* But I must here restrict myself to a few gleanings from a now multifarious and daily accumulating history, and such as may best illustrate the *rationale* of the missionary enterprise.

When the first missionaries went to Greenland, we may be sure they had the ignorance of a most raw and unpromising population to contend with. They thought they would go gradually to work, and, before presenting them with the message in the terms of the mission, that they would give them some preparatory ideas of natural religion. For that purpose they expatiated in formal demon-

stration on the existence, and the unity, and the attributes, and the love of God. The Greenlanders did not comprehend them; and the missionaries were mortified to find that, after years of labour, they had not gained a single proselyte to the faith. On this they resolved to change their measures, and, as a last desperate experiment, they gave up all preparatory instruction, and made one great and decisive step onward to the peculiar doctrines; and these, too, couched in the peculiar phraseology of the Gospel. When simply told, in Scripture words, of sin, and of the Saviour, the effect was instantaneous: there was something in the hearts of these unlettered men which responded to the truths and tidings of the New Testament. The demonstrations of natural religion fell fruitless and unintelligible on their ears; but they felt the burden of sin and of death, and listened attentively to the preacher's voice, as it told, that unto them a Saviour was born. They live on the very outskirts of population, and beyond them there is nothing seen but a wilderness of snow, and nothing heard but the angry howling of the elements. Who will say that the enterprise is chimerical, now that a Christian people has been formed in a country so unpromising,—that the limits of the Christian church have been pushed forward to the limits of human existence,—and the tidings of good-will to men have been carried with acceptance to the very last and outermost of the species? The discovery thus made by the Moravians, was converted by them into principles which they carried round the globe; and which, ever since, has been the fertile source of their marvellous success in the work of evangelizing the heathen. They now learned that it was impossible to antedate the message of the Gospel in any

manner, and they availed themselves of this experience in all their subsequent operations. Among the Esquimaux of Labrador, among the Indians of North America, among the Negroes of the Danish, and Dutch, and British colonies, and, lastly, among the Hottentots of South Africa, as the effect of their peculiar and powerful regimen, villages have arisen in the wilderness; and we now behold men of before untutored and savage nature, as if by the touch of miracle, completely, because radically, transformed, living in gentleness together, and tutored in the arts and decencies of a civilized people.

Many there are who nauseate the peculiar evangelism which lies at the root of this great moral and spiritual change, yet are forced to admire the beauteous efflorescence which proceeds from it; just as there are many who can eye with delight the grace of a cultivated landscape, yet have no taste for the operations of the husbandry which called it into being. Certain it is that Moravians have become the objects of a popular and sentimental admiration among men who would not tolerate the Methodistical flavour, as they term it, of a Moravian report,—a thing just as possible as that they might feel a most exquisite relish for their music, along with a thorough distaste for their hymns. The fruit and the flower are pleasing to the eye of many to whom the culture is offensive, and who could not look upon it without the revolt of nature's enmity to the truth as it is in Jesus: and therefore it is that they look only to the one, and contrive to overlook the other. And, accordingly, Moravians have of late become the objects of very general request, as well as of very general admiration: their services are everywhere sought after. It is a most substan-

tial testimony in their favour that the West India planters have found the best results from their preaching and discipline, in the good order and fidelity of their slaves. When their accounts were made up at the end of 1827, they had under Christian instruction no less than 35,629 negroes.

This seems to be the best place for the adjustment of the question, whether the first attempt should be to christianize or to civilize, or which it is of these that takes the precedency of the other. The Moravians themselves have innocently given rise to a delusion upon this subject. The result in their subjects has now become so striking and so palpable,—they have at length succeeded in raising so beauteous a spectacle, as that of Christian and well-ordered villages, in what were before the fruitful haunts of prowling and plundering barbarians,—there is something so inexpressibly pleasing in the chapel service and the well attended school, and the picturesque garden, and the snug habitation, and the prosperous husbandry of reclaimed Hottentots, that Moravians are now cried up by sentimental travellers and elegant writers as an example, nay, as a reproach, to all other missionaries; and they have supposed, perhaps naturally enough, that what was first in exhibition, was also first in time,—that the Christianity, in short, was a graft upon the civilization, and not the civilization a graft upon the Christianity. There were none more hurt and scandalized by these eulogies than the Moravians themselves; and they have actually penned a vindication of their method, not against the sneer of malignant enemies, but against the praises of mistaken admirers. The whole history, in fact, of this success,—I may add, the whole history of christianization

