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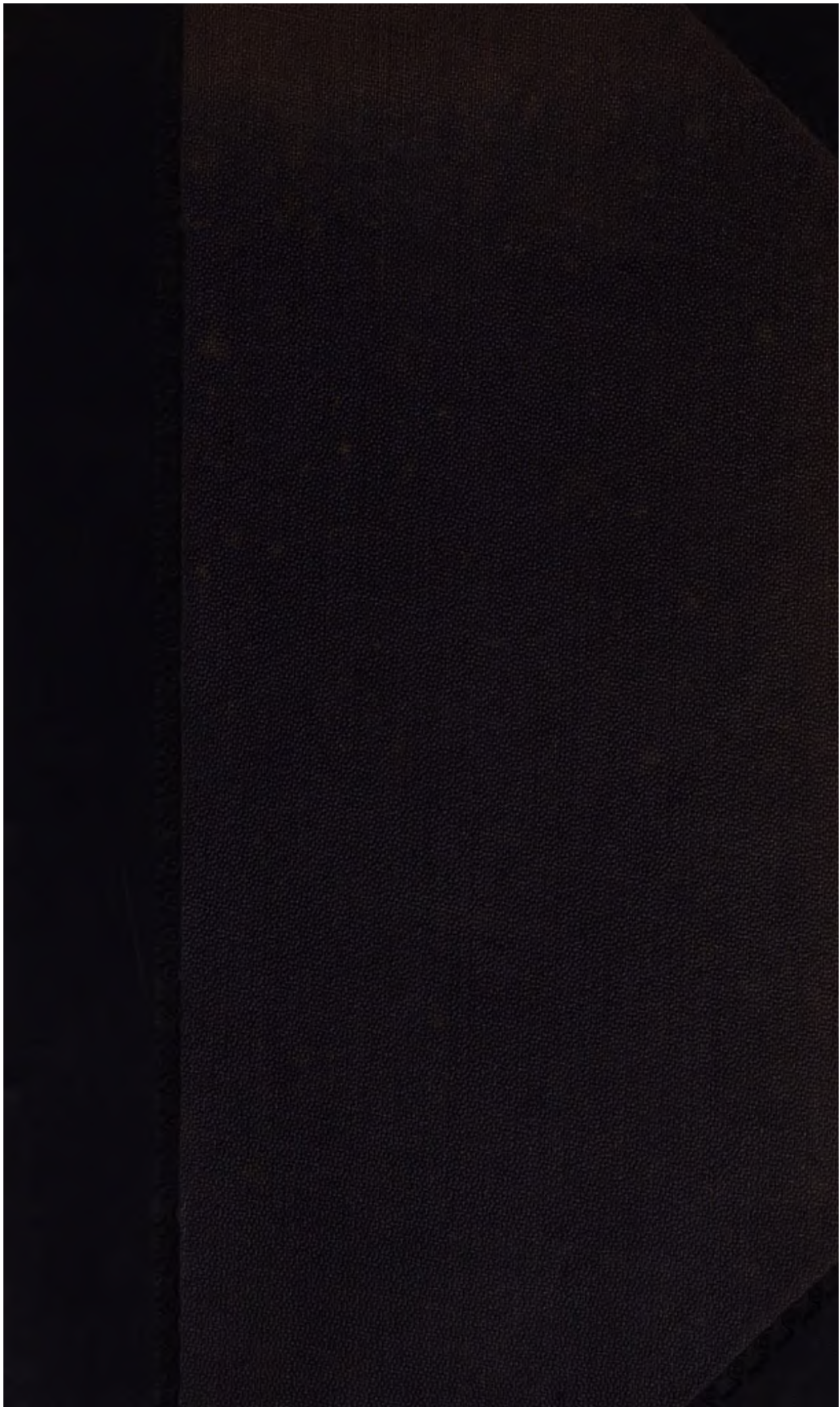
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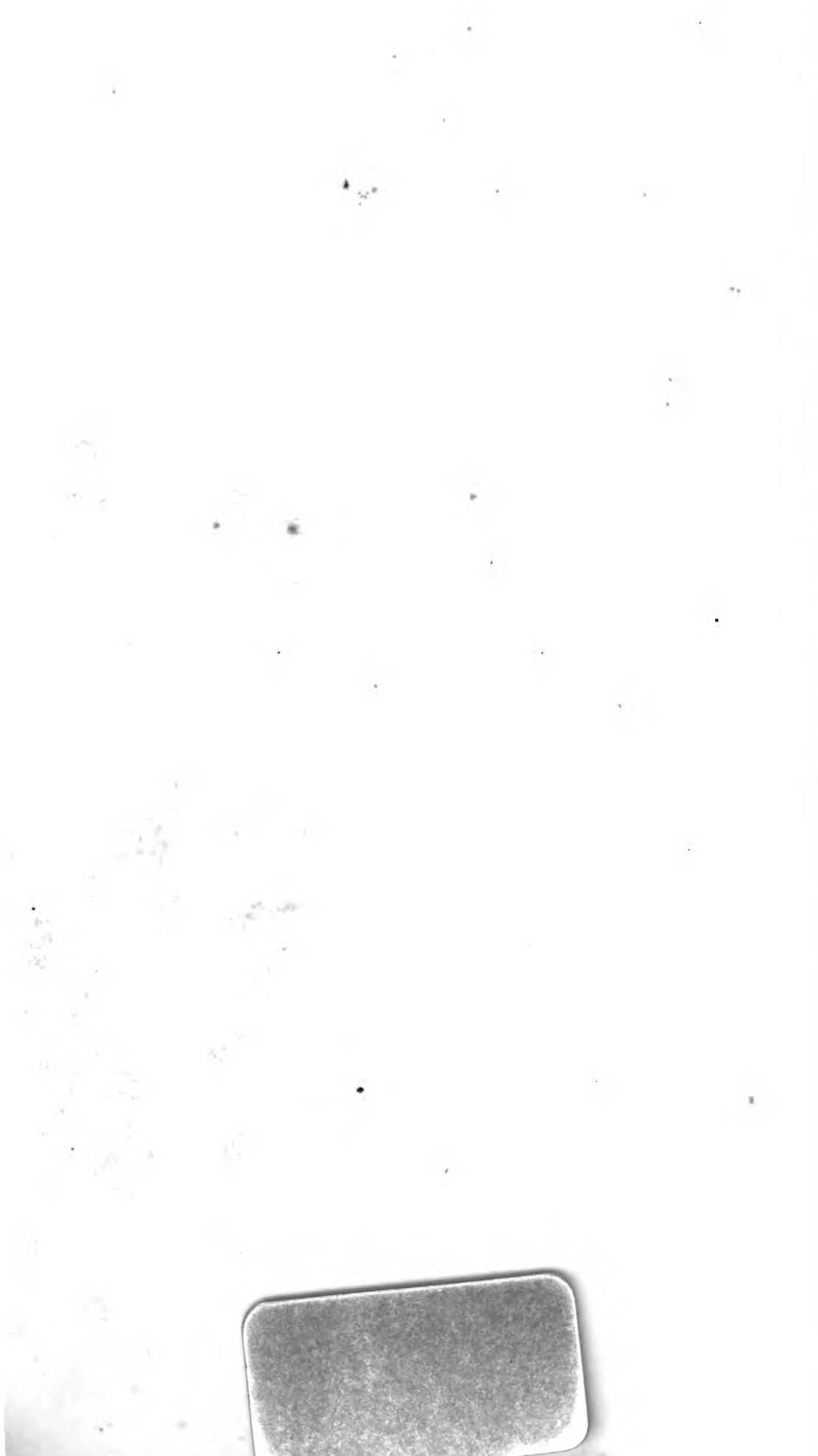
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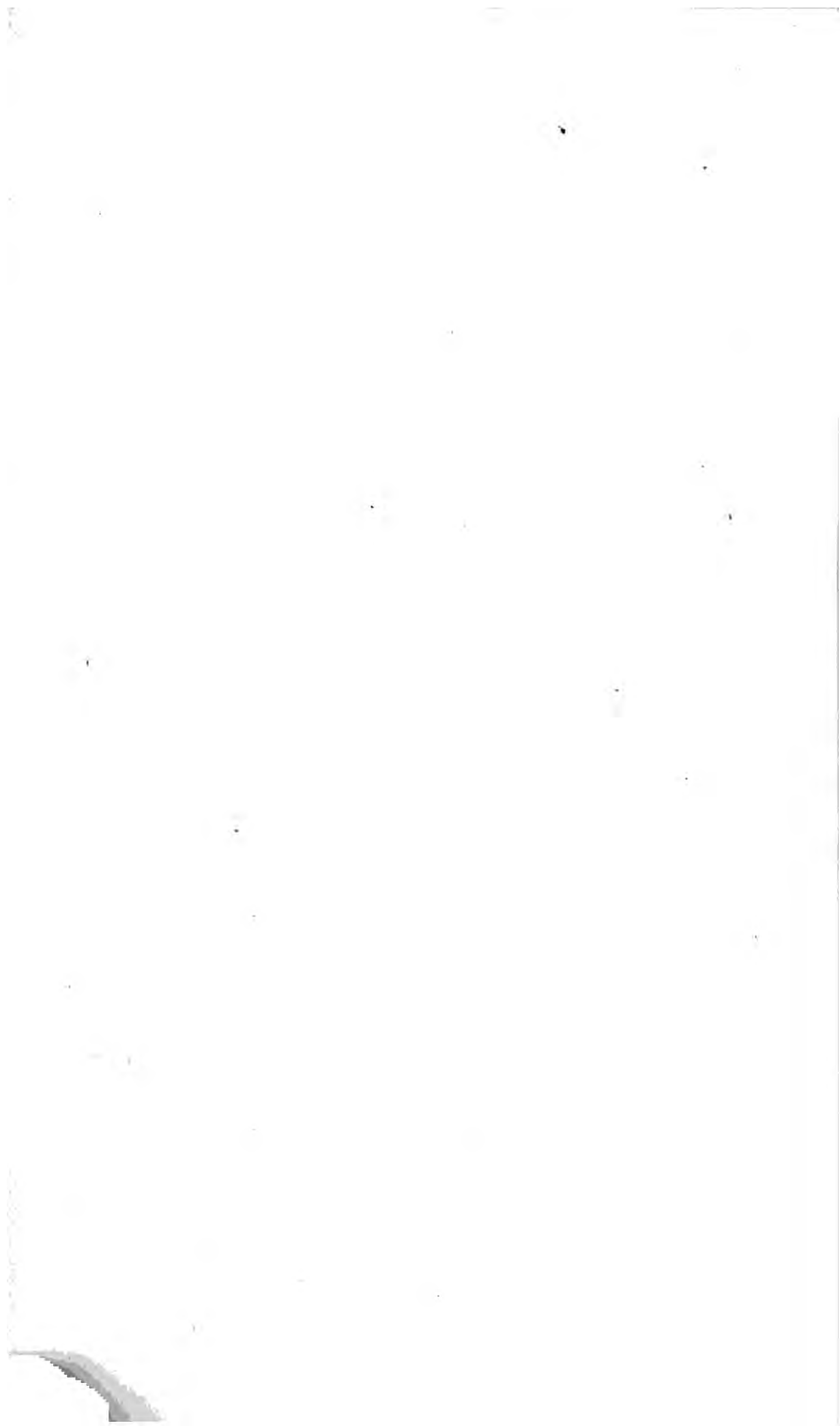
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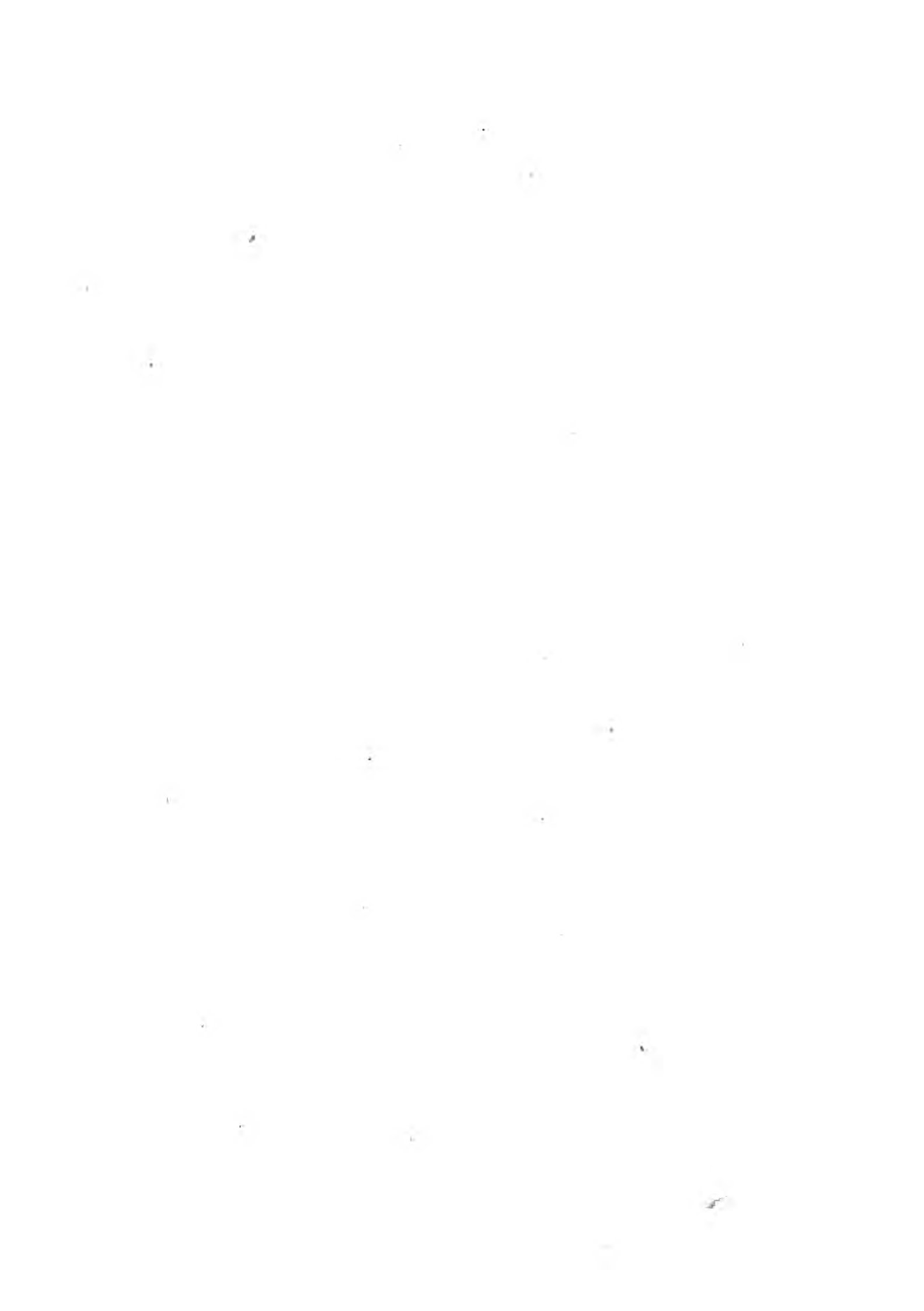


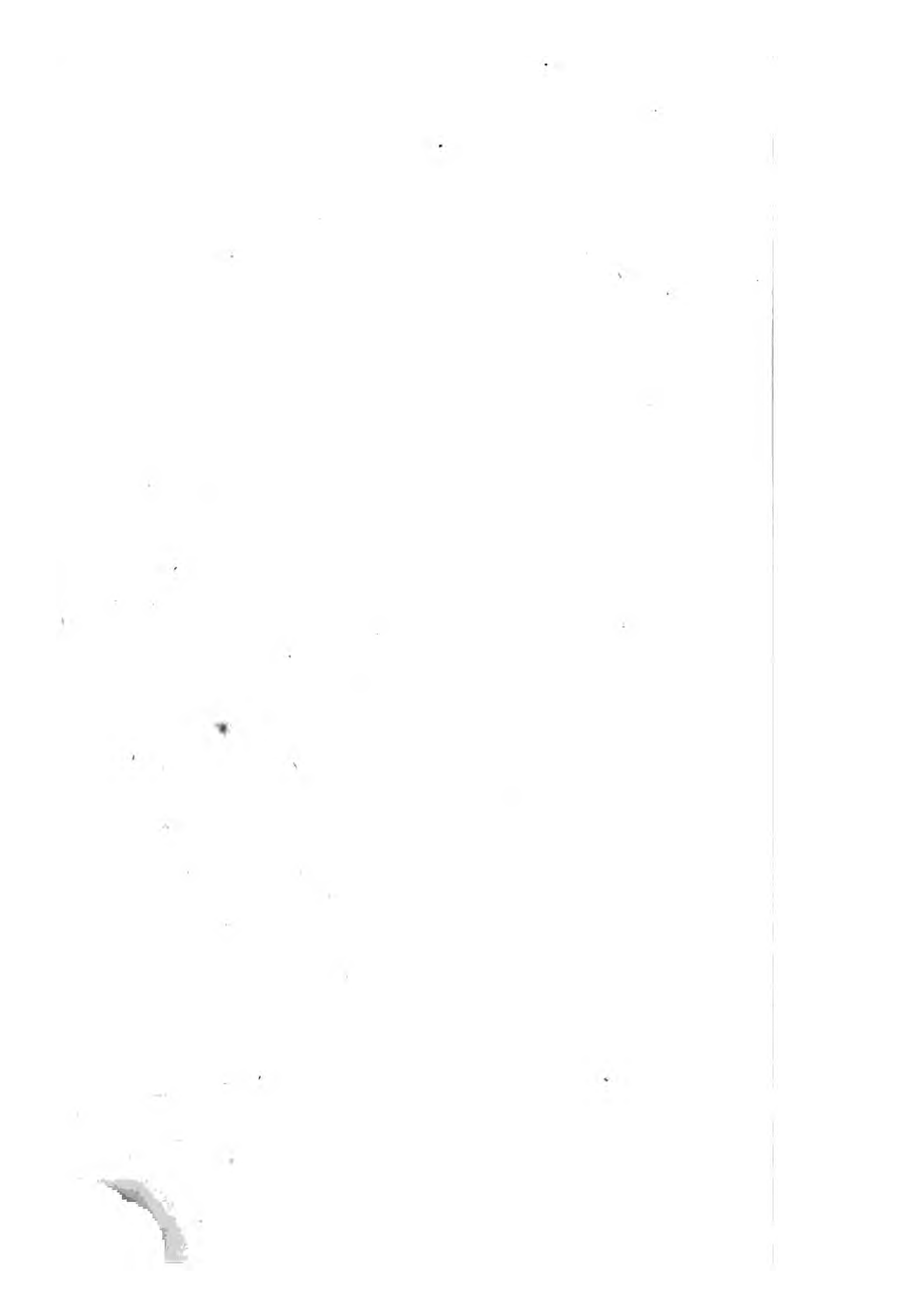
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DISCOURSES

UPON THE

GREAT FESTIVALS,

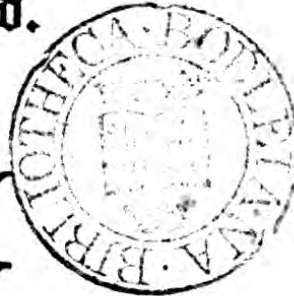
AS STATED IN THE

CALENDAR AND RUBRICKS

OF THE

Church of England.

~~~~~  
BY T. TAYLOR.  
~~~~~



He that regardeth a day, regardeth it to the Lord.—Rom. xiv. 6.



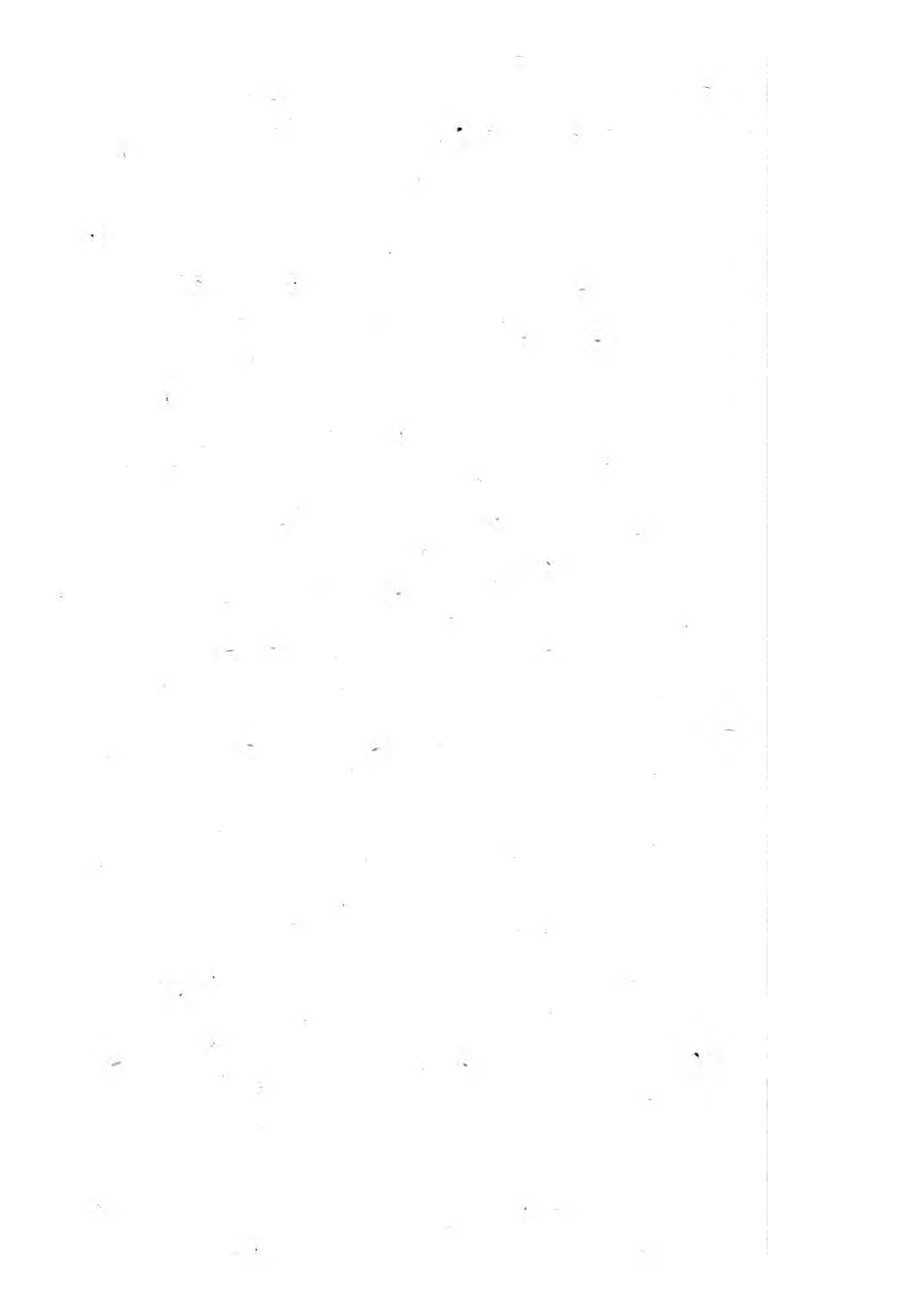
Manchester:

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1812.

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PREFACE.

ONCE thought, it might be well to entirely abolish those Holidays, as they are called ; because they are shockingly abused, being appropriated to bad purposes, reveling, drunkenness and sinful recreations, such as bull-baitings, cock-fightings, and various other idle and cruel amusements. Most certainly people had better be employed in their honest and lawful occupations, than thus devote their time and money to what is a disgrace to human nature, sinking the man beneath the brute. But granting it to be so, and that such were my thoughts, yet since infidelity has had so dreadful a spread, even in our land, I see a very great propriety in maintaining those monuments of our redemption, so essential to our salvation. For if there be any thing essential in religion, it must be the incarnation, birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord of life and glory, and also the coming of the Holy Ghost.

They hold in review those great essentials upon which we profess to stake our all, and stand forth as witnesses and monuments of these glorious transactions. Words are liable to be frittered away, and men, who have the talent of torturing, can twist them as they please; but actions, like figures, are permanent; two and two will stand for four, and if the artful casuist should rack his brains out he cannot prove it to the contrary. It was to perpetuate the deliverance from the Egyptian bondage, that the pass-over was kept; the feast of tabernacles reminded them of the Israelites dwelling in tents in the wilderness; and the pentecost, the giving of the law on mount Sinai; and if the remembrance of these notable transactions was carefully kept up by those regular feasts, much more those important concerns respecting our eternal redemption. A time might come when infidels would deny that Christ ever came to redeem a lost world, and that all which is said of the important affair, only fiction invented to deceive; but the annual commemorations keep up the sacred remembrance till the Lord shall come to judge the world.

As to the abuse of those Seasons, it is a proof of human depravity; for what is it which man hath not found out the art of abusing? If we lay aside every thing which he abuses, we must lay aside eating

and drinking; for what is gluttony and drunkenness but an abuse of those necessary aliments so needful in human life? I flatter myself the ensuing Discourses will have some tendency to impress the design of those solemn Institutions upon our minds, that the original intention may be fully accomplished in each of us to the honour of him who came to seek and save that which was lost. We need reminding of these important events, for we are apt to forget them, and therefore the annual return of these Festivals is intended as to be standing memorials till time shall be no more.

The substance of the ensuing Discourses has been delivered in several large towns, and I flatter myself not only with acceptance, but with a degree of edification, which encourages me to hope that they will not be read in vain. It is true, no man can convey that warm animation to paper which he may feel in his own Soul when in the pulpit; his action, his emphasis, and what he feels in his own mind, namely, the unction from above, are all calculated to impress an energy upon the hearers which cannot be expected in the reader; and yet reading is exceedingly profitable, and has this advantage even over hearing, viz. if a sentence is not at first understood, the reader can look it over again, whereas he cannot stop the speaker to repeat it over again: yet it is of

considerable advantage to read the Writings, and especially Sermons, of such as we have been accustomed to hear ; for although they may be absent or dead, yet we are in effect hearing them speak. Reading is a great help to the understanding, and such as neglect it are seldom remarkable in that respect, and only hear Sermons with their passions, and the impression which is made that way is soon worn off ; and hence it is that we have so many stony ground hearers.

My principal design in publishing the following Sermons is the same as was that of preaching them, viz. that of impressing upon the minds of my readers the importance of those glorious events which these seasons commemorate. If that is fully accomplished the great end of the author is fully ascertained.

Manchester, February 3, 1812.

SERMON I.

ON THE NATIVITY.

Luke ii. 14.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND
ON EARTH PEACE, AND GOOD WILL
AMONG MEN.

THE works of God are great, and sought out by all such as have pleasure therein. And we may easily observe, there are two grand ends to be answered in every thing which God has made: one is, his own glory; this is evidently manifest in the whole creation; and therefore *the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work.* Hence it is, that David's animating address in the three last Psalms is replete with beauty and propriety, in which he calls upon the whole creation, animate or inanimate, to form one grand chorus of praise to him who from nothing hath called them into existence; and closes

the whole with, *Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.*

THE other circumstance pointed out in the works of God is, the happiness of his creatures. This is manifest to every attentive mind. It is true, that Sin has deranged the beautiful order and sweet harmony which we believe subsisted in the beginning when the deity beheld his works, and with a smile of complaisance pronounced them *very good*. But even in their present mutilated state, even in ruins, there is so much left through the covenant of redemption as to confirm what has already been hinted. God has adapted comforts to every creature, though they are to be obtained through labour and toil, and especially in the case of the human race. Infinite wisdom has made all the elements, the earth, the air, the fire and water contribute to his felicity, and innumerable animals of various sorts pay their tribute to our happiness and comfort, both to our food and medicine, to our raiment and habitations.

IF we survey the economy of providence, the very same reasoning holds good. If he bless, or if he chastise, all is for the same valuable end. Even when he afflicts, it is for our profit; and as a father pities his children, children that have infirmities, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. He still

remembers whereof we are made, and considers that we are but dust.

THE same reasoning will hold good in that cardinal, that most astonishing work, that utmost effort of the deity, the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ: in which he glorified his father on earth and redeemed a lost race. These two important points are happily united in the angelical chorus just read in your hearing, in which a choir of angels sing, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and good will to men.* Charming language! Sweet encouragement to the needy children of men! It is not necessary that I should expatiate upon the circumstances with which the text is connected, these can be read at leisure. My business must be to consider,

FIRST, that the coming of our Saviour into the world brings glory to God.

SECONDLY, peace, and good will to the needy children of men.

FIRST, then, I am to consider that the coming of our Saviour into the world brings glory to God.

IT is a glorious display of his wisdom. When the royal psalmist was contemplating the works of creation, he says, *In wisdom hast thou made them all.* (a) It is a

(a) Psalm civ. 24.

glorious truth, though frequently overlooked by men. The same may be said of the providence of God. Indeed these are stars in the right hand of the deity; but redemption, the glorious redemption of Sinners, is like the Sun shining in his meridian strength; this is creation more sublime, it is the labour of the skies! Here is wisdom in a mystery, a mystery of bleeding love, God manifest in the flesh; such a mystery, such wisdom as the angels desire to look into, called by the apostle, emphatically, *the wisdom of God*; (a) yea, *the manifold wisdom of God manifested in the church to principalities and powers*. (b) And yet such is the stupid ignorance of man, with all the refinements of human learning, that this supreme wisdom is deemed foolishness; yea, the preaching of the cross, in which this wisdom is set forth, is foolishness to the unbelieving world. Indeed it was such as none of the princes of this world knew, for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Man is a presumptuous creature, precipitate and rash, and is mighty apt to condemn what he does not know. Time was when it was deemed a heresy to assert that there are antipodes, and hence it was that *Galileo* was put into the inquisition for maintaining so dreadful

(a) 1 Cor. i. 24. (b) Eph. iii. 10.

a heresy, and obliged to renounce his tremendous error to regain his liberty! Such is human infatuation. And no wonder that the wisdom of God manifested in the advent of the Saviour should be treated as folly. But in the mean time angels, who know the immaculate nature of the deity, are astonished to see the wisdom of God in his justice, being rendered inviolable and the sinner saved from everlasting damnation by the incarnation of God made manifest in the flesh, and dying an accursed death on the cross.

2. **THIS** wonderful transaction both demonstrates and satisfies the justice of God. This awful attribute in the deity, stands engaged for the honour of all the rest, and cannot, must not be violated. Therefore angels were driven out of heaven; when they sinned, they could not remain there; their place knew them no more. The first transgressors in paradise were driven thence, because they had sinned; the old world was swept away; and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were turned into ashes. And therefore Jesus was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, that he might be the propitiation, or covering for our offences. Therefore he was made a sin offering for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righte-

ousness of God in him. He suffered the just for the unjust to bring us to God.

“ The Lord in the day of his anger, did lay
“ Our Sins on the Lamb, and he bore them away.”

Therefore we can say, Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. To attempt bringing this great point to the bar of our shallow reason is folly. There are many things in common life which far surpass the limits of our short sighted reason. Our reason cannot comprehend how the four elements combine to form a grain of sand, or a blade of grass, and yet it is so. In this divine transaction we see the will of God, and in this will we see the happiness of the human race, and let us adore the author of our happiness and be thankful. Let us not invade the rights of the deity, nor stand to dispute his prerogative ; but let the grateful language of our hearts be, *Just and true are thy ways, O King of Saints.*

3. THIS stupendous scene unfolds unto us the amazing love of God. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have eternal life. Indeed God is love, and in this his love is manifested, that while we were sinners Christ died for us. Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might wash away its filthiness in his own blood. O trace this

love, from whence it originates, deep in the Father's bosom, even from eternity; see the divine streams, not only spreading abroad in unnumbered worlds, but forming an amazing current down to the stable and manger at Bethlehem! Wonderful mystery! God manifest in human flesh! the ancient of days an infant of years! The eyes which are as flames of fire, wrapped or sealed up in an infant's slumber! The hands which spread the starry plains abroad, are become an infant's, whose grasp is soft and unsteady. The feet that walked upon the wings of the wind became the objects of a creator's care. Lord, I cannot comprehend this, but I humbly adore thy wisdom, thy love to fallen man! Ah! what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of man, that thou shouldest, in so strange a manner, visit him!

“ Wrapt in swathes the immortal stranger,
“ Man with men, we have seen, lying in a manger.”

O may that love which urged the bleeding reconciler through that life of poverty, pain, shame, labour, toil and death, find its way to each of our hearst.

4. BY the coming of Jesus into the world the power of God is displayed; and displayed in a manner that astonishes all heaven and confounds all hell, displayed in human weakness. In creation and providence, the wonderful arm of God has often

been made bare, but in this, the power of God had the armies of hell to defeat; principalities and powers to spoil; death to destroy, and all the powers of fallen nature to subdue. What a world of iniquity is there to destroy in man's fallen soul! There is a carnal mind, like a rock of adamant; here is unbelief like a gate of brass; here is self will like an iron pillar; here is a polluted conscience, like an incurable leprosy; here sinful affections like the swarms of frogs and lice which corrupted all the land of Egypt; here is a corrupt memory, like a cage of unclean birds; or like a sieve which lets the precious liquor run out, but retains the dregs. These strong habits are hardened, or condensed into deadly prejudices; all these are combined in firm compact, and form a dreadful phalanx against the power of the most high, and must be subdued, by that stone cut out without hands, (a) without human aid, without the wisdom and power of man. But to accomplish all this, behold, *To us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government is upon his shoulder; his name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God—the prince of peace. Of the increase of his government there shall be no end.* (b) Here is Jehovah's battle ax, and with him he will break in pieces the nations, and destroy king-

(a) Dan. ii. 45. (b) Isa. ix. 6, 7.

doms. (a) Yes, this wonderful child shall rule all nations; and to him every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess to be glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing of wonders. He will reign, in spite of all the sparkling wit of infidels, or their sophistical arguments; or all the persecuting rage of such as breathe violence and destruction. His power is manifest in subduing stubborn sinners unto himself; in turning the hearts of the disobedient unto the wisdom of the just; in turning the whole bent of the soul, the judgment, will and affections. No power on earth can do this; they may rack and torture the body; and break and bruise it even to death; but they cannot touch the will. This is the prerogative of our all-conquering Immanuel. It is his power alone, which can preserve the soul in its progress to glory; otherwise the cares and crosses, trials and persecutions on one hand, and the snares and allurements on the other, would certainly prevail; or should these fail in working ruin and destruction, there is the roaring lion, going about continually, seeking whom he may devour. But the faithful soul is kept by the power of God, through faith unto full salvation. (b)

5 THE incarnation of Jesus manifests the mercy of God to a ruined world. If

(a) Jer. li. 20. (b) 1 Pet. i. 5.

there had been no sin, there would have been no misery in the world ; for misery is the offspring of sin, and misery is the object that mercy has to do with ; and therefore had there been no sin, we cannot see how the mercy of God could have been displayed ; but as matters now stand in the world, there is ample room for that benign perfection of the deity, and all thanks be to his adorable name in his love, and in his pity he redeemed a fallen race. He who heard the groanings of the Israelites in Egypt, and saw their burdens, saw the fallen apostate race of Adam like the man fallen among thieves ; no help was found in heaven or earth ; all, like the priest or Levite, passed by ; but he, like the good Samaritan, passing by, saw us and had compassion. This pity is set forth under a variety of striking images ; but I think none more so than in Ezekiel, (a) where our helpless, hopeless case is set forth under the symbol of a new born infant, cast out into the open field ; no eye pitied it to help it, and it could not help itself ; for an infant is the most helpless of all creatures ; but Jehovah saw it and became its merciful nurse, and took care of it, and reared it up till it became a princess of renown. (Indeed he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. I have, for the sake of brevity,

(a) Ezek. xvi. 8.

connected pity and mercy together; and indeed they are so nearly allied to each other, that usually, they go together like the sun beams on the figures of a dial, and perhaps differ no otherwise than the sentiment or feeling and the actions; something like faith producing works. For certainly pity in the deity is not an impotent sensation; but is full of mercy and good fruits; and like the sun shining on the evil and the good; and like the rain which falls upon the just and the unjust, and issued through the man Christ Jesus; and in him *Mercy and truth, that is justice, meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other.* (a) So that in consideration of the ransom of the cross, the tender mercies of God are over all his works.

6. THIS adorable advent of the Son of God, honours the purity of the most high. The holiness of the deity is set forth in scripture in awful and striking colours; and when contrasted with the brightest objects in creation, they shrink into darkness. Hence it is said, *He looketh to the moon and it shineth not, and the stars are not pure in his sight.* (b) Yea so glorious in holiness that no man can see his face and live, (c) so that in awful astonishment the men of Bethshemesh exclaimed, *Who can stand before this holy Lord God!* (d)

(a) Ps. lxxxv. 10. (b) Job xxv. 5. (c) Exod. xxxiii. 20.
(d) Sam. vi. 20.

And no doubt but it was a sense of this which made all the great congregation shake and tremble at the foot of Mount Sinai at the giving of the law, and which made even Moses to quake exceedingly.(a) Now as light and darkness cannot agree, so sin and purity can have no fellowship with each other. But, for ever blessed be God, in Jesus is opened a fountain for sin and uncleanness; and his precious blood can cleanse from all sin. In the very nature of things the unholy cannot enter into the kingdom. No; sin would turn heaven into hell; and therefore without holiness no man shall see the Lord. But no man can say, I have made my own heart clean; this made David cry out, *Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.* Mark, he entreats God to do it, plainly intimating that he could not perform it himself. This must be the Lord's doing; and he is faithful who hath promised, and will enable his church to sing, *To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and his father, to him be glory for ever and ever, Amen.*(b)

7. THIS wonderful transaction displays the amazing goodness of God to fallen man.

(a) Ex. xix. Heb. xii. 21. (b) Rev. i. 5, 6.

Infinite goodness does not seem to be so much the description of one attribute as a combination of them all put together, illustrating each other, collecting all into one grand point, all uniting to form one grand focus, and defusing their benign influence upon the needy children of men. Here is a mine that will never be exhausted to all eternity. Well may the psalmist sing, How great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought out for them that trust in thee before the sons of men. (a) From this never failing spring proceeds, all our peace, and shews the deity to be the parent of all good, and whose goodness is from everlasting to everlasting. Holy and reverend is his name.

THUS does the incarnation of the Son of God reconcile and humanise all the divine perfections in the deity, whereby he can be just, and holy in the salvation of repenting sinners, so that he may stand God confessed by all in heaven, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, and adored by the church of the first born to all eternity.

(a) Ps. xxxi. 19.

SERMON II.

ON THE NATIVITY.

Luke ii. 14.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, AND
ON EARTH PEACE, AND GOOD WILL
AMONG MEN.

AS the advent of Christ gives *Glory to God in the highest*, so on earth it proclaims peace and good will to men.

1. *Peace*. This implies the pardon of sin, seeing there can be no true peace to the guilty. For peace implies a deliverance from all tormenting fear, seeing where that kind of fear is there cannot be peace within. But when pardon is obtained, the well known language of the soul is, *O Lord, I will praise thee, for thou wast angry with me, and hadst good reason so to be, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me.* (a)

(a) Isa. xii. 1, 2.

THEREFORE, bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name; who forgiveth all thy sins, and healeth all thy diseases. We have redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins according to the riches of his grace. This peace is proclaimed in the everlasting gospel, and the ministers of Jesus can say to poor perishing sinners, *We bring you glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people.* Therefore, be it known unto you, men and brethren that, through this man is preached to you forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things which they could not by the works of the law. It is inconsequence of this amazing circumstance that Jehovah can, and will say to the penitent sinner, *I have blotted out thy transgressions as a cloud, and thine iniquities as a thick cloud; return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.* (a)

2. **THIS** peace goes farther than simple pardon; it implies reconciliation. A rebel may be pardoned; so that his life may be given him, and yet he may not be in a state of favour and reconciliation with his prince who has spared his life; nay, there may be still enmity in his heart against such a prince, and also against his service. Not so in the present case. The pardoned soul is truly reconciled to his once offended

(a) Isa. xliv. 22.

Lord; and can say, Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he is also become my salvation. Surprising change! the terror is gone, the soul can come boldly to the throne of grace, and obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Moreover, the Lord enters into a covenant relation, to be their God, and they become his people. They are his people who were not his people, and his beloved who were not his beloved. Jehovah says, *thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land be termed Desolate; but thou shalt be called Hiphzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. For as a young man marrieth a virgin shall thy sons marry thee: and as a bridegroom rejoiceth over a bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.* (a) Charming language! spoken by that God against whom we have sinned. The Lord is so far from being a terror, that he is their hiding place, their strength and shield, a present help in time of need.

Furthermore the enmity is taken away from the believer, so that having much forgiven he loves much. He can say, I will love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication. Whom have I

(a) Isa. lxii. 4, 5.

in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth I desire in comparison of thee! Whom having not seen we love, in whom though not seeing, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

3. **THIS** peace goes farther still, namely, a full justification. The criminal, here may be pardoned; yea, taken into favour, and yet he may be justly deemed guilty of the crimes laid to his charge; but in this case the pardoned soul is fully cleared, so that neither law nor justice can lay any thing to their charge, seeing it is God that justifies. For them Christ has died; yea, and is risen again for their justification, and who ever liveth to make intercession for them. Such a case is similar to that of an insolvent debtor, who has an able and a willing bondsman; and who freely satisfies the creditor, so that he can have no more claim upon the debtor, who is amply acquitted, and is therefore at liberty. Herein he can sing,

Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,
My beauty are my glorious dress;
Mids't flaming worlds in these array'd
With joy shall I lift up my head.

Yes, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in his blood, whom God hath set forth as a propitiation in his blood, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

Who would not exclaim, thanks be to God, for his unspeakable gift!

4. **THIS** peace implies the new birth; a renovation of the whole soul, that where sin did abound grace should much more abound. For, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away and all things are become new. If that were not the case the sinner could take no comfort or delight in God; no comfort in the ways of God; whereas they are become ways of pleasantness, and all his paths are peace. He delights himself in the law of God, and in that law doth he meditate day and night. His enmity is taken away, and nailed to the cross. He has his fruit unto holiness and the end eternal life. The whole of his conduct is changed, so is his will, and his affections, seeing he has put off the old with his deeds. Christ is formed in him the hope of glory. Glorious change! a change worthy of him by whom it is made; and it appears to be the workmanship of God created a new in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath ordained that we should walk in them.