since the days of the apostles,—shows that wherever the faith of the Gospel arises in the mind, it is rooted, and has its deep foundation, in the workings of that moral nature which is common to all the species. And so it is that these Moravians tell us how they begin the topics of sin and of the Saviour at the very outset of their converse, even with the very rudest of nature's wanderers; and they find a conscience in them, which responds as readily to their sayings, and which loosens the pre-occupations and prejudices which obstruct their efficacy, as in the lettered Mahometan, or the demi-civilized Hindoo. It is true they also attempt to insinuate among them the arts and industry of Europe, from the very beginning of their enterprise; and the two educations—religion and humanity—go on contemporaneously together. It may, in some instances, be difficult to assign what the precedency is in the order of time; but as to the precedency in the order of nature, or in the order of cause and effect, there is no difficulty. It is not the previous civilization which makes way for the Christianity,—it is the previous incipient Christianity which makes way for the civilization. This is the strict philosophy of the process: Christianity does not wait for civilization, it is civilization which waits, and follows with attendant footsteps, on Christianity. In a word, the message from God to man may be delivered immediately to all men; it is a message alike to the barbarian and to the Greek: and here, too, as in everything else, there is the fullest harmony between the declarations of the Gospel itself, and the findings of experience.

This will explain, I hope, that very prevalent misconception, in virtue of which it is, that while, in the West Indies more especially, and, indeed, throughout a great

portion of British society, there is such a demand and veneration for Moravians, there is still so strong a remainder of dislike, and even of derision, for all other missionaries. The reason is simply this,—the Moravians are the oldest of all our modern Protestant missions, and they have had time to work up a more conspicuous result as the evidence of their labours. They also went through the very ordeal of contempt and of bitter calumny which still our missionaries have to undergo, and which they must continue to endure, so long as the Christianity of the attempt stands out so nakedly to the eye of worldly observers, and the mantle of civilization is not yet sufficiently thickened to cover it from their view. We doubt not that there is a rawness in the new settlement of Bethelsdorp, which is now most comfortably softened away in the older establishments of the Moravians. The one is just as solid and deeply founded as the other in the sacredness of the enterprise which led to it; but there is not that secondary luxuriance which catches the eye, and calls forth the homage, of sentimentalism. The honeysuckle has not yet grown at each cottage door, nor is the picture yet complete for the enraptured traveller to gaze upon, and at which he may kindle, perhaps, into strains of sweetest poesy. So meagre, so utterly superficial and meagre, are the conceptions of those who, while they would exalt the Moravian, do it at the expense of the Methodist and all other missionaries. There is in it the mere finery of sentimental prettiness, without the depth of Christian principle, without the substance and the depth of philosophic observation.

I consider it necessary, before I conclude, to give you one instance more, in justice to the usefulness and the

efforts of another Society, not composed of Moravians—I mean the London Missionary Society. Let me just say a few words on what I still consider to be the most illustrious of all their achievements.

Had the members of some school of philosophers, by dint of a skilful and laborious analysis, become profoundly conversant with the mysteries of the human spirit; had they speculated with accuracy and effect, not merely on the progress of the individual mind, from its first order and uniform elements to the highest finished being of its moral and intellectual cultivation, but also on the progress of the collective mind in society, so as to trace all the continuous footsteps by which the transition is made from savage to civilized life—had they, on the principles of the new system, devised a plan of tuition, and instituted a method of discipline, and framed a scheme of elementary doctrine and scholarship, in virtue of which they held themselves prepared for a grand philanthropic experiment on some remote remnant of barbarians yet in the primitive ignorance of nature—had they been enabled so to interest the public in their scheme as to be upheld by them in all the cost of a beneficial expedition, and then set forth on the wide ocean of adventure till they reached a far distant and solitary shore that was peopled by the most degraded tribes of idolaters, where all the habits and decencies of Europe were unknown, and where some hideous misshapen sculpture bespoke a paganism of the most revolting character—had they in these circumstances offered parley with the natives, and gained their confidence, and won such an ascendancy as that they could assemble and detain them at pleasure, for the purposes of education, and furnished as they were by an enlightened scheme of