5. **THIS** peace implies a divine union or fellowship with God; a privilege of an inestimable kind, and which excels all earthly honour as much as heaven excels earth. This union is set forth under a variety of simple, yet striking emblems in Scripture, as the vine and branches; the head and

members; the foundation and the building fixed upon it; the husband and wife. All of which are very clear and instructive in the great honour which God confers upon his saints. For this our Lord prays, *That they, believers, all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us—And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given them, that they may be one, as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one; that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.* (a) Thus all believers may truly say, our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. As he has put on our nature; so we are called to put on his, and hence may be said to put on the Lord Jesus, ever to be made partakers of the divine nature. High honour! glorious eminence! And this honour have all the Saints.

Secondly, the next invaluable blessing expressed in the text is, *Good will to men, to men on earth.* The word rendered good will*, is very expressive, and contains an assemblage of amiable properties. Perhaps we may come near its meaning in the following observations —

1. This good will is strikingly clear in the precious gift of a Saviour; and in this

(a) John xvii. 23. * εὐδοκίαν.

gift is included every other. For God spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all, and with him freely giveth us all things. He was given to be a sacrifice, a propitiation or covering for our sins. Indeed no less gift would avail; for sacrifices and burnt offerings God has no pleasure in; but said the Immanuel, *a body hast thou prepared me, and in that body he comes to do the will of his Father.* In this respect he said, I come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me, My meat and drink is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work; and in the issue could say, I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work, which thou gavest me to do. This was the great end which he had in view, in all he did and said, till he bowed his head on the cross, and like a conqueror, exclaimed, It is finished: and gave up the ghost; having bowed his head in obedience to his Father; so that the Godhead might be all in all.

2. THIS good will appears in the gift of the ever blessed Spirit. In our present fallen nature we are dark, dead and inert; and therefore we need the divine agent to open our eyes, to shine into our inner man; to lead the blind by a way which they know not; to guide us into all truth, that we may be led by a right way to a city of habitation.—This spirit of life must also quicken

us; for how can we run our christian race, or fight the battles of our Lord if we have no life in us? We cannot eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood if we are dead. Nor can we find any real comfort in the ways of God if we are dead; all will be stupidity and heaviness, if we have not the spirit of our God. If we live in the spirit, let us take heed to walk in the spirit, so shall we bring forth the fruit of the spirit. There is in our fallen nature a remarkable dulness, especially in the ways of God; and therefore we need this divine agent to excite us forward in our heavenly journey. Every thing in the divine life calls for exertion; if we consider the old man which is to put off, the new man which is to put on; the world which is to be conquered, Satan, which must be repelled, so that there is no trifling in this warfare. But all will be at a stand without the agency of the ever blessed spirit; seeing we must be strengthened by this ever adorable Helper in the inner man daily. In this the good will of the deity appears, through him who came to seek and save that which was lost.

3. THE preaching of the everlasting gospel is a public declaration of the goodness of God to fallen man. It is indeed glad tidings of great joy to all the fallen race. It is very properly called, the joyful sound; and happy are all the people who know the sweet language thereof; such

will walk in the light of the divine countenance. It calls to every one that thirsteth to come to the waters, and such as are stripped of all may take of the water of life freely. The language of the gospel is, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. It apprizes sinners of danger; but points them to a remedy. It describes their lost state, but fully informs them, that the son of man came to seek and save that which was lost. In the context, the angels preached the gospel to the shepherds, saying, *Fear not; behold we bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people; for unto you is born, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.*

4, THIS good will is abundantly expressed in all the blessed promises made to us by a gracious God. And all these promises are suitable to our manifold wants; there is not a real want which we have, but there is a promise in opposition to it; so that our wants may be as so many indexes, or hands, pointing to the promised help. Indeed our vanity may desire many things, and our avarice more, which might be hurtful, eternally hurtful for us to have; but such things are not promised us, and therefore we have no right to expect them. The apostle says, *My God shall supply all your wants, or necessities, according to his riches in glory*

by Christ Jesus. (a) But let the promises be ever so great, or numerous, either for time or eternity; either for body or soul, they are all made in Christ Jesus, flowing from his Father's good will to Adam's sinful race.

5. **EVEN** the threatenings are the blessed effects and proofs of his good will to the human race. For although they are awful, and delivered in a very prompt and positive stile, yet they are in fact, no more than so many kind warnings to prevent our running headlong to eternal ruin. Jehovah warns us that we may shun the danger; and is not that a blessed instance of his loving kindness, his good will to us? This will leave men without excuse, because there is danger; but then there is a remedy, and such as neglect that remedy have nothing to expect but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation from the Lord. But as there is a refuge, his language is, *escape for thy life; look not behind thee. For depend upon it, this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world; but men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. Let us take the friendly warning; seeing the name of the Lord is a strong tower; let us run therein, so shall we be safe.*

6. **THE** good will of God is manifest in

(a) Phil. iv. 19.

granting us so many comforts in life; in giving us rain and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. All these are forfeited mercies on our part, but given us back in the covenant of redemption. The earth originally was exceeding fruitful no doubt, but when man had sinned, as the head of God's works, all were lost, and a curse ensued: *Cursed is the ground for thy sake, was the awful sentence, thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.* (a) But he that spared not his own Son, but freely gave him up for us all, with him he freely giveth us all things. So that godliness is really profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come. A sense of this would sanctify all our table comforts; we should view them as the gift of God, swimming to us through the channel of the Redeemer's blood, and we should use them with sobriety and gratitude.

7. To crown all; as the last proof, which I shall recount, is the glory which he has prepared for us hereafter. Indeed if that were not the case what would all which I have been declaring avail? Hope, we know, is the spring of all action here below; and hope is a pleasing expectation of some good which is before us. This stimulates the soldier, the sailor, and the hus-

(a) Gen. iii. 18.

bandman; the men of wealth, pleasure, or honour; and why should it be excluded from the christian? No doubt but it was an encouragement to the faithful Israelites in the wilderness, that they were going to a land of corn and wine and oil; a land flowing with milk and honey, *a delightful land, and the glory of all lands.* This hope is reckoned by some to be selfish, and is almost reprobated; but if so, I do not see why, the joys of eternity are so often set before us by way of encouragement. Our Lord encouraged his disciples in all their trials to remember, that he went to prepare a place for them, and would receive them to himself, that where he was there they might be also. Even of himself it is said, *that for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross and despised the shame;* and in this we need not be ashamed to follow his example. There we shall meet our living head, and, with the redeemed of the Lord, see the King in his beauty, and the land which is afar off.

LET us wonder at, and adore the loving kindness of our dear Redeemer, which caused him to stoop to the mean circumstances of human nature, even in its most abased state. A sordid stable the place of his nativity, a manger his cradle, a few poor shepherds his human attendants. O how contrary to the wisdom of this world! He might well say, *My kingdom is not of*

this world. Shall his followers seek great things in this world? Do they not see the contempt which our blessed Lord cast upon all which the world counts great and good? Be content with your lot, knowing that is best for you which God hath appointed. O may we learn a child-like simplicity in contemplating our abased Creator, remembering what he said, Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of God.

INTRODUCTION.

IT is a dispute, among the antiquarians, respecting the precise time of our blessed Lord's nativity; some assert it must have been in summer, and their reason is, because of the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night; but others think it rather a proof of its being in winter, believing that the sheep would need to be watched more in winter than summer, as being more liable to the incursions of wild beasts, or the depredations of thieves. However, it is a matter of no consequence; it is cause of thankfulness that the thing is true; and he that regardeth a day, let him regard it to the Lord, and let it be done with reverence; and if we rejoice let it be in the Lord; let us "kiss the Son, lest he be angry with us and we perish from the right way." Let us not keep the feast with revelling and foolish amusements, but in such wise as is becoming those who own the Lord who bought them.

SINCE the stile was changed in 1752, New-year's day hath been observed as the day, which commemorates the circumcision of him who came to fulfil all righteousness, which we are assured was performed when he was eight days old, (a) so that he submitted to all the rites and ceremonies belonging to the dispensation, under which he was born, however painful or troublesome they might be. But although nothing is trivial that belongs to the Saviour of Sinners, yet I purpose to treat upon the more weighty matters in the ensuing discourses, and therefore shall pass over the article of circumcision; and as the New Year begins a new period of our life, I shall consider it in a solemn circumstantial light, viz, as the uncertainty of our days, and the certainty of their ending, and that our prayer might be, So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.

(a) Luke ii. 21.

SERMON III.

ON NEW YEAR'S DAY.

Jer. xxviii. 16.

BEHOLD, I WILL CAST THEE OFF THE
FACE OF THE EARTH: THIS YEAR
THOU SHALT DIE!

IT is more than probable these words will be verified in some who are present in this assembly; and there is need for each to make the solemn enquiry, *Lord is it I!* But before I enter upon the awful subject, it will be necessary to pay some attention to the original cause of the tremendous sentence.

IN the preceding chapter, the prophet Jeremiah was commanded to put a yoke upon his own neck; and also to make yokes and send one to each of the ambassadors, belonging to several kings, who were attending the court of Zedekiah king of Judah; as the king of *Edom*; the king of *Moab*; the king of the *Ammonites*; the

king of *Tyrus* and the king of *Zidon*. It is very probable, that the ambassadors of these kings, might be come to the king of Judah, to form a league of defence against the king of *Babylon*, who was making very rapid conquests; and as the prophets spake by signs as well as by words, the yokes sent to their different envoys were to signify that all those kingdoms should be brought under the yoke of the king of *Babylon*; and as it might be deemed imprudent for the prophet to send a yoke to *Zedekiah*, he put it on his own neck, to signify that the king of Judah also, and his land, should be brought in subjection to the king of *Babylon*. Courts are seldom destitute of sycophants, parasites and flatterers; one of that character was now in the court of *Zedekiah*, of the name of *Hananiah*. I judge he was what we should now call, a court chaplain, or chaplain in ordinary, and in conformity to his profession is called, a prophet. This bold adventurer took an occasion, before a large assembly of priests and people, to contradict the messenger of *Jehovah*; yea, and had the assurance to deliver his falshood as from God himself. *Thus, says this time server, saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years will I bring again into this place all the vessels of the Lord's house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took*

from this place, and carried them away into Babylon. And I will bring again to this place Jaconiah the son of Jehaiakim the king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah, that went into Babylon, saith the Lord: for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. The prophet Jeremiah patiently listened to all this dreadful falshood, and then as a lover of his country, he said *Amen: the Lord do so.*—He then gave a description between a true prophet and a false one; their predictions being verified was the only proof of their being true prophets; and finding that it was in vain to contend for the present, and not having any express testimony to deliver, he quietly went away. We may easily suppose Hananiah would be highly applauded, while poor Jeremiah would retire with disgrace. But the triumph of the wicked is not long. For although Hananiah was wonderfully confident, and as a proof of his assurance, he had broken the yoke from the neck of Jeremiah, as a token that God would confirm all that he had said; yet God sent his faithful Servant with a different message, intimating that although the bold man had acted the bravado, and had broken the yokes of wood, they should be exchanged for yokes of iron; and having faithfully delivered his message, he now reads the false, arrogant prophet his doom in awful accents; *Hear now, Hananiah, the Lord*

hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people trust in a lie. Therefore, thus saith the Lord; Behold, I will cast thee off from the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord. So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month. That was about six weeks after the first debate. It is clear that Hananiah had sinned the sin unto death; so that his flesh was given to destruction, whatever might become of his poor soul. Having said thus much respecting the original cause of the words, I shall leave the two prophets in their lot, and consider the text in a way that may profit us who are here upon praying ground. *This year thou shalt die*, as I before observed; it is more than probable the text will be realized in some of us who now stand in the presence of God. That this may properly affect our minds, I shall endeavour to shew,

FIRST, the certainty of death.

SECONDLY, the uncertainty of it.

THIRDLY, what is necessary, in order to die comfortably.

FIRST, then, I am to consider the certainty of death. The point is universally allowed, but is not laid to heart, that is the point I am labouring at; and there are several circumstances which second my endeavours in the momentous matter.

1. The annual death of vegetables, the

grass, the corn, flowers of various colours, and different odours. How beautiful did creation appeared a few months ago! We could then sing,

“ Lo, for us the wilds are glad,
“ All in chearful green array'd;
“ Opening sweets they all disclose,
“ Bud and blossom as the rose!”

The fields appeared like so many green carpets, embroidered with a variety of flowers, the fragrance of which revived the fainting traveller; but now they are become like so many barren heaths, and not a sprig of life appears; all looks waste and mournful. The trees presented a variegated scene; some adorned with blossoms, others nursing their offspring, namely, delicious fruits, shaded by verdant leaves; but now they are like so many dead logs, or lifeless trunks. Thus we see death has entered into the composition of the inanimate creation for man's offence, in which he may read his own destiny, even his own dissolution.

2. **ANOTHER** circumstance, which preaches mortality to us, and that is, the daily destruction of animals. In this we may say, as the apostle does, in another respect; namely, that death has passed upon those which have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. The poor brutes have not sinned, and yet millions of these feel the pangs of death every day; are violently dragged to slaughter, to feed the

race of him whose sin brought the punishment upon them. And if they escape the violence of man, they are either destroyed by one another, or "the lurking principle of death" gradually brings them to the dust from whence they were taken. Thus, however useful, or pleasing, they must go the way of all the earth, and cry aloud to us to prepare for our turn. It is the opinion of some, and it is perfectly innocent, that the brutes will have a future existence, as a recompence for their sufferings here. It is certain, they are made to suffer here most cruelly, under the tyrannical hands of man; they groan under the most dreadful oppressions; and the common parent of good, is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works. We see, in many instances, how a kind providence, careth for even the brute creation, and the charge which he hath given concerning them. See Exod. xxiii. 5. Deut. xxii. 4. verses 6, 7. Prov. xii. 10. But man, cruel man, violates all those laws either to gratify his avarice, pleasure, or revenge: the design of providence in giving mankind the creatures was for his use and comfort, and not for his abuse. But the whole creation groans and travails in pain till the great deliverances come; when the creature shall be delivered from the bondage of correction into the glorious liberty of the children of God. (a)

(a) Rom. vii. 22, 23.

BUT let them die of themselves, or let them be destroyed by man, they enforce the first awful sentence, Dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return.

3. **BUT** what speaks more loudly, and what is a more emphatic call, the death of our own species, and that daily. And yet the frequency of that circumstance lessens the solemnity of it. Should such a thing as a funeral happen, in a neighbourhood, once in fifty years, it would create an alarm; but as it is happening daily, it becomes a common place thing; and though the bell tolls, and the graves open, the mourners walk in solemn procession, yet it is not regarded. The accents of the deep-toned bell sound in vain. The design of our forefathers, in ordering what we term, *the passing bell*, to be rung was wise and pious; as it was to announce to the parish, that a soul was passed from time into eternity; and therefore properly called a *passing bell*. How solemn! how awful to leave all things here below, which we may have been acquainted with all our lifetime, and to enter upon an untried state, and among inhabitants which we are so ignorant of? Likewise to consider, that the soul enters upon its fixed state; only in the resurrection to rise into a higher state of glory or sink into the great depth of misery for ever-more. Awful thought,

- “ How shall I leave my tomb ?
• With triumph or regret ?
“ A fearful or a joyful doom,
“ A curse or blessing meet ? ”

4. **THE** word of God puts this matter out of all doubt, the excellent of the earth have all gone this gloomy road except two. Let their lives have been prolonged to a period which now surprises us, yet the close of the matter is, *they died*. I have read, somewhere, of an infidel, who happened to go into a church where prayers were read on a week day; and the first lesson was the fifth chapter of Genesis; in which the longevity of the antedeluvian patriarchs is described; he listened, and the reading struck him with attention. He heard that Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years and *he died*; others lived their nine hundred and odd years, and then died. The repetition of the word, *he died*, brought him seriously to think that he himself must die too, and it seems had a blessed effect upon his own mind. In such a manner does infinite wisdom over-rule even curiosity, and also makes the most trivial things contribute to his glory and the happiness of his creatures. O! tis a serious thing to die; and yet it must be submitted to; as there is a time which we were born, so there is a time in which we must die. For it is appointed to man once to die; and to die well is to live for ever. There have been

here and there a few who took it into their heads that they should escape their last enemy, but they did not remain long in that opinion; death put them in another mind; even they died like the rest of their fellow mortals. Such must be our lot. The psalmist exclaims, *I said, ye are gods, speaking to magistrates and rulers, and all of you children of the most high, But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the people.* As much as if he had said, I honour you for the sake of your office, but there is no bye way for you: no, you must go the common way of all the earth, and die like the meanest of the human race.

MOST likely some of you are saying in your hearts, what avails the preacher detaining us here this cold day, in ringing the changes a thousand times in our ears that we are to die? do not we all know that we must die? All assent and consent to it, as they do to the being of a God, or to heaven or hell; but then, as one says, "All men think all men mortal but themselves!" I want the awful truth to penetrate into thy heart, my fellow sinner; so that thou mayest cast off the works of darkness, that the thought may arouse thee from thy slumber; so that death may no longer appear like the picture of a lion, or a lion at a distance, but as the lion in the narrow pass; and to see that his teeth are broken and his paws cut off, or as the apostle expresses it, that

death may want his sting ; so that you may triumph over him ; have sin, which is his sting, finally destroyed.

II. BUT SECONDLY, my dear fellow sinners, if the certainty of death will not affect you, let me try what the uncertainty will do. You say, you know, as well as I can tell you, that you must die ; then consider, at such an hour as ye think not, death may come.

1. **WE** all allow the certainty of the thing, but the time when, is a secret which was ever hid from mortals. We do not find any of the patriarchs could ascertain the precise time when God would call them hence. They could conjecture from their advanced years, that, their days would be soon extinct, that the graves were waiting for them ; and that according to the course of nature they must go down to the bars of the pit ; and as such waited for the hour as for salvation. Moses and Aaron might have the clearest presentiments of any that we read of ; each was ordered to ascend a mount, and there wait till the Almighty called their immortal spirits home. Saul seemed to have the most punctual notice, when Samuel said, *To-morrow, thou and thy sons shall be with me.* (a)

BUT it does not appear as if Saul understood what Samuel meant. Nor does it

(a) 2 Sam. xxviii. 19.

appear that God revealed this secret to any of the prophets, except Elijah might have some intimation, when he should be taken to glory. But we must remember, his exit was a translation and not death. The foreknowledge of St. Paul was in consequence of the sentence either already passed, or which he expected daily from a bloody Nero, that made him say, *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.* These are all singular and exempt cases, and therefore militate not in any wise against the general proposition.

2. **THIS** uncertainty should excite us to a diligent use of every means of grace. We see uncertainty has this influence upon men engaged in worldly avocations; they are instant in season and out of season. It is so in husbandry, in trade, in naval concerns and in military operations. All who mean to succeed in any of those concerns well know that, if a desired end is to be obtained, the proper means must be used which lead to that end. And in this respect the children of this world are wiser than the children of light. God can do without what we call means; but he has nowhere said that he will; and we seldom find him exerting his miraculous power, but where the ordinary methods fail. As soon as the children of Israel came into a land of corn and wine, the manna ceased.—We are highly favoured

in this land with opportunities of all sorts. God meets the prejudices of his poor creatures, and many doors are open; and yet it is lamentable how few regard any means of grace whatever.

IF we had not liberty of conscience, or if there was but one profession of christianity allowed, we should hear loud complaints enough; but that pretence is taken away; we have various forms and denominations, and we are at liberty where to make our choice; and therefore God and men are clear; and if the sinner will run upon his own ruin, his blood must be upon his own head. Serious and awful are the words of the poet,

In death's uncertainty thy danger lies.
 Is death uncertain? thou therefore be fixt;
 First as a sentinel, all eye all ear,
 All expectation at the coming foe.
 Rouze, stand in arms, nor lean against thy spear;
 Lest slumber steal o'er thy soul,
 And fate surprize thee nodding.

YES, my friends, hear, read, mark and inwardly digest the word of life. Pray without ceasing, eat that bread and drink that cup in remembrance that Christ died for thee.

3. THE uncertainty is a strong admonition to avoid all sin; yea, even sinful thoughts, sinful tempers and desires, as well as words and actions. I own the motive is of the lowest kind; but however,

it is lawful, and even expedient; and it is what the scriptures continually make use of, or all the threatenings would avail nothing. But we need every stimulation, and the threatenings are kind warnings to avoid the ruin which is before us.

IT is true, the christian acts from nobler motives; for the love of Christ constrains him. He finds the service of God his delight, and to him it is perfect freedom. He cannot tread under foot his Saviour; he cannot tear his wounds open, or crucify the Son of God afresh; and therefore, though sin offers itself in the most pleasing form, he rejects it with abhorrence, saying, How shall I do this wickedness and sin against God? Like good old *Polycarp*, when called upon, by the proconsul, to swear by the image of Cæsar, and blaspheme Christ, and he would release him: "fourscore and six years," said the venerable champion, "has Christ been my master, and he has been always kind, how can I blaspheme my Saviour and my king?" That was noble and saint-like. I own I admire such heroism, and wish to imitate it.

BUT, as Kempis observes, if the love of Christ will not constrain thee, let the fear of hell do it. Indeed we need every motive, and all will be found in many cases too little. And remember, if death should surprise thee in a fit of anger, or undue levity, or burning with revenge, or impure

desire, would such a soul be fit to enter the pure mansions of unsullied light? or into the presence of him, before whom the angels veil their faces, and all the shining ranks fall down at his feet!

I presume you do not believe that there is any efficacy in death to purify unholy souls, or that there is a purgatory to prepare us for heaven, O then sinner, prepare to meet thy God.

4. THIS awful consideration should make us fruitful in every good work, and ready for every kind office. Therefore whatever thine hand *findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.* And as our blessed Lord, said, I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work. While we have time, says the apostle, let us do good to all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith. Our Lord explains and enforces this doctrine in his own stile and manner in the parable of the talents; and sums up the whole in the application, *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the son of man cometh.* (a) There is a time for all things, and that time should be carefully bought up for the best of purposes. We may now be useful; shortly it

(a) Matt. xxv. 13.

will be out of our power; we cannot help the dearest friend when once the span ended. We may now do good; and this we are called to do every moment. I can now help the sick, or weak in body or mind, more or less; but when my breath is gone all is over. I may feed the hungry, or cloth the naked, or help the prisoner; but after death my power ceases; I am stripped of all my ability; naked I came into the world, and as such I must go out of it again. I may now give the word of advice, or loving reproof, or comfort; but from the grave my voice cannot be heard; it is the region of silence, the land of forgetfulness, where all is dark and solitary. My influence cannot follow me; let my office or power be what it will, the rod, or sceptre of authority, is for ever broken; so that, as Solomon says, *a living dog is better than a dead lion*. Let the day of judgment be at ever so great a distance, my eternity is at hand; the judge is at the door, and with me time will be no longer.

5. FROM what has been already advanced, we see the necessity of being made partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Like the stones which composed the building of Solomon's temple, which were to be fitted to their place previous to their being brought thither; so all the lively stones which compose Christ's spiritual building must have their polish here, that

no noise of axes or hammers, no jars or tumults, no trials or temptations may be heard or felt in that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. God often fits, squares and polishes his stones, his children here, by needful crosses, trials and temptations; so that their graces may be made perfect, and their souls fit to enter among the spirits of just men made perfect.

How sweet must that rest be! But remember, as we cannot tell what an hour may bring forth; let us lose no time, let us up and be doing: let us give all diligence to make our calling and election sure.

SERMON IV.
ON NEW YEAR'S DAY.

—
Jer. xxviii. 16.

**BEHOLD, I WILL CAST THEE OFF THE
FACE OF THE EARTH: THIS YEAR
THOU SHALT DIE!**

HAVING considered the certainty and uncertainty of our death, I come now to enquire what is necessary to die comfortably.

AND herein, good Lord, direct me! direct how to speak, and direct the word to your hearts.

1. **I HOPE** many of you, my dear hearers, are sensible that you are sinners, that you have brought into the world a carnal, sinful polluted soul.

“ Sprung from the man whose guilty fall,
“ Corrupts the race and taints us all.”

THIS self-abasing truth you cannot be too sensible of. Here is the beginning of

true wisdom. We are indeed shapen in iniquity, and in sin conceived and born; and are, by nature, children of wrath even as others. This corrupt fountain has sent forth corrupt streams; this bad tree has brought forth bad fruit. From the heart of man proceed evil *thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within and defile the man.* (a) This is a rueful description, a sorry compliment to human nature! The stile is vastly different from that of our modern divinity; but the worst is, it is true; yea, it is the very case with the audience which I am now addressing, unless the grace of God has made the change; which I hope is the case with many. Of course repentance from dead works must have taken place. God has commanded all men to repent, because all have sinned. Now repentance is a change of mind, in which sorrow takes place, for the offence committed against the divine majesty; and this will be manifested by confessing and forsaking sin.

FOR certain it is, his servants we are unto whom we obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. He that committeth sin is of the devil, but

(a) Mark vii. 21, 22, 23.

the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil. And what are the works of satan? those which have just been described. But before they are destroyed they are manifested, mourned under; and an eager desire to be released from them. This we see was the case with Mary Magdalen, Zacheus, the three thousand on the day of Pentecost; the jailor, or any penitent which we read of. To every penitent soul who comes to the Redeemer, he says, *I do not condemn thee; go, and sin no more.* This heart-felt work must take place, or we die in our sins; and if we die in our sins, where Christ is we cannot come.

2. BUT without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that believeth not makes God a liar; a horrid condition indeed: and a state that ought to make the stoutest heart tremble. But he that believeth hath set to his seal that God is true. He that believeth is passed from death unto life, but he that believeth not, shall not see life; for the wrath of God abideth on him. The faith of an heathen is to believe that the Almighty is, that he exists, and that he is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek him. He fears God, and works righteousness, and is accepted of him. As he has not heard of Christ, he cannot believe in him; for how should he believe in him of whom he has not heard? Yet even his

salvation is in Jesus; and if he pursue the light which, through Christ, is communicated to him, he will at last see the King in his beauty, and the land that is afar off. And perhaps the great multitude, which no man can number, may be such as were without the pale of the visible church; and yet, may have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the lamb. (a)

BUT pure gospel faith speaketh on this wise, *If thou shalt confess the Lord Jesus with thy mouth, and shalt believe in thine heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, that is, to be made righteous; and with the mouth confession is made unto Salvation. For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth in him shall not be confounded.* (b) This faith brings peace and assurance to the soul, and is productive of all the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

3. HENCE we must have the mind of Christ in order to our present and final happiness. The mind of Christ is a concise term for all the tempers of a christian. It takes into its composition, love, joy, gentleness, meekness and fidelity. The king's daughter must be all glorious within. The pure in heart shall see God; and none else shall see him with comfort. This is that

(a) Rev. vii. 14. to the end. (b) Rom. x. 9, 10.

heavenly adorning, that wedding garment which we must put on that we may attend the supper of the Lamb. The heart of stone must be taken away; we must be cleansed from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, that we may perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. To this end there is a fountain open for sin and uncleanness; so that all our filthiness may be washed away, and the sinner made a meet partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.

4. **BUT I** must remind you, that this purity will necessitate you to deny yourselves and take up the cross; or, still, you cannot be disciples of a crucified master.

THESE are hard conditions to such as are at ease in Zion; or to such as remain still in the oldness of the letter. But the new man can comply with the command; nay, it must; for as all self centers in self will, this self will must submit to the will of God. Indeed it is our happiness to have no will of our own; but in all things, little or great, to say, *thy will be done*. What is it which makes heaven? it is that the will of God is compleatly and constantly done; and therefore the saints in glory enjoy the beatific presence; the Lord God and the Lamb are the light of the heavenly region. What is it which constitutes hell? A number of rational beings tormented in living in their own will, which is in direct opposition to the will of God, and that continually en-

creasing their own and each others misery. The very same is the case with multitudes on earth; yea, with every child of man who walks after the flesh, he walks in and after his own will, and therefore cannot be our Lord's disciple. 'Tis this self will which fills the world with mischief; with noise and uproar, battles, murders, and sudden deaths. Therefore to carry our self will into heaven would be to carry all these calamities thither, and turn heaven into hell.

THE cross is undoubtedly any trouble, or difficulty, which God in his providence may lay in our way, for the trial of our passive graces, such as patience, resignation, meekness, fidelity and the like; things that are little regarded by multitudes who profess religion; but must be regarded by such as follow the lamb of God. In many cases it may be at our option to sin or suffer; if we choose sin rather than suffering, we renounce the cross of Christ; but if we will suffer with Christ, we take up the cross, and we shall reign with him. There is no age, rank, or station in the world which will exempt us from the cross, if we are the followers of a crucified master. This often proves a touch-stone, a trying circumstance, and in which many stony ground hearers fall away; and therefore observe,

5thly. WE must endure the cross and despise the shame, if we mean to die comfortably: for he that endureth to the end, the

same, and none else, shall be saved. *To them, who by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honour, and immortality, eternal life shall be granted.* (a) He who runs the race for eternal life, must hold on his way; must so run, and continue to run, that he may obtain the prize. Indeed there is much need to fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of us should seem to come short of it. Too many there have been, and still are, who make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. Among the many myriads who left Egypt, and passed through the red sea, how few entered the promised land! They fell through unbelief, and thou standest by faith; be not high minded, but fear. *For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold, here the goodness and severity of God: on them that fell, severity; but on thee goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou shalt be cut off.*(b) *Therefore be thou faithful unto death, and thou shalt receive a crown of life.* (c)

6. How amazing little is the world? How short and uncertain? How soon will it be gone? We see every thing in it proclaims, *all is vanity and vexation of spirit.* All the hurry and uproar which is in the world plainly evidence that it is in a disor-

(a) Rom. ii. 7. (b) Rom. xi. 20, 21. (c) Rev. ii. 10.

dered state ; and our dearest comforts hang upon a very feeble tie, liable to break at every breeze.

“ Lean not on earth, 'twill pierce thee to the heart ;
“ A broken reed at best, but oft a spear ;
“ On its sharp point peace bleeds and hope expires.”

IT has been observed, that we see death before our eyes in various forms ; in the grass which perishes, in the animals which die before our eyes ; in that of our fellow creatures, yea our dearest acquaintance who are daily dropping off. What manner of persons then ought we to be in all manner of conversation ? I have described what we ought to be ; yea, and what we must be, or we cannot enter the kingdom of God. This day is said to commemorate the painful rite of circumcision, inflicted upon our blessed Redeemer, when he was eight days old, that he might fulfil all righteousness, being made under the law, that he might redeem us who are under the law ; that we might put off all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God. He had no filthiness to put off, being holy, harmless and undefiled ; but being in the likeness of sinful flesh, he submitted to all the painful inconveniencies, that we might be the circumcision which worship God in spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

7. **AWAKE** then, ye careless triflers with

precious time. Awake to righteousness! Are ye sensible that there is no work nor device in the grave whither ye are hastening? Are you convinced? Do you feel that ye are sinners? Then is it not necessary that ye should seek for a remedy? Seek the Lord while he may be found. Call ye upon him while he is near. Beware, lest your conscience gets lulled asleep again, and so you speak peace when there is no peace. It will be exceeding well to keep a sense of your disease till the cure is truly effected; till you feel redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of your sins. Your condition is something like the man-slayer under the law, who perceives the avenger of blood is at his heels; we may suppose such an one would not loiter on his way: a sense of his danger would add speed to his flight; nor could he think himself secure till he reached his asylum. Now the name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run into it and are safe. Mark, they *run* into it. Running implies exertion; so run that ye may obtain. If you have found the pearl of great price, if you have obtained a sense of the divine favour, you will find work enough to keep that which you have. Many, very many, and cruel are your enemies, who are seeking your ruin on every side; therefore watch ye; stand fast in the faith; quit yourselves like men; be strong. But if

you mean to retain what you have, it is highly necessary to encrease; for there is no standing still: if we gather not with our Lord we shall surely scatter abroad. Leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and go on unto perfection.

8. FINALLY, my brethren, such as have various troubles, crosses and tribulations, either in body or mind; let this comfort you, they will shortly have an end. Lazarus had his sickness, pain, contempt and poverty, for, perhaps, 30 or 40 years; but now he is comforted, has enjoyed that comfort for seventeen or eighteen hundred years, and shall enjoy it for ever. All his pains and sufferings are over, his tears are for ever wiped away.

COURAGE then, ye suffering saints; your troubles will not be long; you shall drink of the brook by the way, and in the end shall lift up your head above all sorrows and temptations, cares and crosses, ages without end.

TO conclude. *The time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as though they used it not. For the fashion of this world passeth away.*

SERMON V.

ON THE CRUCIFIXION.

Zech. xii. 10.

**THEY SHALL LOOK UPON ME WHOM
THEY HAVE PIERCED, AND THEY
SHALL MOURN.**

SEARCH the Scriptures, said our blessed Lord,—for they testify of me. (a) And after his resurrection he said to his disciples, *These are the words which I spake unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures.* (b) Many passages in the old testament have a twofold signification, one of which was accomplished prior to our Saviour's coming into the world, and what we may call, a literal or

(a) John v. 39.

(b) Luke xxiv. 44, 45.

historical meaning; the other was not fulfilled till the coming of the Messiah, and therefore what we call, an evangelical interpretation: such is the text which I have just read in your hearing, and the passage connected with it. Literally it refers to the captives in Babylon, and their deliverance. Their seventy years being accomplished, God raised them a deliverer in the person of Cyrus; he was to set them free. But previous to this liberation the Lord declares, *I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and supplication; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn.* That is, I will soften their stony and obdurate hearts, and they shall consider my mercies and loving kindness towards them, and their own base ingratitude and perfidy against me; and shall relent, and turn unto me whom they have grieved, and as it were pierced by their numerous provocations; and they shall mourn as one that mourneth for his only son; yea, it shall affect whole families and even whole tribes, so that it shall cause bitter wailing, and lamentation throughout all the land; and then will I turn their captivity as the rivers of the south. This seems to be the primary sense of the words. It is true, they may look forward to a period which is not yet arrived, as I believe they do, when they, the Jews, shall

finally be gathered from all lands, and shall sincerely and with broken hearts return to their neglected and despised Redeemer, and shall see and love him whom they have repeatedly scorned and rejected.

BUT still, there is another meaning, a meaning which perhaps we should never have thought of, had not a new testament expositor been our guide. We are informed, that, when Christ was crucified, two thieves were crucified with him ; and, that their bodies might not remain upon the cross on the sabbath, the soldiers were ordered to break their legs that they might be taken away. *But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs : but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and there came out blood and water—For these things were done that the scriptures might be fulfilled, as in the case of the Paschal Lamb, a bone of it shall not be broken. (a) And again ; another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced. (b)* This which I have read for the text is the scripture referred to, and to which I shall now call your attention. *They shall look on him whom they have pierced !* Awful sight ! a God incarnate, bleeding for human crimes. Surely it is meet and right that this impor-

(a) Exod. xii. 46.

(b) John xix. 31—38.

tant circumstance should be perpetuated by an annual remembrance.

FROM this affecting passage, I shall endeavour

FIRST, to point out the object here presented to our view.

SECONDLY, consider what is implied in *looking at the object.*

THIRDLY, the effect it is here said to have, *they shall mourn.*

FIRST, then, the amazing object presented to our view; that is, a pierced Christ. But what were the spears which pierced the adorable Son of God?

1. **THE** first, and prime of all was the spear of original sin. By one man's disobedience many were made sinners; and it could only be by the obedience of one that many could be made righteous. In Adam all died; both naturally and spiritually; so in the second Adam only could they be made alive. Through the offence of one, Judgment came upon all men to condemnation; so through the obedience of one, is the free gift come upon all men to justification. Here original sin is expiated, and hence the salvation of infants, who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. Sin could not go unpunished; and therefore he took on him our infirmities, and bore our sins in his own body on the tree. The first transgression brought death into the world and all our woe; and even brought death

upon the Son of God, seeing he made his righteous soul an offering for sin, that with his stripes we might be healed.

2. **ACTUAL** sin was another spear which pierced the lamb of God. Therefore he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, that through him a ruined sinner might have access to God. I do not apprehend that any of Adam's race will be condemned for Adam's sin; but it is in consequence of Adam's sin that we became actual transgressors; and I judge, had any of us stood in Adam's stead, we should not have managed our cause one whit better than he did; so that I do not think that we can cast a stone at our first parent.

BUT we have sufficient cause to lie humbled in the dust, in that all we, like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way; but the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. Yes, sinner, not only thy innate pride and self will, thy unbelief and carnal mind set their envenomed teeth in the dear Redeemer; but thy swearing, sabbath breaking; thy luxury and wanton propensities; and all thy disobedience were charged on him, so that thou mayest cry out with the poet,

“ 'Twere you my sins, my cruel sins,
“ His chief torments were;
“ Each of my crimes became a nail,
“ And unbelief the spear.”

HEREIN he gave himself for our sins, and bore them in his own body on the tree that they might be destroyed.

3. **THE** spear of rigorous justice pierced the bleeding reconciler; this awful attribute, stands engaged for the honour and harmony of all the rest, and puts a check upon mercy itself, without full satisfaction. But where was that satisfaction? Not among the angels; none of these durst draw the deadly forfeiture upon their heads; they knew the indignation of the Lord was too fierce for them to stand under. Could any of the human race engage in so arduous a task? Ah! no. One wretched rebel cannot engage to stand surety for another. He therefore looked, but there was none to help; he wondered; but there was none to uphold; therefore his own arm alone brought salvation. Stepping into the sinner's place, and being fully qualified to give satisfaction, the offer was accepted; and indeed it could not be otherwise, seeing it was stipulated in the eternal council that help should be laid upon him. Nor was he ignorant of the awfulness of the undertaking. He knew that he must drink the cup of his Father's fury, even to the very dregs.

No wonder, that amazement should seize him when his soul was exceeding heavy and sorrowful even unto death.

“ The waves of swelling grief
“ Did o'er his bosom roll ;
“ And mountains of Almighty wrath
“ Lay heavy on his soul.”

To hear the Father say, *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow.* (a) I say this must have been a tremendous sound, and might well thrill through every nerve of the man of sorrows. But, still, he goes on, Father, thy will be done ! It is enough ! the hour is come ! He goes on in the fulness of his love, in his fulness of strength. He meets the pointed dart. The shepherd is smitten ; but the sheep are spared, delivered from eternal pain. Our all depends upon this ransom, the effects of which are surprising ; this ransom on the cross, as from an high altar, as one expresses it, looks back to the first human transgression, and extends forward to the realms of everlasting felicity ; where the heavenly arches echo, *Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive glory and honour, riches and praise, world without end.*

4. THE broken law was a cruel spear, which entered deep into the human soul of our divine ransomer. The holy law of God is a transcript of the deity ; and shews the purity of the divine nature ; the giving of which was attended with very awful cir-

(a) Zech. xiii. 7.

cumstances, which made the mountain shake from whence it was promulgated, and the vast multitude to tremble. Dreadful are the curses, which are announced against the transgressor; not against the flagrant, the atrocious, scandalous offender only, but against the man who continueth not in *all things* written in the book of the law to do them. (a) Who then can be saved? Verily none by the deeds of the law. For the law is so spiritual and penetrating that it takes cognizance of the very intentions, desires and affections; so that he that looks upon a woman to lust after her, commits adultery; and he that hates his brother is a murderer. Here then every mouth is stopped; and all the world is become guilty before God.

BUT will not this law be propitious to the penitent, who ceases to do evil and learns to do well? No. Its demands are perfect and uninterrupted obedience; for the soul that sinneth must assuredly die. It admits of no repentance; makes no allowance for human infirmities; it was given to man while in a high state of perfection, and therefore had abilities to perform its utmost demands. But he sinned, has lost those abilities, and the image of his maker, and therefore became a hopeless, helpless, ruined sinner.

(a) Deut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii. 10.

IN this fearful state of man, God looked down with pity and compassion upon him, and provided a remedy; this remedy was found in the Son of his love. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. (a) *In the likeness of sinful flesh!* Good God! how abasing! How many humiliating circumstances belong to *Sinful flesh!* Shame, labour and toil, pain and death are what belong to *Sinful flesh*; and did our Lord submit to all these likewise? He did; and that in the most ignominious manner, in the lowest degree, as the vilest of criminals. Nay, but hear what an apostle says farther; *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a CURSE for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.* (b) Be astonished, O my soul! nay, be astonished, O ye heavens, ye angels, ye morning stars of light! What do ye think: to see your incarnate maker hang a curse, not only accursed, but a curse, in the abstract. What do you think, you heirs of glory! Ye ransomed race, that he in whom all nations are blessed hangs yonder a curse! Lord, what is man? that thou art mindful of him; or the Son of man, that thou shouldest thus

(a) Rom. viii. 4.

(b) Gal. iii. 13.

be mindful of him! O this curse was a poisoned arrow indeed! the iron of which entered into his soul! He made his soul an offering for sins, and suffered the just for the unjust to bring us to God.

5. THE power and dominion of Satan was very great among the children of men. He threw his flaming dart, dipped in hellish hate, at his conqueror. It was permitted him to bruise the heel of him who in the issue should bruise his head. The pride of the arch rebel was very great, as well as his power, and that increased his rage in the highest degree. He knew the Saviour of the world would spoil principalities and powers, as most probably did all the infernal crew, and therefore the underlings of Satan cried out, *Art thou come to torment us before the time? I know thee*, exclaims one of them, *the holy one of God*. Many were the conflicts which the captain of our salvation had with the powers of darkness, during his pilgrimage here on earth; but the grand conflict appears to have been upon the cross. Dreadful was the conflict indeed! Here, I apprehend, all hell was engaged. An awful cloud of darkness overspread the heavens; midnight veiled the glorious face of the sun, while the Sun of righteousness set in blood. But it is the last onset, and the victory is gained. It is finished, exclaims the conqueror! the enemy is routed; hell is put to flight; and a

sinful world is redeemed. Now the heavenly trumpets sound, the accuser of the brethren is cast down; a world of sinners is redeemed, and the deity is glorified.

“ ’Tis finish’d, cry’d the Lamb of God,
 “ Then dy’d to set his children free;
 “ Redemption’s finish’d, cries his blood,
 “ The gracious Lamb, he dies for me.”

THUS has the divine shepherd laid down his life for his sheep; and by his death, life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel.

II. **HAVING** considered the object presented to our view, a pierced Christ, I shall now enquire what is implied in looking to him.

1. **IT** implies that we know our disease, our wants and weaknesses; for till that is the case we shall care very little about Christ, or the redemption wrought out by his dying agonies on the cross. They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. He came to seek and to save that which was lost.

BUT we must be sensible of our lost state before we shall enquire about the Saviour of sinners. What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, are the enquiries of millions; nay, and of millions too who profess christianity, who will own in words they are sinners, but are wholly unconcerned about that salvation so dearly purchased

for them; they may assent and consent; and that is all.