metaphysics (for I am supposing this to be a company of philosophers and savans)—had they proceeded thus far, and furnished with the best and fittest lessons for man in the infancy of understanding, brought the well-weighed processes to bear on them—had they got pupils from among all their families, and in twenty years wrought a change more marvellous than twenty centuries rolling over the heads of many tribes and many nations of our world have been able to accomplish—in a word, had they transformed this horde of cannibals into a lettered and humanized peasantry, and from the cruelties of that desolating superstition, turned them to the peaceful charities of this world, and to the rejoicing hopes of another—had they been enabled to grace the whole of this exhibition by such pleasing and picturesque compositions as those of newly-formed villages, and cultivated gardens, and prosperous industry, and the whole customs of industrious and well regulated life—and all this on the part of a people who, but a few years ago, were prowling in nakedness, and, with fierce and untamed spirits, could assemble in multitudes around the altar of a human sacrifice; an achievement so wondrous as this would have blazoned forth on the world as one of the noblest triumphs of philosophy; it would have filled and delighted the whole of our literary republic, and her academies would have vied with each other in heaping their orders and honorary titles on the men who had found out that specific charm by which to reclaim savages to the walks of humanity, and to quicken a hundred fold the march and improvement of our species.

It is not many years ago since such an enterprise was set on foot by the members of a certain college, though

not a college of literati; they carried out with them a certain book of instruction, though not one philosopher had to do with the composition of it; and they made the very attempt which we have now been supposing on a territory removed by some thousands of miles from the outskirts of civilization, and through a severe ordeal of ridicule and of reverse did they ply their assiduous task, and have now brought their experiment to its termination: and whatever the steps of their process may have been, there is many an eye-witness who can speak to the reality of it. The island of Otaheite, in spite of the conflicting testimonies and accounts of more recent voyages, overborne at length by the last and most authentic testimony which has appeared,—the island of Otaheite, which teemed with the worst abominations of savage passion and savage cruelty, was the selected arena on which they tried the virtue of their peculiar specific; and whatever the rationale of its operations may have been, there is no doubt as to the certainty of the operation itself. These savages have been humanized, the rude and hideous characteristics of the savage state have disappeared, a nation of gross and grovelling idolaters has become a nation of rational, and kindred and companionable men; and furnished now, as they are, with a written language, and having access by authorship and correspondence to other minds and other countries than their own, do the lights of Christendom now shine full upon their territory. And it is indeed a wondrous transformation, to look at their now modest attire, on their now sweet and comfortable habitations, on their village schools, on their well ordered families, on their infantine literature, on their new formed alphabet, and their boyhood, just taught and practised like our

own, in the various branches of scholarship; and what perhaps poetry, though apart from religion, would most gladly seize on of all, the holiness of her Sabbath morn, and the chime of its worship bell, now breaking, for the first time, on the ear of the delighted mariner, who hovers on its shore, and recognized by him as a sound that was before unheard throughout the whole of that vast Pacific, in the solitude of whose mighty waters this island had lain buried and unknown for so many ages.

All this has undoubtedly been done, but then a few Gospel missionaries had the doing of it, and they tell us that the whole charm and power of this marvellous transformation are to be found in the Bible and in its cabalistic orthodoxy. And they tell moreover of prayers, and outpourings, and mystic influences from on high, which all the science of all our universities cannot lead us to comprehend, or in any way to sympathize with. And thus, as the compound effect of this whole exhibition on men's spirits, are there a credulity and a contrast, and at the same time an astonishment at a great moral phenomena, the truth of which is forced upon them by the evidence of their senses; and withal, we fear, a full determination to nauseate with all their might that peculiar evangelism which has been the instrument of this most gigantic stride that ever was made by barbarians on the road to civilization and virtue. And thus upon them do we perceive perhaps the most striking illustration that can be given of the saying, that when God worketh a work in their days, they will in no wise believe though a man declare it to them. But what they will not believe they will be made to behold; and, though forced to contemplate it, it will be beholding with despisers who wonder and perish.