BUT it is far different with a soul that is truly hungering and thirsting after righteousness. The language of such an one is, *As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, even for the living God.* (a)

It may be truly said of such an one, *behold, he prayeth.* He looks round for help in the creatures; but all is vanity: he tries what his own good works, or resolutions will do; but all are as filthy rags. He tries men and means, but refuge fails on every side. What shall he do? Whither shall he fly? He is driven from every plea; and while he is looking upon his case as desperate, he hears a voice saying, *Look unto me and be saved all yea ends of the earth.* (b) *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* (c) *The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.* Such precious texts are reviving cordials to poor sin-sick souls, when they are applied by the spirit to the heart of the sinner.

2. **THIS** looking, then, implies, some saving knowledge of the cure; and finds there is no other name given under heaven among men whereby a ruined sinner can be saved, but the name of **Jesus.** The sinner

(a) Ps. xlii. 1, 2. (b) Isa. xlv. 22. (c) Matt. ix. 12.

views Jesus an able Saviour; believing, as touching his divine nature, that he is over all, God blessed for evermore; and therefore is able to save to the uttermost all them that come to him. He reads with pleasure, that in the days of his flesh he healed all that had need of healing; no disease was too obstinate for him to heal; no devil too hard for him to cast out; even roaring winds and stormy seas were obedient to him. All opposition fell before him. The sinner finds him as willing as he is able to save him. Sometimes his ability has been doubted; this was the foot on which the father of the lunatic child halted. *If thou canst do any thing for us help us.* He seemed to have no doubt of his willingness; but, as the dumb devil had been too hard for the disciples, he was afraid it might be too hard even for the master. Some doubted his willingness: here the leper staggered, *"If thou wilt, said he, thou canst make me clean."* Most likely, he had seen our Lord do many mighty works; but knowing his to be a loathsome disease, few or none would come near him, he did not know whether our Lord would condescend so far or no. But the soul, of whom I am speaking, is like her who had the bloody issue, looks through all opposition; looking at the precious promises, and sweet invitations of the friend of sinners. How can he doubt so long as he hears that charming invitation,

Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Or while he reads that gracious declaration, *Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out*; I say, while he reads this can he doubt? Let earth and hell muster up all their objections against a vile sinner, and this blessed word shall answer them all.—The believing soul does not say, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down. Or who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring him up from thence. No, he knows he is nigh to all that call upon him; he therefore calls, believes and is saved. He beholds the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. He looks unto him and is not confounded.

3. To this great end, that he may see and feel this blessed cure, he uses every means of grace; he knows that he who hath ordained the end hath ordained the means which lead to that end. As a throne of grace is erected, it is highly necessary that we should come with humble boldness to that throne, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. As the scriptures are written for our instruction, it is necessary that we should read them; they testify of Jesus; and therefore direct us to him in whom all fulness dwells, that we may receive out of that fulness and grace to help in every time of need.

As some men are called to preach the

gospel, others are called to hear them; seeing faith comes by hearing; yea, and is increased by hearing also. It is the general engine which God makes use of to pull down the strong holds of Satan, and which gives him the most uneasiness, and against which he seems to have the greatest indignation. It is the preaching of the cross, though foolishness to the unbeliever, which is the power of God to an endless life. We have reason to lament that it has so little influence even where it is preached in simplicity and power; but where it is not preached the people perish for lack of knowledge.

THE Supper of the Lord is another mean which is appointed, and this mean is positively intended to set forth our Saviour's death, till he shall come in glory to judge the world.

THESE are the appointed means, which like so many windows, through which we must look unto him whom we have pierced, and I do not see how we can look unto him if we neglect them.

4. **THIS** looking implies faith working by love. Indeed, if the ordinances are the windows, faith is the eye of the soul, which looks through those windows. The window is of small use to the blind; and if there is no light, neither the eye nor the window avail much. Now Christ is the light of the world, and the lively object which is set be-

fore us in the text, and the gospel looks directly at this object, and a glorious object he is; and viewing him by faith creates love to him, love to his ways, to his people, and to his commands; they are not grievous; they are ways of pleasantness and all his paths are peace. While this faith is in exercise love will abound, and sin will be abhorred. Sin shall not have dominion over the lover of Jesus, he is not under the law, he is under grace. This faith will shew itself by its works; for it is an active principle in the believer's soul, stretching forward, ascending to its source like fire to the sun; or the river, which receives all its waters from the ocean, and in perpetual streams flows into the ocean again. Such is the nature of faith working by love.

5. **THIS** looking implies a rejoicing in Christ alone. The wise man does not glory in his wisdom, nor the rich man in his riches, nor the strong man in his strength; but the believer glories in the God of his salvation. Neither his rank nor pedigree weigh any thing with him, seeing he counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. All such can say, We are the circumcision, which worship God in spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

THIS blessed object is unchangeable, being the same yesterday, to-day, and for

ever ; and therefore the joy of grace here is heaven begun on earth ; it is glory in the bud ; and will dilate and expand, it will shed its heavenly fragrance in the realms of eternal bliss in a growing sweetness ages without end.

But here is no honey without sting, in this vale of tears ; nor is there a rose without its thorn. So our sweets must have some bitters ; neither must our joys be without some sorrows ; and therefore the text says, *they shall look upon him whom they have pierced and shall mourn.*

SERMON VI.
ON THE CRUCIFIXION.

Zech. xii. 10.

**THEY SHALL LOOK UPON ME WHOM
THEY HAVE PIERCED, AND THEY
SHALL MOURN.**

THE THIRD thing proposed, which is to consider the effect of this looking, *they shall mourn.*

THERE are two kinds of mourning, or sorrow; there is a *godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of:* and there is a *sorrow of the world which worketh death.* (a) Of this latter, kind we find several instances daily occurring, as also in the scriptures. It is sometimes occasioned by the loss of property in trade or otherwise, when schemes have not succeeded, or through failures;

(a) 2 Cor. vij. 10.

even high gamers have been known to put an end to their existence through mere vexation. Sometimes it has been occasioned, through the loss, or the apprehension of losing the favour of man, or the empty honour of the world; and the chagrin has either preyed upon their spirits, so as to bring on incurable diseases, or they have laid violent hands on themselves. Such appears to have been the case with *Ahithophel* when his counsel was counteracted by *Hushai*. *When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his ass, and arose and got him home to his house in his city, and put his household in order and hanged himself.* (a) Here we see the sorrow of the world and its effects.

THE same may be said of *Judas*, when he saw our blessed Saviour was in the hands of his enemies, and that they had condemned him, and that he was likely to suffer, *repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood—And cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.* (b) Such is the sorrow of the world, and such are its effects; there was sorrow in both those rebels, but it was the sorrow of the world, and which wrought despair and death.

(a) Sam. xvii. 23. (b) Matt. xxii. 3, 4, 5.

BUT, on the other hand, there is a godly sorrow, and such are called mourners in Zion; and whom our gracious Lord pronounced blessed, and declares they shall be comforted. Of this description we find David to have been. Look into the 6th, 38th, and 51st Psalms, the very language of which groans, even the attentive reader can feel it.—Such a mourner was *Hezekiah*. Hear his plaintive language. *Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove, O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.* (a) Of this description of mourners we may very justly reckon the weeping *Jeremiah*. (b) Read over his lamentations, where every sentence is a tear, and the whole, like *Ezekiel's* roll, full of lamentation and woe. Of the same description we may reckon *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, and *Daniel*. (c) These were true mourners in Zion. They hanged their harps upon the willows, and wept bitterly over the sins and miseries of their country. Nor must we forget, even poor weeping Peter; who though he had sinned grievously, yet he wept bitterly. Nay, the great apostle Paul was a man of tears; his cruelly persecuting the church had left such a scar, even in his pardoned soul, that he felt it to the latest moments of his life. And how did he weep

(a) Isa. xxxviii. 14. (b) Jer. ix. 1, 2.
 (c) See Ezra ix. Neh. ix. Dan. ix.

and mourn over such as had sinned, so that he wrote in tears.

Now such are the mourners under consideration; their great object is before their eyes in him whom they pierced, that is, a crucified Saviour.

1. IF we had some dear friend who had undergone a long series of distress, of labour, poverty, pain and shame, terminated in a lingering, painful and cruel death, how should we feel ourselves? Would it not pierce us to the quick? But if we had been the cause of all that inconceivable anguish; nay, had we in frantic madness been the actual perpetrators of those cruelties, what anguish and distress must ensue? How did Joseph's brethren reproach themselves for the barbarities inflicted upon an innocent brother? *Verily, said they, we are guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us; and we would not hear: therefore this distress is come upon us.* (a) Now they looked upon him whom they had pierced, and they mourned. The application is easy, only the comparison is far too weak. And indeed no comparison can fully illustrate the matter in hand, or adequately set forth the sufferings of him who bore our sins and carried our sorrows. Each believing soul may cry out,

(a) Gen. xlii. 21.

" Beneath my load he faints and dies,
 " I fill'd his soul with pangs unknown ;
 " I caus'd those mortal groans and cries,
 " I kill'd the Father's only Son."

2. **ANOTHER** cause of this mourning is that, they resisted the calls of the divine sufferer so long. They had been like the deaf adder which stoppeth his ears, and will not hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely. It is true, the times of ignorance he winked it; yet they can accuse themselves of being wilfully ignorant, seeing they have had so many opportunities of instruction; yea, and checks, from the ever blessed Spirit, by which they might have been guided into all truth; but pleasure, or worldly care, or carnal company, or self-sufficiency, engaged their attention and kept them still in open arms of rebellion against him who died for them. They can but regret the time mispent, or worse than mispent; so that if they could weep tears of blood, the sorrow would be inadequate to the offence. O my dear hearers, and even my young hearers, let the time past more than suffice that you have wrought the will of the gentiles. Turn even now, to him with weeping and wailing, and supplication; rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to him who died for you. He, even now, stands at the door and knocks; if any man hear his voice and open the door he will readily enter in.

3. **IT** is matter of godly sorrow that we

have served the friend of sinners no better, since we had some acquaintance with him. I doubt the greater part of us have loitered on our way, and are not so far on our journey as we might have been. May not that charge be justly applied, *Of the rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee.* (a) Heavy charge! Forgotten him! who says, he cannot forget us! though a woman may forget her sucking child. Nay, but he has engraven the believing soul on the palms of his hands; and ought not that to nail our affections to his cross for ever!

BUT hearken, my brethren, what are the returns which you have made him? Perhaps coldness and indifference, attachment to the world and the things of the world: base ingratitude, heart-hardness, foolish wanderings, even in duty, and backwardness to that duty. Instead of thankfulness, murmuring; instead of mourning, trifling; instead of fervent zeal, sluggishness; and instead of brokenness of heart a carnal mind oft rising against purity of heart; so that not only the outward eruptions, but the inward state often gives pain till it is destroyed; and every thing brought in subjection to the Son of God; till he sits upon his throne making all things new.

IN the mean time the souls of the righte-

(a) Deut. ii.

ous groan within themselves waiting for full salvation.

4. IT is matter of holy mourning to the saints, that they see such multitudes rushing to everlasting ruin, seeking death, in the error of their way. These are still crucifying the Lord of glory, and putting him to open shame. By the unholy lives of such as profess christianity; the cross of Christ becomes a stumbling block, and his name is reproached among the heathen. Therefore one, who looks to Jesus feels pain; he beholds transgressors and is grieved. He sees the honour of God is struck at, and likewise the interests of the ever blessed Redeemer: his agony and bloody sweat, his cross and passion, his precious death and burial, his glorious resurrection and ascension; his intercession and coming to judgment are all turned into fables; made quite light of, or rather despised and hated; so that he may call out to poor careless souls, *Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there were ever sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me.* (a) Moreover the mischief which is done in the world, by poor unthinking mortals, is matter of great lamentation; for truly one sinner does much harm. Like a person who has the plague, they carry infection and disease with them, wherever they

(a) Lam. i. 12.

go, and all combine to make war against the lamb; labouring to tear his wounds open again, and as it were to crucify him a fresh. O sinner, remember this; lay it to heart; lest he speak unto thee in his wrath, and vex thee in his sore displeasure; yea, lest he swear in his wrath, thou shalt not enter into his rest.

MORE or less their time on earth will be a time of mourning to the saints. But the days of their mourning shall have an end; when the Lord God shall wipe away the tears from their eyes; appoint unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they may be called trees of righteousness the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified in them. (a)

Now redemption, long expected,
 See in solemn pomp appear;
 All his people, once despised,
 Now shall meet him in the air.
 Happy mourners, happy mourners,
 Lo, on clouds, he comes, he comes.

Glorious time! blessed season. May we all be prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

5. See, my dear brethren, what sin has done? The misery and ruin which it hath brought upon the human race; the various diseases which have fixed their residence in

(a) Isa. lxi. 3.

these bodies of sin and death, and which, like the leprosy under the law, in the house, and no cure is found for it; but the house must be demolished, and its very foundation must be erased. (a) How does the whole creation groan, and travail in pain, panting for deliverance? Poor little infants, which have not sinned, like Adam; even the brute creation feel the dire effects of the fall. How many of these are groaning under the merciless hands of sinful men. Even the inanimate part of the creation partakes of the fall; and hence we see corruption and death have invaded all vegetation. The most fragrant flowers, the most verdant branches, the most stately trees, are all subject to decay and death. The most awful calamities of war, famine, plague, earthquakes and desolations are all the fruit of that forbidden tree, namely, sin. The moral evils which are in the world are its foul offspring, such as *Adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evils come from within and defile the man.* (b) Could we look into hell, and see the writhing, and gnashing of teeth, and hear the horrible shrieks of the damned; they would explain its malignant nature.

BUT let all the miseries in earth or hell

(a) Lev. xiv. 45. (b) Mark vii. 21, 22, 23.

be brought forward, with all their horrid effects; and yet, they do not describe the monster in so awful a manner as the suffering lamb of God, who stood in the sinner's place, and upon whom the vials of divine indignation were poured without mixture, or mitigation, upon the head and heart of our suffering Saviour.

6. **WE** see how awful, yea how dreadful the divine attributes are without the atonement. The justice of God is figured out unto us in the most terrible images. Tremendous thunder, the rage of fire, the stormy seas, destructive earthquakes; yea, every thing that is terrifying to the whole animal creation, to the brutes as well as the human race, are all calculated to shew that with God is terrible majesty. Moreover, all the calamities which we have heard or read of; the general deluge; the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; the earth, expanding her rapacious jaws, and swallowing Korah and his rebellious company, or the other multitudes who fell in the wilderness; or had we seen the destruction of Jerusalem either by the Chaldeans or by the Romans, all of which were dreadfully awful, and asked what was the cause of all those dreadful calamities; we must answer, it is sin.

HAD we seen the ravages of the plague in London, in the year 1665, when grass grew in the streets; or the terrible fire in

1666, and asked what might be the cause? We must still answer, it is sin. Nay, could we discern all the bloody battles which have been fought, and the millions that have been slain, and the cruelties, the studied barbarities which have been inflicted upon martyrs and captives, we might see and judge of the nature and mischief of sin. Could we uncover the mouth of the bottomless pit, and see the writhing, and hear the doleful howlings of the damned, it would terrify, it would overwhelm and almost disanimate us; but put all together, and the bitter cry from the cross, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me, sounds more dreadful than they all.

What havock hast thou made, foul monster sin?
 Greatest and first of ills.—The fruitful parent
 Of woes of all dimensions! But for *thee*
 Sorrow had never been.”

WHAT say you, my dear hearers? Can you still indulge the hellish hag? Will you plead its dreadful cause? Which of them will you hold fast? Is it your pleasing sin? you must pay dearly for it in a very little time: eternal pain must be the penalty. Does it avail the rich man now, that, above eighteen hundred years ago he fared sumptuously every day? Does the idea, or remembrance mitigate his eternal misery? Ah! no; quite the reverse. Then, my dear fellow sinner, resolve upon the

death of thy sin, or it will be thy punishment to all eternity.

WILL you hold fast your profitable sin? the sin of gain? when you know it to be so! it will eat your flesh with eternal fire. The wages of that sin is death; even eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power.

Is it the honour of the world? the praise of man? even that must end in everlasting shame and infamy. O let the crucified Jesus crucify thy old man, that the body of sin may be destroyed, and thy happy soul take her heavenly flight to the realms of everlasting felicity, to contemplate the riches of redeeming grace and dying love for ever.

7. **LASTLY**, see, my dear fellow sinners, where our help is laid; behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. Here is a plaster as broad as the disease; here is a remedy, wide as the recess of misery, deep as our inbred sin. God so loved the world, that he gave his beloved Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have eternal life. O, look unto him, and be saved all ye ends of the earth. Here is a fountain open for sin and uncleanness. Here is pardon for the guilty, life for the dead, healing for the sick, strength for the weak, and a cleansing fountain to the impure. In him all fulness dwells; and from that fulness we all may

receive whatever we need. Open thy mouth wide, O, believer, so shalt thou derive ease from his pain, life from his death, honour from his ignominy, and in due time shalt contemplate those wounds which thy sin has made, with triumphant shouts of praise to God and the Lamb for ever. To whom be ascribed equal and undivided praise world without end. Amen!



SERMON VII.

ON THE RESURRECTION,

ON EASTER DAY.*

Isa. lxiii. 1.

WHO IS THIS THAT COMETH FROM
EDOM, WITH DYED GARMENTS FROM
BOZRAH? THIS THAT IS GLORIOUS
IN HIS APPAREL, TRAVELLING IN
THE GREATNESS OF HIS STRENGTH?
I THAT SPEAK IN RIGHTEOUSNESS,
MIGHTY TO SAVE.

THE preceding chapter presents us with a pleasing view of good times to come; in which the church shall be beautiful and glorious, and to which Jehovah gives titles

* THE term EASTER, occurs but once in all the Scriptures; and it would have been full as well if it had not been there at all. It is the name of an ancient Saxon goddess, and the term signifies rising; which made our ancestors apply it to our Lord's resurrection; otherwise it bears no reference to the Greek word *παχα*, which signifies the passover, and I know no reason why it was changed here.

expressive of the union with and the delight which he will take in the same. *Thou shalt, saith he, be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. Thou shalt no more be termed, Forsaken; neither shall thy land be termed, Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.*

It may not be amiss here to give a reason why the days of the week bear the names they do.

Sunday from *Sol*, the latin name for the Sun, being the day in the week which the Saxons worshipped that planet.

Monday, literally *Moonday*; for on that day the Moon was worshipped, which they supposed to be the wife of the Sun.

Tuesday, is supposed to be derived from *Tuesco*; an idol among the Teutonicks or ancient Germans, to whom the third day of the week was dedicated.

Wednesday, from *Woden*, the furious god of war, among the Saxons, and supposed to be the same as *Mars* among the Romans.

Thursday, from *Thor*. Supposed to be a contraction of the word *Thunder*, and is thought to be the same as the Roman *Jupiter*, whom they stile the *Thunderer*, or the *God of Thunder*.

Friday, from *Friga*, the latins call it *Dies Veneris*, the day of *Venus*, the Goddess of Love. An impure deity.

Saturday, from *Saturn*, an ancient idol, during whose reign was supposed to be the iron age.

Thus we find all the days of the week denominated after the idols of the heathen; it might be well if they were denominated as in the Scriptures, viz. *First, Second, &c.*

How charming is this language? how encouraging? To signify that the Lord takes delight in his people, and that he is united to them. Pleasing ideas indeed! And as every transaction of importance is brought about by some agent, known or unknown; so the wonderful transactions spoken of in this chapter are undoubtedly brought about by some fit instrument adequate to the task; and I apprehend the glorious hero is marked out with surprise and wonder in the words of the text, *Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?* He answers for himself; *I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.* The imagery in the text and context is awful and grand. It describes a hero, who hath valiantly stepped in the behalf of the indigent and oppressed, against the tyrants and oppressors; one who had put his life in his hand and rushed upon the oppressors; and, with much toil and danger, had gained the victory, and returns triumphant, with the blood of his enemies sprinkled upon his raiment. The captives are free, the enemy is slain or routed, and the conqueror returns with shouts of triumph. But then, who is this glorious champion? It cannot be *Hezekiah*; he could scarcely say, *I that speak in righte-*

ousness, mighty to save. Nor can it be Cyrus; we never read of his being in Edom. Nor will it apply to Judas Maccabees. I apprehend it is the same glorious personage spoken of in Revelation, chapter 19, from the eleventh to the seventeenth verse; that is, the King of Glory: the Lord strong and mighty in battle; and therefore in lofty language describes his glorious resurrection, his conquest over Satan and the grave.

WE do not read of any remarkable hero coming from Edom; but we read of one who said; *I will ransom them* (namely poor sinners) *from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death.* (a) We read of one that *spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them, openly triumphing over them in it.* (b) And therefore I apprehend the words refer to the glorious resurrection of Jesus: and I am the more convinced of this in contemplating the original text. The word here rendered Edom*, has the same radical letters which compose the word we render *earth*, or *ground*, and therefore I scruple not to render it, who is this that cometh from the *earth*, or from the ground, the grave where he was laid in arrest for our offences; having conquered his and our enemies; and therefore is risen to set them free. *Bozrah*, I apprehend, was

(a) Hos. xiii. 14. (b) Col. ii. 15. □ 178.*

the capital of Edom, and in some places signifies a vintage, Lev. xxvi, 5, and signifies that he had trod down his enemies, and crushed them even as he that treadeth the wine vats crushes the grapes. Sometimes the same word signifies a place that is fortified; (a) and shews that our all glorious conqueror entered the strong hold of Satan, to deliver the sons of death from the power of the mighty. He alone engaged in our desperate cause; dreadful was the undertaking; but *he looked and there was none to help; he wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore his own arm brought salvation.* Considering the words as applicable to a risen redeemer, I shall endeavour to consider,

I. The august person here spoken of.

II. From whence he comes.

III. The form he wears,

IV. The design of his coming.

1. The glorious person is to be considered.

And who can he be, if we consider the stile he assumes, but the ever blessed and glorious potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in that awful light which no man can approach unto; and as touching his divine essence, whom no man hath seen, nor can see; and who is stiled the only wise

(a) Lev. xxxii. 26. Isa. xxy. 12.

God our Saviour, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily? It would be great arrogance in either man or angel to say, *I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.* But it is highly becoming him who is the resurrection and the life, and whom to know is life eternal. He can say, *I and my Father are one. I am in the Father, and the Father in me. He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father also. He is stiled the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.*

2. **BEING** God over all blessed for ever, he is mighty, and powerful to subdue all adverse power, or whatever shall set itself in opposition to him. Let all hell oppose him, he can put down all rule and authority, and bring in subjection to himself every thought in captivity. This is the stone which the builders rejected, but is the head of the corner; yea, the very foundation, and against which the gates of hell shall never prevail.

HE has all power both in heaven and in earth, and unto whom angels and principalities and powers, and all heaven are subject. It is plain from the context, that nothing can stand before him. Do opposers stand in his way? *I will tread down the people in mine anger, says he, and make them drunk in my fury; and I will bring down their strength to the earth.* Can any human being speak thus? No, not if he is

in his senses, or has any proper knowledge of himself: but it is language becoming the most high, though in the appearance of sinful flesh.

HIS power was the first qualification which he assumed after his resurrection. *All power is given me, both in heaven and in earth.* (a) To him therefore every knee must bow and every tongue confess to be Lord to the glory of the Father.

THIS is a mighty encouragement to his saints, and especially to his ministers; for in the strength thereof they can go into all the world, and proclaim glad tidings to all nations; while their all conquering master says, *Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.*

3. **HE** that is thus mighty, is also true and faithful. To confirm this in the minds of his followers, he often reminds them of his transactions in the days of old. His dealings with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, are often referred unto, and likewise with their offspring; how he brought them out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage; divided the red sea, led them with a pillar of a cloud by day, and with flaming fire by night: fed them with manna, and brought them water from the flinty rock; conducted them through Jordan, and made the walls of Jericho fall down, and

(a) Matt. xxviii. 18.

drove the warlike nations out before them : gave them houses which they had not built, vineyards which they had not planted, and wells which they had not digged ; and while they continued faithful, he suffered no man to do them arm ; yea, he reprov'd kings for their sake. Now why are these things so largely and often repeated ? Doubtless that we may take comfort and courage in pressing on in the way that leads to eternal glory.

IF that passage in revelation has reference to the text and context, it exactly confirms, what I have asserted. “ *I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him was called true and faithful, and in righteousness doth he judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns ; (to signify that he had gained many conquests) and he had a name written, which no man knew but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipt in blood : and his name is called, The Word of God.— And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron : and* HE TREADETH THE WINE PRESS OF THE FIERCENESS AND WRATH OF ALMIGHTY GOD. (a) My reason for quoting this passage is, to shew the coincidence

(a) Rev. xix. 11—15.

of the prophet and the apostle, and likewise the fidelity of the Redeemer of Sinners. He is called *the faithful and true witness*. (a) The apostle John, often stiles him *true*, or *him that is true; the true God and eternal life*. He is faithful to all his saints; and he is faithful to all his promises; not one of them can fail. We can put little confidence, even in princes, nor in any of the children of men; for all flesh is but as grass, and the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of Immanuel abideth for ever. Men may sometimes want ability to perform their engagements; some unforeseen accidents may intervene, and thereby cut them short; but nothing of that kind can happen to him who is infinite wisdom; and nothing can restrain him who is infinite power. Men may change their mind, but he changeth not.

HE is also the true Messiah in opposition to all vain pretenders; and he is the true rest for all his poor weary pilgrims; a neverfailing rest, and a present help in every time of need.

HE is the true foundation, upon which the church is built, and against which the gates of hell cannot prevail.

ALL the dispensations of his providence are according to truth: although they may

(a) Rev. iii. 14.

at certain times appear dark and intricate, and require some degree of patience to wait the event. This we find to have been the case with many of God's eminent saints; yet he made darkness light before them, and crooked things straight, and in the issue they could say, thou hast done all things well; *just and true are thy ways, O King of saints.*

5. IN this adorable person we discover our only Redeemer and Saviour. We were indeed poor captives, who had sold ourselves for nought; but he came forth to be our ransom and our peace. He gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time. He gave himself for our sins, that he might redeem us from the present evil world. Awful indeed, and great was the price laid down for us; not corruptible things such as silver and gold, but his own most precious blood, by which a world of sinners was redeemed. Hence he says, in the context, *The day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.* Indeed he loved poor sinners, and gave himself for them, that he might redeem them from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.

6. HE is not only the Redeemer, but the actual Saviour of perishing sinners. For although the ransom is paid down, even his own precious life; yet the cruel tyrant, the

furious oppressor, is not willing to let them go, nor are they very desirous of being released; so that in their actual salvation there are two conquests to make; namely, the captives themselves, that they may see their misery; and feel an eager desire to be released from it: that like the Israelites, in Egypt, they may groan to be released: and then the sighing of the prisoner comes up before him with acceptance, and he saves to the uttermost all them that come to him. That he is able to do this, appears from what has been said, and that he is willing, there is not the smallest doubt, seeing he declares, *him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.*

NOR do we ever find that he rejected any poor sinner that ever come to him. Let satan have ever so strong hold of the sinner, the Ransomer of the nations can, and will deliver such as are looking to him. If they sink into the miry clay, he can and will pluck them from thence, and set their feet upon a rock and establish their goings. Let the habits of sin be ever so strong, he can break the power thereof, and set the captive free; let their natural propensities be ever so vicious, yet he can subdue all to his sovereign sway, that at the last they may sing, Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

II. HAVING contemplated this glorious personage; let us enquire from whence he

comes, the text says, from *Edom* ; we have said, from the earth, that is, from the grave, where he had been laid in arrest for our offences; and therefore, the text is a lively description of his glorious and triumphant resurrection.

DEATH was the penalty due to sin, and as he freely stepped into the sinner's place, it behoved him to suffer; even the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. As he said to his disciples, *thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and rise from the dead the third day.*—And, as he said to the two disciples, *Ought not Christ to suffer these things and to enter his glory?*

WHAT amazing mystery is all this? God manifest in the flesh, God in human nature laying down his life for ruined sinners! This may lessen, if not wholly banish the gloom of death. The apostle observes, to the Corinthians, that the sum of what he had preached to them was, *that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.* (a) And from the resurrection of Christ, he proves our resurrection; for he observes, *If there be no resurrection from the dead, then is Christ not risen.* (b) But, as he farther observes, *By man came death, by man came also the*

(a) 1 Cor. xv. 3, 4.

(b) 1 Cor. xv. 13.

resurrection of the dead. The first Adam was made a living soul ; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. (a)

How great was that love which brought the Lord and giver of life, down to the shades of death? However, it affords a louder song of triumph. He could say to his fainting servant, *I am the first and the last ; I am he that was dead, but am alive, and behold : I am alive and live for evermore. (b)*

O, THIS is matter of triumph to us also, and hence the Father speaking to his coequal Son, says, *thy dead men shall live ;* and the adorable Conqueror subjoins ; *together with my dead body shall they rise ;* and then by a striking apostrophe, addresses his living seed, *Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust. (c)* Thus he stooped to the gloomy recesses of the grave, that he might triumph over the tomb, and lead captivity captive, and receive gifts for men.

2. TIS said he came from *Bozrah*, a vintage, we said, where the wine press stood, the painful toil of which, he had to endure, where all his opposers were like the grapes beneath the feet of the treader.

MOREOVER, it may signify the glorious, in-gathering of precious souls, in consequence of his agony and bloody sweat, his cross and passion, his precious death and

(a) 1 Cor. xv. 45. (b) Rev. i. 17, 18. (c) Isa. xxvi. 19.

burial, his glorious resurrection and ascension. Great and glorious will be the number of his ransomed race, like the innumerable and pure drops of dew from the womb of the morning. (a)

THE term *Bozrah* has been observed to signify, not only a vintage, but also a fortress, or fortified place, and may import the strong hold in which poor sinners were held, fast bound in iron and misery. But the almighty Saviour entered those dreadful territories, to deliver the wretched captives who lay in darkness and in the shadow of death; and bring them from the horrible pit, and from the miry clay, and set their feet upon a rock, and make their goings sure. Awful indeed was this work, and none but himself durst engage in it. He was appointed for this important work, and was duly qualified for it; and therefore entered the strong holds of the enemy, and brought forth the prisoners out of the pit in which there was no water.

BUT if the term *בִּזְרָה* is derived from *זר* as some think, then it must signify distress, trouble, or anxiety, and is very applicable to the life of martyrdom and distress which he endured, when he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and especially at last when it is said he began to be sore amazed, and heavy, and cried out, *My*

(a) Ps. cx. 3.

soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death. And especially that last cloud of inconceivable anguish which extorted the bitter cry, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* But now having done and suffered all that was appointed him, he bursts the barriers of the tomb, and comes forth a glorious conqueror, an almighty deliverer, having conquered death and the prince of darkness, he sits enthroned at his Father's right hand, till all his enemies become his footstool.



SERMON VIII.

ON THE RESURRECTION.

Isa. lxiii. 1.

WHO IS THIS THAT COMETH FROM EDOM, WITH DYED GARMENTS FROM BOZRAH? THIS THAT IS GLORIOUS IN HIS APPAREL, TRAVELLING IN THE GREATNESS OF HIS STRENGTH? I THAT SPEAK IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, MIGHTY TO SAVE.

HAVING considered the glorious person of our Immanuel in his redeeming capacity, having laid down his life for our offences, and resuming it again for our justification; having overcome the sharpness of death, having paid the dreadful penalty for our offences.

I AM in the third place to consider the awful form he wears; and that is no longer the form of a servant; no more the prisoner

at the bar of an unjust judge; no more as the criminal on the cross; no more in expiring agonies; dying groans; strong cries and tears; no:

1. HE comes forth *with dyed garments*. This indicates him to be a warrior, and as such, he is frequently represented in scripture. Thus Moses describes him thus: *The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; thy right hand O Lord, hath dashed the enemy in pieces.* (a) The prophet Isaiah, saith, *The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar, he shall prevail against his enemies.* (b)

IN the minor prophets, he is frequently described under very awful characters. *Who can stand before his indignation? And who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? His fury his poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him.* (c) *I saw, and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer.* (d) He had an awful conflict in his own person, it has been observed, and he has a warfare still to carry on in his militant church, as we see in the twelfth chapter of Revelation, where, under

(a) Exod. xv. 3, 4. (b) Isa. xlii. 13. (c) Neh. i. 61.
(d) Rev. vi. 2.

the title of *Michael*, he wars with the dragon. For the war there spoken of in heaven, is in his church, in her militant state, and therefore is now carrying on, until the grand adversary shall be finally cast down. Dreadful indeed will be the case of such as continue to fight against him. Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth; but woe to him that striveth with his maker.

2. HIS dyed garments indicate that he had been in battle; and that he was sprinkled with the blood of his enemies. Nor had he escaped wounds himself; for he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, that with his stripes we are healed. It even pleased the Lord to bruise him. The shepherd was smitten that the sheep might be healed. The scars of a conquering hero are much to his honour, especially when he has received them in the defence of the injured and helpless. The glorious captain of our salvation, even now, appears in the midst of the throne as a lamb newly slain. (a) After his resurrection, when he appeared to his doubting disciples, to dispel all their fears, he shewed them his hands and his feet. He bid unbelieving Thomas, reach his hands and put his fingers into the prints

(a) Rev. v.

of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side. (a) Our sins were the cruel hands, the pointed nails, the bitter scourges, which pierced and wounded the Lamb of God, and therefore it is said of repenting believing sinners, *They shall look upon him whom they pierced, and shall mourn for him.* (b) Our life is from his death; our health from his sickness, our ease from his pain, and our high exaltation from his humble abasement.

3. **THIS** adorable hero had not only been in battle, but he came off gloriously victorious. He is neither weary nor faint, he travels in the greatness of his strength; still mighty to save. Though he had none to second him, yet he rises victorious; he is glorious in his apparel: and speaking in the martial stile, he tramples on his enemies in his fury, and their blood is sprinkled upon his garments. He looked, and there was none to help; he wondered, and there was none to uphold; therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him.

“ Alone the dreadful race he ran,
 “ Alone the winepress trod;
 “ He dies and suffers, as a man,
 “ He rises as a God.”

HE dieth no more; death hath no more dominion; even his human soul was not

(a) John xx. 27. (b) Zech. xii. 10.

confined in the grave, nor did his flesh see corruption. All that the care and forecast of his enemies could do, to keep him prisoner in the grave, only tended to announce his resurrection more largely, and to put it beyond a doubt: all that the powers of hell could do, only made his triumph more conspicuous, and their confusion more awful. *I am he that was dead, and behold, take notice of it. I am alive for evermore; and have the keys of hell and death.* Glorious exultation. And in another place he says to his servants, *Because I live ye shall live also.*

THUS is our all-conquering Immanuel risen from the dead, and is become the first fruits of him that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive.

4. BUT he has not yet done: He must go from conquering to conquer; he must reign till all his enemies become his footstool. Like the small stone cut from the mountain without hands, which not only smote the image, but became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. (a) The war in the church, is now carrying on between Michael and the dragon, till the dragon is finally cast out of the church, and the saints shall shout victory through the

(a) Dan. ii, 35.

blood of the Lamb. Victory did I say? nay, more than victory! more than conquerors! the heavenly echo is; but it is through him that loved us.

Now the bold challenge is, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." No wonder that an innumerable company of adoring angels sing with a loud voice, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, by which he strengthens all his followers; riches, by which they are enriched for ever; wisdom, by which they are made wise to salvation; strength, by which they are strengthened in the inner man, and can do all things; honour, that they may be honoured, and had in everlasting remembrance; glory, that they may be confessed before his Father and the holy angels; blessing, that they may be blessed with the divine favour here, and hear the soul ravishing sentence, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. O they shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, even as the stars for ever. The honour of all this is justly ascribed to the ever adorable Lion, of the tribe of Judah; the ever blessed Jesus, King of kings, and Lord of lords.*

IV. I SHALL in the fourth place con-

sider the design of his coming forth in this triumphant manner.

1. UNDOUBTEDLY it is to conquer all opposition which may come against his church, let it arise from what quarter soever. There is a world of snares and difficulties, and the spirit which is in it is full of enmity against our Lord, and also against his followers. To his carnal friends he said, *The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth; because I testify that its deeds are evil.* (a)

To his disciples he said, *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own, but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore, for that reason, the world hateth you.* (b) We cannot but notice the fidelity of our blessed Lord, when enlisting his soldiers, he did not swell their hopes with a variety of tempting prospects in this world. No, he apprizes them of trials, persecutions, hatred and contempt, even death itself. But still he promises to be their kind friend, and neverfailing benefactor. *In the world says he, ye shall have tribulation; but in me ye shall have peace; be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.* (c) *Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me; and because I live, ye shall live also.* (d) *Ye shall live also!*

(a) John vii. 7. (b) John xv. 19. (c) John xvi. 33.

(d) John xiv. 19.

Precious promise! a promise, big with all necessary consolation. Nor shall the flesh, corrupt sinful nature, prevail against the champions of the cross. I know it will struggle hard for victory; but like him that was born after the flesh, it shall bow down and yield to the younger. That is, nature shall bow down to grace. If we be dead with Christ, we shall live with him.

LET us be willing that our old man should be crucified, that the body of sin may not prevail; that being risen with Christ, we may seek the things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand; so that being dead to sin, the world, the curses of the law; our divine and spiritual life may be hid with Christ in God, as the sap in winter, is hid in the tree.

AND shall satan, with his rebellious crew, prevail? No, says the apostle, I am persuaded that neither principalities nor powers shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

2. HE comes forth to display his divine majesty and power. And his appearance to John was highly expressive of the same. *His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; his eyes were as a flaming fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in the furnace; and his voice as the sounding of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword:*

and his countenance was as the sun shining in his strength. (a)

No wonder even a beloved disciple should fall at his feet as dead! For O, how unlike the man of sorrows! how unlike the prisoner at Pilate's bar? How unlike the criminal that was dragged through the streets of Jerusalem, like the vilest ruffian, nailed to the ignominious cross, and consigned to the silent grave!

HERE we see a ray of that glory which he had with his father before the world was. Now he could say, All power is given unto me both in heaven and in earth. I am he that was dead, and, behold, I am alive, and live for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death. He dies no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

HE can now say, *I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth shall never die.*

“ The rising God forsakes his tomb,
 “ Up to his Father's courts he flies;
 “ Cherub legions guard him home,
 “ And shout him welcome to the skies.”

THERE is a dignity, a heavenly grandeur in the close of the gospel by St. Mark:

(a) Rev. i. 14, 15, 15.

So after the Lord had spoken to them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. (a)

3. IN this glorious exaltation, the astonishing goodness of God appears to the human race; in which we see our nature exalted in Christ, the first fruits of a coming harvest. By man, it is true, came death, but by man came the resurrection of the dead. Death has a long and dreadful triumph; but the destroyer of that enemy has prevailed. He is risen, the first fruits, and after him shall be a glorious harvest.

ONE glorious battalion arose and accompanied him to glory. (b) And I apprehend another blessed multitude will arise in the millenium, and will set upon thrones, and will live, and reign with Christ during the thousand years of the millenium. (c)

IN this, goodness, infinite goodness, will appear, yea, it does appear in our exalted Lord, and he confirms it in saying, *Because I live, ye shall live also.* Human nature hath sinned; but human nature hath atoned, fully expiated sin; and the victory over sin, death and hell, is obtained through him who appeared in our nature, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and having purged our stains, he rose, the world to justify, and now appears for us in the midst of the throne, with the recent prints

(a) Mark xvi. 19. (b) Matt. xxvii. 52. (c) Rev. xi. 4.

of his dying love, making intercession for transgressors. O infinite goodness! infinite love! let the sound of this make the heavenly concave ring to all eternity!

YE angels! ye morning stars of light, ye saw the awful process he passed through! His agony and bloody sweat; his cross and passion on the tree. Ye saw him laid in arrest in the silent grave, and tremendous was the sight; but your ravished eyes saw him burst the barriers of the tomb.

“ Him ye beheld; our conquering God,
 “ Return with garments roll’d in blood!
 “ Ye saw, and kindled at the sight,
 “ And fill’d with shouts, the realms of light
 “ With loudest hallelujah’s meet,
 “ And fell and kiss’d his bleeding feet.”

4. **HE** comes forth an almighty conqueror, to save such as are looking to him. To save the guilty from their condemning fears. For he rose to deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. He comes to seek and to save that which was lost. He comes into the world to save sinners. But he could not save others unless he saved himself. And as the apostle justly reasons, *If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and faith is also vain.* There is no foundation for a sinner to hope in. Indeed the whole frame and structure of the gospel is built upon the resurrection, seeing his precious

death avails nothing without it. Therefore the guilty trembling soul may draw near, seeing the great High Priest is entered into the holiest, and by, or with, his own precious blood, he is able, and willing too, to save all that come to him.

To save them not only from guilt and condemnation, but from the nature and in-being of sin. His blood hath not only atoned, but by the application of the ever-blessed spirit can purge the conscience from dead works, to serve our God without fear, in holiness and righteousness all our days; it even cleanseth from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and that we may perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.

5. **BE** confident and thankful **O** ye saints, for the victory obtained for you, by him who was delivered for your offences, and raised again for your justification. He has overcome for you, and he is able and willing to overcome in you. Are you tempted? so was he. Are you afflicted? so was he. Are you poor? so was he. Are you despised? He was despised and rejected of men. Have you corruption in you? He is able to save to the uttermost, and he is equally willing. Have you death to face? and does every thing in death look awful and gloomy? Remember, he has been in the silent tomb; and he has conquered the king of terrors, the last enemy, and has triumphed over the powers of dark-

ness, so that the saints may sing, In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.

6. **LASTLY**, tremble ye that are stout-hearted, and far from righteousness. Will ye despise his agony and bloody sweat? Will ye trample under foot the Son of God? Will ye count the blood that has bought your peace a common thing! Then you will be found among his enemies; this dreadful stone will fall upon you; you make it a stone of stumbling and rock of offence. Take then the consequence; hear what he says to you, *I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth.* Now then submit to your Almighty helper, so shall all his love power and goodness be fully engaged in your behalf; that when he cometh in the clouds, you may with rapture sing, This is our God, we have waited for him, he will save us, save us for evermore.

SERMON IX.

ON THE ASCENSION.

Psalm lxxviii. 18.

THOU HAST ASCENDED ON HIGH, THOU HAST LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE: THOU HAST RECEIVED GIFTS FOR MEN; YEA, FOR THE REBELLIOUS ALSO, THAT THE LORD GOD MIGHT DWELL AMONG THEM.