Speaking of this Otaheite, you will remember that, in exposition of the evidence, I spoke of the Spirit of God giving effect, as it were, to the evidence—that is, the testimony of truth on the conscience; and we look on the example just now quoted as a verification of this. We are old enough to recollect (and I am sure that some here present must be old enough to recollect) the high-flown spirit of adventure on which the first mission to Otaheite was undertaken, and with what eclat the missionary vessel went forth on her voyage, as if the flags and ensigns of victory were already streaming in the gale, and with what eloquence were pictured forth all the chances, if not all the certainties of success. We doubt not that many were dazzled into an earthly confidence, whether they looked at the complete equipment of all the human securities that were so abundantly provided for the accomplishment of this enterprise, and how that was dispelled—or that the elements of nature did carry it in safety to the shore, and how that was dispelled also—or that the elements of the moral world, taught by humble experience that for these, too, he must be inquired after. And a cloud of disgrace and distress hung for years over the enterprise, and the spirit which worketh in the children of disobedience stood its ground among the natives, and, more woeful still, the spirit of apostacy made ravage among the missionaries themselves; and well can we remember the derision and the triumph of infidels upon the misgiving of this sanguine speculation. We doubt not that many were effectually taught in the arts of patience and prayer by this fatherly correction, and led to look from the visible apparatus to the unseen Guide and Mover of it; and that there was a fuller ascent of importunities to heaven, and a louder

knocking than before at the door of the upper sanctuary: and certain it is that, after a season of severe but salutary chastisement, an influence, far too sudden and diffusive to be interpreted by any ordinary cause, came down on the land; and by a miracle, as if it had been newly summoned from the deep, do we now behold it a land of genial dwelling-places, the quiet and lovely home of a christianized nation.

LECTURE.*

FREENESS OF THE GOSPEL.

We intend to make some remarks on the manner in which the overtures of the Gospel may be presented to *all;* and on the warrant which all have to accept them; prefacing the whole with a few observations on the universality of the Gospel. We cannot but think that the doctrine of particular redemption may be so expounded, as to give an unfair and forbidding aspect to the Gospel. A comparison is sometimes instituted (and in the style of an arithmetical computation too) between the quantity of suffering endured by Christ, and the number of those to whom it may be made available for salvation; which, to the least, is an uncalled for and untasteful speculation. But it has the more serious effect of embarrassing the minister of the Gospel; for if Christ did not die for *all,* he knows not to whom the Gospel should be addressed, and feels as if he were prevented from offering it to *any.* Thus the bearers of heaven's message of welcome and good-will to the whole human race, have a sore embarrassment laid upon them, at the very outset of their undertaking, by these speculative difficulties. A topic is fetched from the counsels of God, to mystify the conduct of men; and the message has its leaves of glory clipped by contro-

* Outline of a Lecture delivered in the University of Edinburgh.

versialists, till it shrinks into the dimensions of a narrow sectarianism.

We hope you understand there is nothing in predestination to limit the universality of the Gospel. It is the stepping-stone of a transition from condemnation to safety; but it is not brought about by a *partial*, but by a *universal* gospel. A partial gospel could not have led to the conversion even of the elect. It was in looking at it, not as designed for *some*, but as designed for *any*, that the elect ventured their hopes upon it. It was not because they knew that their names were written in the Book of Life; but because the calls of the Gospel were addressed to all in the Book of Revelation, that they were translated "from darkness to light"—not from a belief of the decrees of God in heaven, but from a belief of the messengers of God on earth, though others shut their ears against them. It is not from the secret counsels of heaven, of which all are ignorant, but from the open communications of heaven, to which all have access, that they extract hope. Christ laid down His life, not for a sacred and selected few, but for all who should believe on his name. It is not because I know myself to be one of "the sheep," or "the elect;" but because I know myself to be one of "the world," that I take the calls and invitations of the Gospel to myself. There is not one breathing who has not an equal right to take those calls and invitations to himself, on whatever page of destiny his name may be written. It is not in the capacity of an *elect* sinner, but of a *sinner;* not as being one of the children of *election*, but as being one of the children of *humanity*, that he receives and accepts the overtures of reconciliation.