SEARCH the Scriptures, said our Lord, for they testify of me. The more we read them, the more shall we be convinced of the truth of this declaration. Innumerable are the places which speak directly or indirectly of a precious Christ, especially in the book of Psalms.

THE occasion of this fine Psalm is supposed to be, the fetching of the ark from the house of *Obed-edom* to Mount Zion, 2 Sam. 6, which was conducted with great solemnity, with sacrifices and thanksgiv-

ings, in commemoration of the many deliverances which God had vouchsafed to his people in bringing them out of Egypt, through the Red Sea, and through the wilderness; the giving the Law on Mount Sinai, and the destruction of their enemies; circumstances which made very weighty impressions upon the minds of the old testament saints, and more especially such men as David, who was not only a pious, sensible worshipper of God, but also, an eminent type of the great Redeemer; as was also the ark which they were at this time conducting to its resting place.

BUT while the mind of the writer was under the divine influence, it was carried far beyond the bounds of the Jewish economy, to the triumphant ascension of the Lord of life and glory. All the triumphant successes, which crowned David's warlike achievements, fell infinitely short of the triumph of Jesus over sin, death and hell. Did chariots and horsemen attend the victories of David? Thousands of angels attended the victorious resurrection and ascension of David's Son, and David's Lord: and therefore the divine penman addresses him in the words of the text, *Thou hast ascended upon high; thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them.* As the words refer to the ascent of the ark;

we may understand them thus: The ark was the symbol of the Divine presence, and the type of our Saviour's humanity; the ark had been a considerable time in a state of captivity, being taken by the Philistines; (a) but David having overcome these stubborn enemies of God and his people, and made them tributaries to Israel; the ark was conducted to its proper station, *viz.* Mount Zion, the type of our Saviour's resurrection; Jehovah, who resided in it, had now taken or led captivity captive, that is, such as had ruled, taken and brought the ark of God into captivity, were become captives themselves; and we find David liberally dispensing gifts among the people, (b) and, like a generous conqueror, very likely his subdued enemies might partake of his bounty; so that he might be said to give gifts unto men, even the rebellious; and perhaps even these might submit to the God of Israel, that he might be glorified in their salvation; so that he might dwell among them, yea, as it is said, that he might reign in the midst of his enemies.

ALL this is grand and glorious; and worthy the power and wisdom of God; but we must look a little higher still; the apostle applies it to the triumphant ascent of our all conquering Immanuel, conquering sin, death and hell; and the heavenly gifts

(a) 1 Sam. iii. 11. (a) 2 Sam. vi. 17.

which he bestowed upon the officers of his church are infinitely superior to the gifts which David distributed either to his friends or his conquered enemies. (a)

THIS day commemorates that blessed event; and whether it is the precise day or not, it is not very material, he that regards a day let him regard it unto the Lord. I own I am partial to the seasons which bring in review the glorious events, and glorious transactions upon which our salvation depends. To attend a little to the words of the text, I shall consider,

FIRST, what is implied in his ascending.

SECONDLY, the gifts which he received, and for whom.

THIRDLY, the end for which he received and gave them.

FIRST, then, let us consider what is implied in his ascending.

1. IT implies, says the apostle, *that he descended first into the lower parts of the earth. And he that descended, is the same also that ascended far above all heavens.* This implies that our blessed Lord had a being prior to his incarnation. This is plain from many of our Lord's expressions, *I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me.* (b) *Glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the*

(a) Eph. iv. 8. (b) John vi. 38.

world was. (a) Likewise that saying, which offended the Jews so much, that they took up stones to stone him, *viz.* Before *Abraham was I am*; which they understood perfectly well to mean, that he existed before Abraham, a thought which they could not endure. To which agree the words of the apostle: *Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.* (b) I am not now proving his divinity, nor should quote such texts for that purpose.* With respect unto his divine nature I apprehend it neither comes nor goes, and therefore neither ascends nor descends, seeing he filleth all space, is in every place, and can say, “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am in the midst of them.”—But I am now speaking of that first-born of every creature, the human soul of our blessed Lord, that *Holy thing* which is called *the Son of God.* (c)

2. OUR blessed Lord finished the great work, namely, the redemption of the world, for which he descended. Hence he could say, *I have glorified thee upon earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.* And so intent was he upon the great design, that he said, *I must work the work of him*

(a) John xvii. 5. (b) 2 Cor. viii. 9. (c) Luke i. 35.

* See my Sermon on that subject.

that sent me, while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work. My meat and drink is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. (a) And what was that work? The prophet, or rather our Lord himself tells us, *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those that are bruised. To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.* (b) All this he did accomplish; the messengers of John the Baptist being eye witnesses, therefore our Lord dismissed them with this answer, "Go and shew John again those things which you do hear and see, the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (c) Moreover the prophet Daniel says of him, *that he should finish transgression, and make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness to seal up the vision, and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy.* (d)

THE sum of all is, he had to give full satisfaction to injured justice: to magnify

(a) John iv. 34. (b) Luke iv. 18. (c) Matt. xi. 5.
(d) Dan. ix. 24.

the law and provide for its honour ; so that the righteousness of the Lord might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. In his spotless life, he was to be the complete pattern ; in his doctrine, the true model which we are to imitate, all which he was in the full sense of the word ; he did all his work perfectly, so that the amazed multitude was obliged to exclaim, *He hath done all things well.*

3. HE conquered his and our enemies. *He led captivity captive.* He trod the wine press alone, and of the people there were none with him ; therefore said he, *I will tread them, that is, our enemies, in my anger, and trample them in my fury, and will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.* (a) The enemies he had to overcome were sin, satan, and death. The first he had promised to do long before, saying, *I will ransom them from the power of the grave : I will redeem them from death : O death, I will be thy plague ; O grave, I will be thy destruction ; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.* (b)

IT is true, the bodies of the saints are yet in the dust, except such as rose with our blessed Lord, and therefore are yet the prisoners of death ; but as our Lord, who

(a) Isa. lxiii. 3, 4. (b) Hos. xiii. 14.

had assumed their nature, was risen and ascended, and thereby had overcome, so all his divine seed should assuredly ascend also; the last enemy, which is death, shall be entirely destroyed. Concerning Satan, the original promise is, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.* (a) And now having spoiled *principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it,* (b) namely, his cross.

No sooner had the Lord of glory made his appearance on earth, than satan laid a scheme, in the person of Herod, to destroy him; but the plot miscarried, and satan and his miserable agent were disappointed; the wisdom of God interposing, so that the wise were taken in their own craftiness. The prince of hell then went another way to work; he was determined to make an open attack in his own person, and chose a proper time, even when our blessed Lord was faint with hunger; and a proper place, even the wilderness, where no man dwelt. Here again he was foiled in every attempt.

HE then set his trusty friends, the chief priests, scribes and pharisees to work, and herein they imagined that they had obtained their purpose; and therefore wreaked all their vengeance upon his body, by exposing him to all the pain and ignominy which

(a) Gen. iii. 15. (b) Col. ii. 15.

they could devise. But still his righteous soul stood collected in all the power of the Godhead, so that satan was still held in defiance, therefore he was resolved to collect all his hellish forces, and make one grand attack upon the cross, and at that critical moment, when the vials of divine indignation against sin fell upon the glorious sufferer. O, what an hour of darkness was that! The sun withdraws from the dreadful combat; no angel now appears; the adorable sun of righteousness sets in blood; he bears our sins, he carries our sorrows; here upon this high altar, he takes away the sins of the world; gains the compleat victory, over sin, death and hell, and in the language of triumph exclaims, *It is finished.* Satan is finally foiled, a world of ruined sinners is redeemed, and all the sufferings of the man of sorrows finally ended.

THUS he became the captain of our salvation, and *through death destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil: and delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.* Thus he became the conqueror of all his and our enemies; and even we may triumphantly sing, amidst all our temptations, trials and difficulties, *In all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.* (a)

(a) Rom. viii. 37.

4. **HAVING** thus done and suffered all for which he came into this vale of tears, he is set down at the right hand of God, where he ever liveth to make intercession. There is a peculiar grandeur in the close of Mark's gospel, relative to this very circumstance: *So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat at the right hand of God ; (a) confirming the words spoken by the eternal Father long before, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.* (b) It was a most effectual way to comfort the mournful disciples when our Lord said, *I ascend unto my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God.*

HE farther added, It is expedient for you that I go away ; for if I go not away the comforter will not come ; but if I depart, I will send him to you.

TWO glorious circumstances are inseparably connected with our Lord's ascension ; in which we are deeply interested, namely, his sending the comforter, and his making intercession for us. Here is a blessed chain of events dependent upon each other, laid down by the apostle. He begins the important enquiry, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth : Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea, rather is risen*

(a) Mark xvi. 17. . . (b) Ps. cx. 1.

again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. (a) So that we see even his death and resurrection avail nothing without his intercession. This important article was prefigured under the Jewish dispensation by the High-priest entering into the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, once a year with incense, and the blood of a victim which had been offered for the sins of the people. (b)

THE apostle beautifully comments upon that important circumstance, and observes, *Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are figures of the tree; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.* (c)

How clear a view had the prophet of this pleasing, this soul animating truth? After giving us a most affecting description of the amazing sufferings of our blessed Lord, he closes the tragic scene, thus, *He was numbered with the transgressors, and bore the sin of many, and made intercession for transgressors.* (d) A sweet truth indeed! a truth in which our consolation abounds; so that we may say, *Seeing we have a great High-priest that is passed into the heaven, Jesus the Son of God; let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

(a) Rom. viii. 34, 35. (b) Exod. xxx. 10.

(c) Heb. vii. 24. (d) Isa. liii. 12.

II. I COME to consider the gifts which it is said he received, and which the apostle says, He gave to men. As man, he received, for that very purpose, that he might give them to men. All are included in one, namely, the gift of the Holy Spirit.

1. **THE** spirit enlightens the mind, by which we see our deplorable and lost condition, by nature and practice. By this divine light we discover our darkness, and see that we have erred and strayed from the path of righteousness like lost sheep, being by nature children of wrath, even as others. By this light we see into the emptiness of the world, that it can no more satisfy us, than air can satisfy our hunger, or dust quench our thirst.

THE spirit of man is an active principle, and must seek its felicity, either in the substance or the shadow, either in the gold or the glitter; but by this heavenly illuminator we see that all is vanity and vexation of spirit. The very bible is a sealed book, till this day spring from on high opens our eyes, and then we read to profit.

THE same blessed spirit discovers the devices of satan, so that we may escape the snare of the fowler and not be taken captive at his will.

2. **THE** same heavenly agent works conviction in us, by which we feel as well as see. This is called, awaking out of sleep. Till this is the case we are little more than

speculators in religion, and that is worse than speculating in trade; for although the latter generally terminates in bankruptcy; yet sometimes the insolvent debtor recovers, and honestly clears his way; but when the former fails, he falls into endless ruin. But now, being feelingly convinced, he is in good earnest, he strives to enter the strait gate; he works while it is called to-day, well knowing the night will come when no man can work.

BEHOLD now he prayeth; before he only said his prayers, and so was satisfied, but now he wrestles with the God of Jacob, and will not go without a blessing. He breaks off his pleasing sins, and profitable sins also; or even that which gave him a cast of credit in the eyes of carnal men.

IN times past, if he heard the gospel, he heard as a critic, or else in a dull, unmeaning, formal manner; but now, he hears for eternity, well knowing that faith comes by hearing, and labours to hear so as to live. In short, his soul is athirst for God, for the living God, and nothing can satisfy him short of the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sin.

3. BY the same spirit we are enabled to believe to the saving of the soul. Great and excellent things are attributed to faith. By faith we are justified, and have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By faith we obtain promises, and indeed

we cannot receive them without faith. **By** the shield of faith we quench all the fiery darts of the enemy; we wax valiant in fight, and turn to flight the armies of the aliens. Believing in the Lord is understood by those strong expressions, *eating the flesh of Christ, and drinking his blood, without which we have no life within us.*

THE believer is passed from death unto life, the unbeliever shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. He that believeth sets to his seal that God is true, he that believeth not, makes God a liar. From this description of the matter, it is easy to see that the faith of the gospel which justifies the ungodly, works by love and purifies the heart; is not a set of tenets, or a repetition of creeds; no, it is a divine principle, it is the power of God unto salvation.

BUT no man can truly believe, any more than he can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost; and therefore stands upon the foundation laid in Zion, namely, the life and death, the resurrection and ascension of the ever adorable Redeemer.

4. **HE** gave those gifts unto his servants by which they might edify others. Hence he gave some apostles, some prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, all of which were necessary to build up the church of the living God. Not that the Almighty needs any of these, because he can carry on his own work without them. **But**

he is pleased to employ men, as well as angels, in his work ; and an high honour it is to be employed in his meanest services, if any part of his service can be deemed mean. But whomsoever he calls he fits for the work ; as different workmen are employed in building a palace, and every man is proper for his office ; so it is in the building the church of Christ, the palace of the great king of glory. All are not apostles, all are not prophets, nor is there any need they should ; there will be plenty of work for inferior officers. It is true, in the first planting of the gospel, God gave these extraordinary gifts, and there appeared a necessity for them ; as the servants of God had to go among distant nations, it was necessary that they should be capable of speaking to them in their own native language ; and for the confirmation of their faith, God gave them other miraculous gifts, particularly that of healing the sick, and curing various complaints. It is easy to see such works of mercy would conciliate the minds of the people to their doctrine. Besides, as it seemed to be the time when the powers of darkness triumphed over mankind in the most absolute manner, it was necessary that the servants of the most high should have the power of controlling them, and their human agents also. Hence our Lord said, *In my name shall they cast out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues ; they*

shall take up serpents ; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. (a)

ALL this was literally fulfilled, as we see in the acts of the apostles ; and much more is said in church history. They spake the dead into life, and the living dead ; for they had a power given them to inflict punishments, and even death upon incorrigible offenders ; so mighty, awful and various were those gifts which he bestowed upon his servants, to the terror of evil doers, and the conviction and confirmation of the faithful.

THUS did he give the ordinary gifts, without which, no flesh can be saved, and the extraordinary, for particular times and seasons, to make his mercy, power and justice known unto the sons of men.

(a) Mark xvi. 18.

SERMON X.
ON THE ASCENSION.

Psalm lxxviii. 18.

**THOU HAST ASCENDED ON HIGH, THOU
HAST LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE: THOU
HAST RECEIVED GIFTS FOR MEN;
YEA, FOR THE REBELLIOUS ALSO,
THAT THE LORD GOD MIGHT DWELL
AMONG THEM.**

HAVING considered our Lord's Ascension, and what is implied therein; and also the various gifts, both ordinary and extraordinary; I come, in the third place, to enquire, what was all this for? namely, that the Lord God might dwell among the sons of men, even among such as were once rebellious.

1. To shew that he is fully and freely reconciled through him, who died to reconcile all things to himself by the blood of his cross. Through the original offence,

the Deity had left his habitation, and this was the only way by which he could return again. As a proof of his goodness and reconciliation, he gives rain and fruitful seasons, and causes the earth to yield her increase, which otherwise was cursed for man's offence; but he that spared not his own son, but freely gave him up for us all, with him he freely giveth us all things; all things which pertain to life and godliness, therefore, his gospel is freely preached to all.

THE Lord sends his servants, with the message of reconciliation into the highways and hedges, to call the outcasts of the human race to come in. Their language is, *Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see, ask for the old paths and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.* (a) *For the spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.* (b) *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner; but that the sinner turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?* (c) All this, and much more which might be quoted, is the language of

(a) Jer. iv. 14. (b) Rev. xxii. 17. (c) Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

reconciliation, and the pathetic breathings of the God of love.

2. **HE** dwells with, and in, his people, that he may protect and defend them. Many are the enemies, snares and temptations which lie in their way; and therefore they stand in need of the Lord to be their strength and their refuge, a very present help in time of trouble.

IF the Lord's church is *a vineyard, even a vineyard of red wine, he takes care to water and keep it night and day.* (a) If his church is a city; *he is a wall of fire round about her, and the glory in the midst of her.* (b) What enemy can prevail while the Lord God fights for Israel? All the kings of Canaan may collect their forces against Israel, and use all their craft and power; but what will it avail? so long as God fights for his people the enemy shall not prevail. (c) If God be with us, who can be against us with success? For who is he that can harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?

DAVID was a man of war, and knew how to form epithets from the weapons used therein, especially weapons of defence; and what a lovely group does he collect together in the beginning of the eighteenth psalm? *I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my*

(a) Isa. iii. 27. (b) Zech. ii. 5. (c) Josh. x.

fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower. Indeed this is the tenor of the whole psalm, and the loftiest language is made use of in describing his interposition in behalf of his servant. *It was then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken because he was wroth.* Read the psalm throughout. But was all this for David alone? No, surely; the Lord is a refuge for the oppressed, whosoever they are; a refuge in time of trouble. (a) Yea, he is a strong hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth, and owneth them that trust in him. (b)

3. THE Lord dwells among his people that he may comfort them. They need his consolation in various scenes in human life. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth out of them all; and while they are in them, he walks with his servants in the fire, saying, *Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not afraid, I am thy God. Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not*

(a) Ps. ix. 9. (b) Neh. i. 7.

be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. (a) *Fear not ; for thou shalt not be put to shame. For thy maker is thine husband : the Lord of hosts is his name ; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth shall he be called. For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment ; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer. O thou afflicted and not comforted, tossed with a tempest and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.—In righteousness shalt thou be established ; thou shalt be far from oppression ; for thou shalt not fear ; and from terror ; for it shall not come nigh thee.* (b) Such is the charming language, by which God comforts the old testament saints, and much more might be quoted to the same effect.

BUT does he speak less encouraging in the new testament? No, in nowise. *Let not your heart be troubled ; ye believe in God, believe also in me.* (c) *I will not leave you comfortless ; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more ; but ye see me ; and because I live,*

(a) Isa. xliii. 1, 2. (b) Isa. liv. 4—15.

(c) John xiv. 1.

ye shall live also. (a) If a man love me he will keep my words; and my father will love him, and we will come to him, and we will make our abode with him. (b) Here again we have the words of eternal life. What the sun is to the natural world, that Jesus is to his church, namely, health, life and light. And how often does he say, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee? So, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride will thy God, O believer, rejoice over thee. And what can be greater comfort than to hear him say, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (c)

4. **HE** dwells among his people, to strengthen and establish them. For as the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord, so he is their strength in the time of trouble. Times of trouble they may expect, from various quarters; they may expect them from the world, from satan, and not unfrequently from professors of religion; for many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth out of them all. How sweetly does David sing of this, in that fine psalm the eighteenth? *It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect. He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by*

(a) John xiv. 18, 19. (b) John xiv. 23.

(c) 2 Cor. vj. 16.

mine arms. For thou girdest me with strength unto the battle; thou hast subdued under me those that rose up against me. And hence it was, that the great apostle could say, I can do all things through Christ strengthening me. So may every believer say.

WE wonder at the military exploits of many of the Israelites, how they waxed valiant in fight; so that one could chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight; but, then, we are to consider, it was the great Jehovah was their strength and salvation; and that around and beneath them was his everlasting arms, otherwise we see in many places they were weak or weaker than their enemies. (a) So long as the Lord is in his church, she is like Mount Zion, that can never be moved; for no weapon formed against her shall ever prosper, and every tongue that riseth up in judgment he will condemn. Thus God is the strength of their heart; and will be their portion for ever.

5. THE Lord will dwell with his people that he may be their glory. As the sun is the glory of this natural world, and it would be a dreary region, a mere chaos without his lucid beams, so is the church like a city forsaken, or a house without an inhabitant, without the divine Shekinah. Indeed he

(a) Num. xiv. 44, 45. Josh. vii. 5.

is the light of the heavenly world, his church triumphant; and if so, how much more needful that he should be the light of his militant church? and, as one of our poets sings,

“ Thy shining grace can cheer
 “ This dungeon where I dwell ;
 “ ’Tis paradise when thou art here,
 “ If thou depart, ’tis hell.”

HEREIN lies the difference between a believer and a formalist; the former can be satisfied with nothing short of the presence of God; the latter is well satisfied in doing what he calls, his duty. In the dark and cloudy day, the believer’s cry is, *Lord, why hidest thou thyself in the times of trouble? O lift upon me the light of thy countenance.* But the formalist says, God, I thank thee, I am not as other men are; I have a large catalogue of good things to boast of; but the true believer glories in his God, and in him alone. He can plead the divine promise, wherein the Lord hath said, *I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people;* (a) also, the precious declaration of our Saviour, *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be.* (b) Such is the honour which God confers upon his saints,

(a) 2 Cor. vi. 16.

(b) John xii. 26.

nor will any thing less satisfy them, than Christ in them the hope of glory!

5. BUT how astonishing is all this? Well might the royal adorer enquire, *But will God indeed dwell on earth! Behold the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, much less this house that I have builded.* Yes, he will dwell with man; for the soul of man is the breath of the Almighty. It is

“ A beam ethereal sully’d and absorb’d,
“ Tho’ sully’d and dishonour’d, still divine.”

AND therefore the Almighty declares, *The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.* (a) Well might the royal psalmist exclaim, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him!