The *particular* redemption of all the saved is made

good from the evidence of texts which relate to *universal* redemption. We should like every individual to apply to himself *specifically*, every offer which is made to the world *generally;* and if he did so, we could assure him he would be saved. We are all one with the advocates of universal redemption, as to the *practical* part of the subject. It is only when we come to speculate about the decrees of God that we differ. There is not an Arminian or a Universalist who would contend more strenuously than we, that it is the duty of ministers to urge the Gospel on *all;* and that it is the duty of all to accept it. The Sun of Righteousness has arisen on *all*, though we may shut our eyes to it. The Gospel call is sounded to *all*, though we may shut our ears to it. If the Gospel were so framed as to hold forth peace and pardon to the *elect*, no one could take them to himself; for who has access to the page of God's decrees? But they are set forth to *all;* and every man may have access to the Book of God's revelation. If there be a warrant *anywhere*, it is in Scripture; and it is framed, not on *special* and *exclusive*, but on *general* conditions. No one trusts for himself individually in anything but the overtures addressed to men universally. To mix up election with the primary overtures of the Gospel, is the direct way to darken the whole message. The hearers may believe such a message as a general position; but being ignorant whether they are included in it or not, they could fetch no tranquilizing influence to their own spirits, and no hope to themselves.

We ought, therefore, to proceed on the model of the invitations in Scripture, untinged by the dogma of predestination, "Come unto me *all* ye that labour." "*Whosoever* cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." These

are the attitudes in which the Father of the human family sets himself forth to men; and the Gospel is not adequately represented, if the force of these declarations be not brought to bear on men. It is a distorted gospel if, by any medium whatever, the spectacle of a God beckoning to all is darkened or transformed. It is thus that we strip the Gospel of its efficacy. The same God who makes the manifested good-will of one man the medium of gaining the confidence of another manifests His good-will to *all*, for the sake of gaining *their* confidence; and it is an instrument brought to bear on all. It is an open manifestation to which all mankind may look, and on which all have an equal warrant to rely. The doctrine of necessity only makes sure the connection between the antecedent and the consequent, whatever the antecedent and the consequent may be. The antecedent in conversion is the general offer to all; and the consequent is the *response* of all, or of any who will confide in it. The index to the path is lifted up in the sight of all. The command to walk in that path is addressed to all. It is because of our own perversity and resistance that we do not obtain the pardon of the Gospel. We may have it for the taking. The Book of Revelation is open, and we may there read *our* welcome in the very passage in which the elect read *theirs*. The Gospel represents God, not only as *welcoming*, but as *beseeching* his strayed children to return to him. If one resists, and another complies, it is not because the invitation was differently *addressed*, but because it was differently *received*. It was given in the same way to both, but was not responded to in the same way by both. The command to both is alike imperative, the invitation to both is alike importunate, and in

both there should be the same response. There may be different results, but the cause is *inwardly* in the men, and not *outwardly* in the offer. The assurance of God's readiness to forgive, coupled with a call to repentance; the declaration that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin; that there is an open way of access, his first movement in which will call forth the rejoicings of heaven; all this is addressed as pointedly, and with the same moral urgency to both; and that minister is untrue to his commission, who does not carry it equally round to every door.

The doctrine of a sure causation does not *impede*, but should *animate* exertion, in using the antecedent. As far as *man's* part is concerned, all is clear; it being the obvious duty of the minister to address the overtures of the Gospel to all; and the no less obvious duty of all to close with them. But we are told that this cannot be done, without a special interposition on the part of God. This we admit; but we see nothing in it to embarrass, but everything to encourage. *Our* part is clear; and we may address ourselves to it with much greater alacrity than before. It is a cruel perversity if the message has a darkening cloud thrown over it, from an ill understood Calvinism.

Deep and mysterious as is the doctrine of election, all is clear and patent as far as *man* is concerned. It is only perplexing so far as it regards God. Here lies our difficulty. It is too vast for our puny optics. Christianity has brought salvation within the reach of all, and there is nothing in predestination to hinder it. But this is not enough for many a daring speculatist, who, not satisfied with knowing that *man's* path is open, would aspire to the

generalities of the Divine administration. The Gospel, to my mind, is as free as though you were to say to twenty people in a room, "Any or all of you that come to me, shall receive something." Those who attend to you may be exclusively engaged with the *objective overtures;* while others may find food for their metaphysics in attending to the *subjective process.* These will find out that faith in your promise must be antecedent to any movement in obedience to your invitation; and so the former will be told to inquire whether they have this faith or not. This they find very embarrassing; whereas they should look only to the *objects* of faith.

I do not think sufficient stress is laid on the import of the terms in which the Gospel is presented. Each would understand that it was intended for himself individually if he could find it so stated. An express communication from the upper sanctuary, with his name and designation attached to it, would satisfy him; but such a designation is nowhere to be found. He does not see how this *universal* invitation can be transmuted into an *individual* one; or how he can appropriate to himself promises contained in a book that circulates through the whole species. He is in converse only with generalities; and so his own heart is uncheered, and his own heart unshone upon.

It is needless to enlarge on the terms of the Gospel. They include *all;* and are yet specifically addressed to *each.* "*He;*"—a term co-extensive with the whole human race. "*Sinner;*"—a term which misses no individual of the species. No terms could be devised more specific. The Word, and the offers of salvation are co-extensive; so that he who has heard the one, has a right to accept the other.

There is a conscience in the breast, which indicates to each his special delinquency and danger. But so far as Scripture is concerned, he has as much right to appropriate the promises of the Gospel as the threatenings of the law. If he tremble because of the saying, "Cursed is he that breaketh the law;" why not rejoice in the commensurate saying, "Blessed is he that believeth the Gospel?" If he sink into despondency on account of the "judgment" that is "upon all;" why not take comfort from the "promises" that are "unto all?" If he gather from the *Old* Testament, that whosoever sinneth is an outcast from God; why, when he reads in the *New* Testament, that whosoever believeth shall be saved,—why does he not "with joy draw water out of the wells of salvation?" The terms in which the Gospel holds forth an *amnesty* to the world, are co-extensive with the terms in which the law holds forth *condemnation* to the world. If a man do not *rejoice* in the belief that he is included in the Gospel's proclamation of *mercy*, because he does not read his name and designation there; why does he *tremble* from the belief that he is included in the law's proclamation of *condemnation;* seeing that as little are his name and designation *there?* If the offers of the Gospel pass by him, like so many pointless generalities, how is it that he gives such point and direction to the threatenings of the law; so that they enter the heart, like an arrow sticking fast?

Perhaps we can guess at the reason. The sense of guilt is produced by the workings of conscience alone. It may be a *natural,* and not a *scriptural* operation;—produced by the law of the *heart,* not by the law of *revelation.* If derived from the same fountain-head, it might

have been equally abundant; for the promises are as free as the threatenings. The individual application of these promises is warranted by the objective terms and truths of the Gospel. Belief in their general terms fully warrants their individual application; and, from the languor, or non-existence of *hope* in the Gospel, would we infer the languor, or non-existence of *faith.*

There is no doubt, then, from the way in which the Gospel is constructed, and from the language in which it is conveyed, that each individual has full warrant to appropriate to himself the overtures addressed to the world. What is the first effect such an appropriation will have? Or what is it that proves such an appropriation to have been made? Only let a person announce to a multitude, that all who came to him should receive a benefit; or that "whosoever," or "any," or "every one" of them that would repair to a certain place, should receive a benefit. Here are sufficient materials for each to appropriate the benefit to himself; and, whoever he may be, he has only to take an intelligent view of the promises, and to yield an intelligent obedience. With the firm gait of assurance, may he advance to the place of meeting. It is not difficult to divine what will be the first thing in his case, as the effect of his having believed the announcement. He will betake himself to the appointed place; and his alacrity in entering on the road which leads to it will be just in proportion to his confidence in the honesty of him who made the promise. This will be the first visible effect of his faith. Observers do not see the *faith;* but they see the hopeful *movement;* and, from it, they *infer* the faith. The individual himself does not see the mental phenomenon reflexly; but he relies on the faithfulness of

the promiser. The terms of the invitation are sufficient to *warrant* his faith: and his compliance is sufficient to *evidence* it. His faith may be gathered from his obedience.

The case we have supposed, may be applied, in all its parts, to the faith of the Gospel. "Eternal life" is there held out as "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord;" and the way is prescribed by which to reach it. It has, we trust, been made obvious, that by the terms in which it is held out, every man has a right to appropriate its offers to himself; and to set out on the walk which is prescribed. That walk is repentance, or new obedience. When the earthly benefactor, whom we have just been supposing, scattered abroad among the multitude the promise of a certain benefit, on their repairing to an appointed place, he did not bid them wait till faith was obtained before they moved. He bade them move, and they, by doing so, instantly proved that faith existed. They did not ascertain their faith *before* rendering obedience; *by* their obedience they ascertained their faith. Faith was anterior in time, but though faith first *existed*, that is not to say it must have been first *known* to exist ere obedience was attempted. They do not look reflexly on their faith, by means of consciousness, and then go forward, as though they might now start fair; but faith prompts obedience immediately, and by this obedience their faith is first well ascertained. There are initial calls to obedience, and a man obeys them, not by feeling inwardly for the faith, but, by following outwardly its objects. He simply *does*, what he is simply *bid* to do. There is nothing to embarrass the initial or the progressive steps. If he believes what he is told, he expects and

does accordingly. There is an *inward* phenomenon—*believing;* and there is an *outward* phenomenon—*doing;* and if the former had not previously existed, the latter would not have succeeded. But this does not say he must first look inwardly, before moving outwardly. The satellites of Jupiter would continue their mathematical courses, although those courses had never been mathematically ascertained. A plain man is told what to hope for, and where to go for it, and without metaphysics or mysticism, he *hopes* as he is *told,* and he *does* as he is *bid.*

Now, to me, it appears quite obvious, that Christianity, in its initial overtures, supplies materials for just as distinct and intelligent an outset. By the very terms it employs, it singles out every man as the special object of its calls; and each may proceed as though they were made specially to himself. And if it be asked, "*How* shall he proceed?"—we answer, just by obeying the very first injunction of performance, which Christianity mingles with the very first overtures of promise. If it promises eternal life, and bids us go forward to it, we should just *believe* the one and *do* the other. Nothing is wanted but a plain understanding of a plain message. There is nothing to stay us at the first bidding, from having our hearts animated with the hope, and our hands busy with the doings of the Gospel. "The trumpet" giveth not "an uncertain sound" to any one, in whatever mental state he may be. But who will deny, since theologians have taken it up, and surrounded it with the haze and heaviness of their endless speculations, that it is altogether beset with uncertainty? They have overclouded and beset that noonday path, in which it is said, that "a wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err."

One reason for this is, that though nothing is more patent than the *objective realities*, nothing is more dark than the description an inquisitive theology has attempted to give of the subjective process. In Christianity, both the promise and direction are as plain to the understanding as any parallel promise and direction in ordinary life. And yet there are none which, if subjected to the same treatment, would not be involved in the same difficulties. A child called upon to receive an apple is at no loss how to proceed. Yet the data on which he acts are not more obvious and apprehensible than are the doctrines of the Gospel, in which we are called to go forth to that Heaven, which stands with an open gate, and a waving flag of invitation in the perspective before us. The child is exclusively *objective* in its regards. Still there is a *subjective* process going on, in the recesses of its little bosom, though unconsciously; and another may describe this process, though the child cannot do it itself, and may justly remark the antecedency of its faith to its obedience, and that faith upheld it from the place of departure to the place of arrival. But there would be no practical advantage in telling the child all this, and it would be still more preposterous to require the child to be quite sure it had the faith, before it does the plain things it is bidden. But this is just the preposterous thing that is done by our speculatists and system-framers, with men who are in the infancy of their religious course. Instead of being plied with objective offers, they are perplexed with subjective subtleties. If the child be in doubt, it is from want of faith; but to *tell* him that, would not mend the matter. You must just reiterate your offers, and ply your objective representations, to prove your honesty, and that you do

not mean to make game of him. But so great is the perplexity between preachers and hearers on this subject, as to verify the saying of my deceased friend, Robert Hall—that evangelical ministers do not know how to lay down the truth in such a way as that their hearers may know how to take it up.

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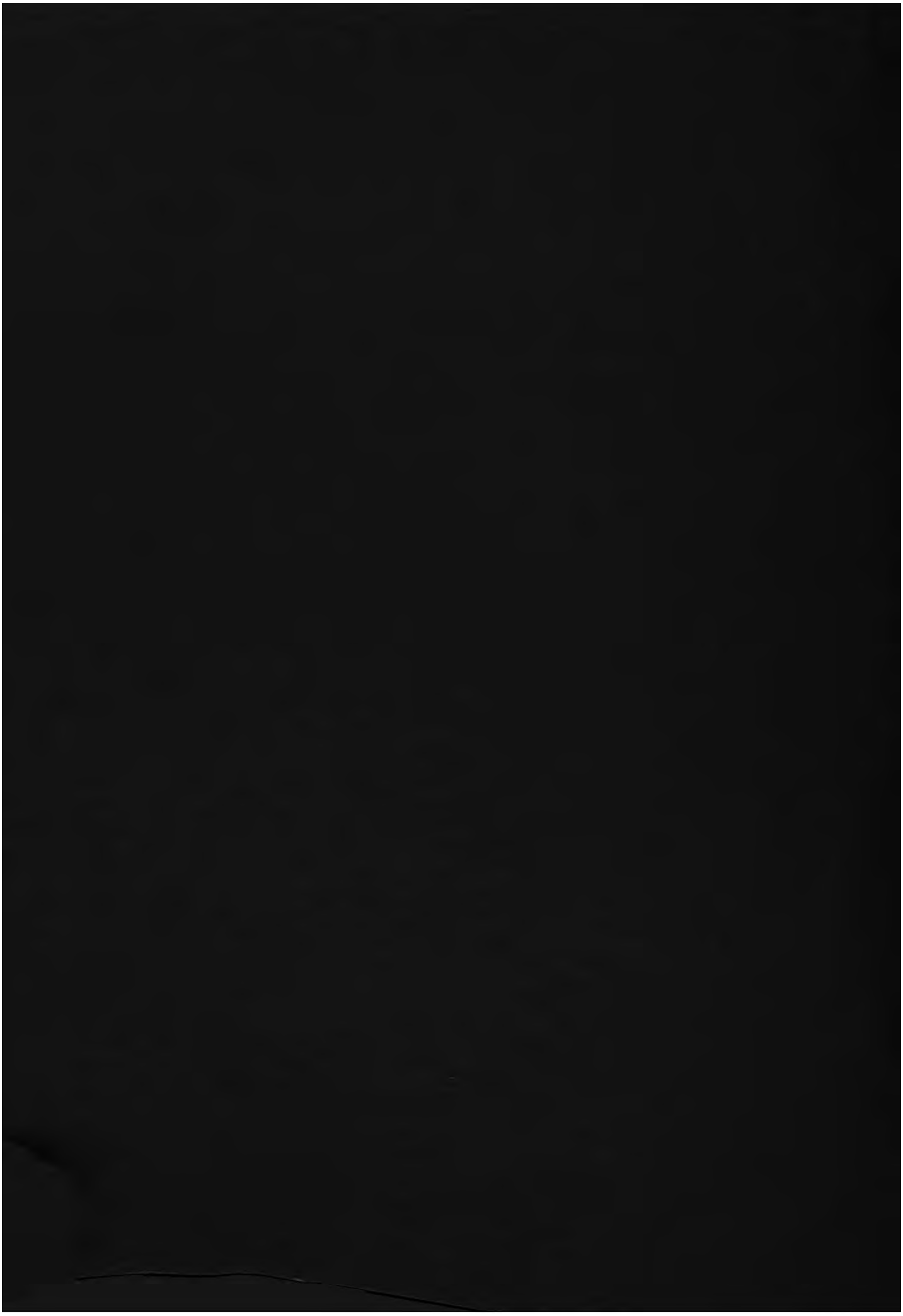
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