LET this encourage every sincere seeker of redemption, to *come boldly to the throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*

EVERY declaration in scripture, every promise, every gracious invitation is spirit and life to the believing soul. O! the astonishing love of God to fallen man. What tongue can tell! What heart can

() Isa. lxvi. 1, 2.

conceive the immensity thereof! Well might a worthy divine exclaim, "If all the water of the sea was ink, and all the piles of grass were pens, and every star a scribe, they would fail in describing a thousandth, thousandth part of my ever loving and ever lovely Lord Jesus." Such warm and pathetic effusions, are looked upon as wild reveries by our cool, philosophical gentlemen; but we find much of this sort in the book of psalms, and in the song of Solomon, and other experimental parts of God's word. It were much to be desired that professing people, and more especially ministers, were possessed more of the good old puritanical, I would rather say, the primitive, spirit which appears in the new testament writers.

WHAT did the great apostle feel when he said, *Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ. (a) For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause. For the love of Christ constraineth us. (b)*

I sincerely join with one of our poets who sings aloud,

(a) Phil. iii. 8.

(b) 2 Cor. v. 13, 14.

“ Oh ye cold hearted frozen formalists !
 “ On such a theme, 'tis impious to be calm ;
 “ Passion is reason, transport temper here.”

WE need not wonder at reading that the lame man that was healed at the gate Beautiful, that he should walk with them into the temple *leaping and praising God.* (a) What noble enthusiasm did David feel when he cried out in sweet exclamation, *Wake up, my glory ; wake, lute and harp ! I myself will awake right early.*

6. **HE** bestows these gifts unto men that the divine donor may be glorified. Hence he saith, *This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise.* (b) All the works of God do praise him. Even the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. And our blessed Lord, speaking of the spirit, whom he stiles the comforter, which he would send, says, *He shall glorify me : for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.* (c) In the psalms we find every thing rational or irrational, animate or inanimate, celestial or terrestrial, is pressed into this noble service to form one grand chorus ; and after all the creation is called upon to the heavenly concert, it is added, *Let every thing that hath breath praise the*

(a) Acts iii. 6. (b) Isa. xliii. 21. (c) John xvi. 14.

Lord.. Praise ye the Lord. (a) Indeed, praise is the highest part of the worship of God that we have, or can have any knowledge of. *Who so offereth praise, saith the great Jehovah, glorieth me.* (b) Ten lepers were cleansed; but one is taken particular notice of, that finding what was done turned back and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell at the feet of his divine benefactor, giving thanks to him.

IN short; if we are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, what is it for? *that we may shew forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.* (c) Thus we find the whole process of redemption hath these two grand ends in view, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men.

LASTLY, we see how much depends upon the glorious undertaking of our ever adorable Redeemer. In him every attribute sweetly harmonizes; and all contribute glory to the deity, and all the comfort and happiness which a world of ruined sinners stand in need of. What amazing encouragement does this give every penitent sinner? The number and magnitude of his sins need be no obstacle in his way, seeing it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came

(a) Psa. cl. 6. (b) Ps. l. 23. (c) 1 Pet. ii. 9.

into the world to save sinners, even the chief of sinners. The Son of man came to seek, and save that which was lost. To our unspeakable comfort this adorable God-man receiveth sinners. For,

“ The Lord, in the day of his anger, did lay
“ Our sins on the lamb, and he bore them away.”

See a lewd Magdalene weeping at his feet, but is received by him who said, *Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee.* See him bring salvation to the house of a covetous Zacheus. See a persecuting Saul taken into his service, and never once upbraided. In short, whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely. Him that cometh to me, says our Immanuel, I will in no wise cast out.

BUT we must remember, this tried stone, this precious corner stone, will be a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to all the disobedient; to such as prefer either their sins, or their own righteousness to the saviour of the world. Indeed this is the condemnation that light is come, but they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. If there had been no Saviour, I apprehend the human race would have been clear, except Adam and Eve; at least the sin of rejecting the Saviour would not be required at their

hands: as our Lord says, If I had not done among them the works that no other man did, they had not had sin; but now there is no excuse; no palliation, they are without excuse. Behold this child is set for the rising and falling of many; to many his second coming shall have a dreadful appearance; they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall wail because of him. For God will assuredly wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalps of such as go on in their sin. Such will cry to rocks and mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb; but all in vain.

For every island, sea and mountain,
 Heaven and earth shall flee away;
 All who hate him, must, ashamed,
 Hear the trump proclaim the day.
 Come to judgment, come away,
 Stand before the Son of man.

BUT O, it is too late; the door is shut; and nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation from the Lord. For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble. The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the people that forget God. And the smoke of their torment shall ascend up for ever and ever. How inconceivably dread-

ful is the thought of everlasting burnings? Who indeed can dwell therein? When the great day of his wrath shall come, who shall be able to stand? Beware of treating these awful thoughts as trifles, or with carelessness. We may trifle while every thing is serious, said once a great man. Indeed, it is so. Time is serious in passing away; death and eternity are serious in coming on; Christ is serious in his calls and invitations, as well as in his sufferings and death; and we may be assured that he will be serious when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. Provoke him not to laugh at your calamity, nor mock when your feet cometh, O kiss the Son, lest he be angry with you, and swear in his wrath, ye shall not enter into his rest.

O YE heirs of glory! followers of the lamb! you see the foundation of all your hopes is in the love of God, manifested in the glorious undertakings of your friend and advocate. O love him, cleave to and confide in him. He will help you; he does help you, and his grace shall be sufficient for you. If ye love him keep his commandments. Follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes. He has passed through this world of woe, and knows what pain and poverty, shame and temptation mean; yea, he has passed through the gloomy region of death,

and knows what it means. He can feel for you, and having overcome all, is ascended to plead for you at his Father's right hand. He is now your life, your peace and comfort; as such, cleave unto him with all your soul, so that when Christ, who is your life, shall appear, ye also shall appear with him in glory.



TO THE READER.

THERE are two names given to the blessed season, which the ensuing Sermons refer to, not well understood by many persons who may read them. The one is, Pentecost. When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they, the Disciples, were all with one accord in one place. The word comes from the Greek Πεντηκοστή. That is, fifty, because it was kept fifty days after the passover, in commemoration of the Law being given on Mount Sinai; and was one of the three grand Festivals at which every man was to appear at Jerusalem. See Exod. xxiii. 17, xxxiv. 23. Deut. xvi. 16. It is also called the Feast of Harvest; because it was the beginning of harvest, when the first fruits were offered, with this humiliating language, A Syrian ready to perish was my Father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation great and mighty. (a)

It is also called the Feast of Weeks, (b)

(a) Deut. xxvi. 5.

(b) Exod. xxxiv. 22.

because of the numbering the seven weeks from the passover.

AT this feast there was always a very great concourse of Jews, as we read Acts ii. 5—12, and this made the Apostle haste, that if it were possible, for him to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost; doubtless, that he might have the greater opportunity of addressing his countrymen. For every messenger of Jesus is willing to lay hold of every opportunity of doing all the good he can.

WE find our blessed Lord attended all these feasts, partly for example, and partly for the same reason of his servant Paul, namely, to have the greater probability of doing good to the needy children of men. Besides, as all these feasts were of Divine appointment, our blessed Lord was to be a perfect model in fulfilling all righteousness, and all righteous Institutions; even those of human appointment; and therefore he attended the Feast of Dedication, instituted by Judas Maccabeus, when he purified the Temple, after it had been polluted by the idolatry of Antiochus. (a) Indeed it is well to attend to every ordinance which is countenanced in the New Testament; for we often need to be put in mind of these things, in which our future bliss is concerned.

(a) John x. 22. Maccab. iv. 52, 54, 55.

IN our country, for some centuries past, the day above referred to, has been called Whitsunday; because it is said to have been a general time of baptizing the Catechumens, and after their baptism, they put on white garments, signifying that they had put off the old man, and put on the new, and that they were washed from all their impurities. But I apprehend that custom must have taken place when the power of religion was upon the decline, if it had not well nigh ceased; we find no intimation of any such custom in the Acts of the Apostles.

FROM thence I suppose it came into the minds of creed makers to assert, that baptism is regeneration, and that the child is to say, "In my baptism, I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheriter of the kingdom of God." From the same principle it is that multitudes think that receiving the Lord's Supper is eating the flesh and drinking the blood of Christ. How careful ought we to be, not to put the shadow for the substance, or put the emblems for the things emblemized!

SERMON XI.

ON THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

John xiv. 16, 17.

AND I WILL PRAY THE FATHER, AND HE SHALL GIVE YOU ANOTHER COMFORTER, WHICH SHALL ABIDE WITH YOU FOR EVER; EVEN THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH; WHOM THE WORLD CANNOT RECEIVE.

SUCH is the charming, animating language of our blessed Lord to his poor disconsolate disciples, before he left them. They had forsaken all to follow him; perhaps not from the purest motives; for it is plain that their notions run very high on worldly matters, and from thence were induced at first, to become followers of Christ. It even appears that they had indulged those wild chimeras in their last journey to Jerusalem, when a contention arose among

them who should be the greatest. (a) And that may appear the more strange, because our Lord had all along warned them against any thing of the kind, and frequently intimated to them, that his disciples must not expect either riches, or honour in this life; for that he, their master, did not come to reign in this world, but to die for sinners; and that he was now going to Jerusalem to be mocked, scourged, spit upon: and that finally he should be crucified. These were heavy tidings on various accounts. All their towering expectations were blasted, and we may suppose, that the holy life and miracles of our blessed Lord, had attached his person to them; so that they found much natural affection to him.

THEREFORE the thoughts of his leaving them sat exceeding heavy upon them, and filled their minds with sorrow. Hence it is that our Lord, forgetting as it were the awful sufferings, which were just at hand, gives them the most comfortable discourse that was ever delivered, contained in the chapter from whence the text is taken, and the two which follow it. *Let not your heart be troubled,* says the friend of sinners, *ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to*

(a) Mark ii. 4.

prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself. If a thousand volumes were written to comfort these mournful disciples, they would not equal these three inimitable verses. And what does he require of them? only to love him, and give the proof of it.

IF ye love me, keep my commandments; and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter which shall abide with you for ever, even the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive. He tells them in plain terms who the other comforter is, namely, the ever blessed Spirit, the divine paraclete, which they waited for at Jerusalem, called emphatically in the text, the *Spirit of Truth*, the true comforter, which shall abide with the church for ever.

BUT it may be here said, Was not the Spirit given long before this time? Were not the patriarchs and prophets inspired by the Holy Spirit? They were undoubtedly so; but in a much more limited sense; the Spirit was now poured out in a more extraordinary manner, and extensive measure, than ever it was before, and for nobler purposes. Even the promises to the Old Testament Church run much in a temporal strain, consisting of corn, wine and oil. But now the blessings were of a superior nature, even the power of God to an endless life.

MOREOVER, under the law, the promises are much confined to the Israelitish nation; but now it was to all that were afar off, even to every nation, so that the words of Joel were fulfilled, wherein God says, *I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh*; and therefore called his servants to go into all the world and preach his gospel to every creature.

I MUST now call your attention to the text, and to the doctrine which this day commemorates.

FIRST, I shall enquire how the Holy Spirit acts the part of a comforter.

SECONDLY, Why the world will not receive this Comforter?

THIRDLY, Consider why we should receive the heavenly guest.

FIRST, I am to enquire why the Divine Spirit may be stiled, *the Comforter*. I shall here illustrate this important character by a few plain similies.

1. **SUPPOSE** we were born blind, and were necessitated to take a difficult journey? How discouraging would such situation be? In such a case who would act the part of a comforter? Surely any one that could give us sight. That is exactly to the point in hand. We are dark and blind, as to the things which belong to our peace; but the Holy Spirit opens our eyes, discovers our own darkness, and the emptiness of the world, the devices of satan, and the

mercy of God in Christ Jesus; or, as the Apostle nervously expresses it, *God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, and hath given us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* (a) Also, our blessed Lord said, *When he, the Spirit of Truth is come, he shall guide you into all truth.*

SUCH a guide we certainly need, or we shall miss our way. But as many as are led by the spirit of God they are the sons of God; and being thus led shall go by a right way to a city of habitation. This was emblemised by the cloud which conducted the Israelites through the wilderness; it was not only a guide, but a cooling cloud by day, to screen them from the vehement heat, and gave them cheering light by night.

2. BUT supposing we had light, yet if we had no strength, we could not accomplish our journey. In such a case who would act the part of a comforter? doubtless, he that could restore strength to our relaxed limbs, and vigor to our exhausted spirits, by which we might be enabled to pursue our way with cheerfulness and alacrity. Such is our case; we have no might or power of our own. Man is often called a worm, a flower, even grass; and his life

(a) 2 Cor. iv. 6.

a vapor; all which shew his native weakness.

AND yet, great things must be done by, and in, this worm, this flower, this grass; and how must they be done? How? he must be strengthened by the spirit's might in the inner man; and hence the word *παρακλητος*, rendered comforter, also signifies a conformer or strengthener; and we see how this character was verified in the apostle Peter.

IN the highpriest's hall, he was a flower all blighted and withered; but being endued with this power from on high, at the day of pentecost, he stood like a stately oak, or like a cedar unshaken.

HE had now received not the spirit of fear; but of power, love and a sound mind. Thus it is with all who receive the heavenly paraclet, who go out in the strength of the Lord God, and who make mention of his name in truth and sincerity.

FOR he giveth power to the weak, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. They shall mount up with wings as an eagle; they shall run without wearying, they shall walk without fainting.

3. SUPPOSING we were condemned for any heinous crime, and fast bound in prison, and in awful expectation of the day of execution; who would perform the office of a comforter? He who would inform us that an ample estate was fallen to us? No. He

that would treat us with an elegant entertainment? No. He that would present us with a suit of splendid apparel? No, we should be ready to say to all such, miserable comforters are ye all. But, should a person come authorised to bring the king's pardon to the prisoner, would not such an one be thought a comforter? undoubtedly. Such a comforter is the ever blessed spirit of God, by witnessing with the believer's spirit that he is a child of God.

Now the horrors of everlasting punishment are over, and the bitterness of the second death is past; there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, while the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given to them. The man can say, I confessed my sin unto the Lord, and he forgave the iniquity of my sin.

4. **SUPPOSE** you were a leper, and under the Mosaic dispensation; the disorder was not only loathsome to the person himself, but to the whole community; and therefore he was excluded human society, and was obliged to live in a separate dwelling. Pray who could act the part of a comforter to such a miserable being? Verily none but one that could remove his disorder. Now, O sinner, such is thy case; but here is a purifier; one that can sprinkle clean water upon thee; and make thee clean; that can cleanse thee from all filthiness of flesh and

spirit; yea, that can make thee pure in heart, so shalt thou see the face of God, with comfort and delight, in the realms of eternal day. If we live after the flesh we shall die; but if we through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, we shall live for evermore.

5. **SUPPOSING** we were famishing with hunger, just ready to perish; upon whom should we look as a comforter? Surely to him that should richly supply us with all needful sustenance. In this, the ever blessed Spirit acts the part of a Comforter, by bringing to us the bread of Life. He shall testify of me, said our dear Saviour, he shall take of mine and give to you. All that a precious Christ has done for sinners must be applied by the ever blessed Spirit. Without his divine influences even our most approved morality is only like the vision of the dry bones; *bone came to its bone, and the sinews and flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them above; but there was no breath in them.* (a) Therefore, while that is the case, we are not happy: something is still wanting, and must be so till we receive the breath of life. The joy in the Holy Spirit excels all other consolations, as much as light excels darkness.

6. **I MIGHT** multiply similies and comparisons *ad infinitum*. This heavenly Com-

(a) Ezek. xxxvii. 8.

forter will be with us in all time of our tribulation, in all time of our wealth, in the hour of death, and in the great day of judgment. He shall abide with you for ever. That divine paraclet may well be stiled *the Comforter*, emphatically so, for all other delights will stay with us but for a little space; they will scarcely see us out of the harbour; but will certainly leave us to toil with the waves of the wide ocean. But this blessed companion will never leave us nor forsake us; and oftentimes sheds its charming influence in the soul when in the greatest straits and difficulties, as is manifest in the saints in times of heavy afflictions, in their last conflicts with death, even the martyrs found it so in their dreadful torments: yea still their heavenly consolations out balanced their pains to the astonishment of their tormentors, which realizes the power of religion above all we can conceive. O blessed spirit of promise, seal us unto the day of eternal redemption.

II. BUT notwithstanding the many gracious offices which this heavenly agent does for the children of men, the world will not receive him. Nothing can be a greater proof of the fall than this stupid perverseness in mankind.

1. BY the world, here, we are to understand the obstinate and disobedient part of the human race, of which our Saviour speaks, when he says to his carnal friends,

The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify that its deeds are evil. (a) And in that divine prayer for his disciples and followers, of whom he says, *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world; the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. (b)* Marvel not if the world hate you; it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world the world would love you; but because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Likewise, in St. John's epistle, *We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one. (c)* In all which places, and many more, the term world means the obstinate, disobedient part of mankind, in whom the carnal mind is found which is enmity against God.

2. Now this world is quite ignorant of God and the things of God; and this ignorance is the source of all their blunders. When our Lord was warning his disciples of the persecutions that they should meet with, namely, that they should be put out of the synagogues; yea, the time would come, that whosoever killed them would think that he did God service. *These things, saith he, will they do, because they know not the Father nor me. (d)* And the apos-

(a) John vii. 6. (b) John xvii. (c) 1 John i. 5, 19.
(d) John xvi. 3.

the speaking of the things of the Spirit, observes, which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. (a) Now the men referred to, were skilful enough in other things, in abstruse science, in politics, and the stratagems of war, and various languages; but were ignorant of God and the things of God. It is still the same with all natural men; they receive not the things of the spirit of God, neither do they know them because they are spiritually discerned. This censure does not fall upon the rash, or the profligate part of the human race only; but even upon the candid enquirer after the things of God till enlightened from above, as we see in the case of Nicodemus. When our Lord stated the new birth unto him, he cried out in astonishment, *how can these things be?* (b) The refined Athenians were as ignorant as the Jewish Rabbi, when the Apostle preached Jesus and the resurrection unto them, they mocked him as a senseless babler, and would hear him no longer.

3. **THE** world is full of enmity against the blessed Spirit of Truth, and that is the source of all that violence and cruelty which has raged against true religion, from Cain, the first human murderer, down to the last persecutor which has existed. And there-

(a) 1 Cor. ii. 8.

(b) John iii. 9.

fore, he that is born after the flesh will persecute him that is born of the Spirit. It is the old spirit of rebellion which was in the first murderer. And if it is under any restraint, either by wholesome laws, or the tie of natural affection, or any secret cause which the mercy of God may lay in the way; yet, there is a secret dislike at the bottom, to the heart-searching work of the Spirit. For they who are after the flesh will mind the things of the flesh; their love and affections will cleave to them, but there is a deadness to the things of the Spirit; so that they do not hunger and thirst after them, any more than a dead man thirsts for the living spring, or longs for an entertainment.

WE see this in our nearest friends; they will converse freely upon indifferent things, as trade, politics, war, agriculture, or any thing but serious, experimental religion.

IN this often-times we find either a pointed opposition, or profound silence; or if they carry their compliance so far as to assent and consent, it is easy to observe that it is mere constraint, and does not sit easy; it is not their element, the stream has met with an obstruction, it does not flow freely. The learned world find innumerable objections against the work of the spirit; it does not accord with their system of reason, and refined researches; they must have demonstration for every thing,

or it is rejected with learned scorn, as being fit for nothing but idiots, porters and wash-women. The plodding busy, drudges in trade and commerce cannot receive the Comforter; they see no prospect of the increase of wealth; which is their chief good. Did the promised Comforter assure them of thousands of gold and silver, increase of lands and cattle, it would engage their attention; but as it leads them to him that had not where to lay his head, he has no form nor comeliness, nor is there any beauty that they should desire him.

THE gay dissipated world hold every thing belonging to the Spirit quite needless; very unsuitable to their turn and disposition. Divine things may suit the sick, the aged and the gloomy; they may suit cloisters, workhouses, infirmaries and almshouses; but quite out of character to the young, the sprightly, the wellbred, especially people of fortune who can enjoy life.

THE honourable man of the world looks down with sovereign contempt upon the work of the Spirit. There is nothing said concerning titles and honours; no glittering stars and garters, the dignity of stile and honour of precedency. The Spirit leads in the dull path of self denial and the cross; the low creeping road of humility, patience and resignation; putting up with affronts, forgiving injuries, a mean spirited life indeed! What man of honour will deign

to cast an eye into such an inauspicious region? But then, I would say to such, do not profess yourselves to be the servants of him who was despised and rejected of men, and had not where to lay his weary head!

THE religious world care as little for the blessed spirit as any of the former. They thank God, they are not as other men; they are free from gross, scandalous immoralities, attend their place of worship, pay their debts, live honestly and quietly among their neighbours, and therefore all is well; for if that will not do, they know not what will; therefore, they hold Christ and his salvation, the divine operations of the Spirit in as little estimation as did their predecessors, the scribes and pharisees, in the days of old. All these rejected the bleeding Ransomer of the nations, and in the general continue to do so still; in this respect, as it was in the beginning, is now, and we must believe it will continue to be so till the glorious millenium shall take place, then, indeed, all shall bow to him who bowed his head upon the cross.

As for the common herd of sensualists, strange as it may seem, yet many of these are brought to the knowledge of the truth much sooner than the classes described above. It was so in the days of our Saviour. The poor had the gospel preached to them, and many of them received it; and even

still the poor in this world are chosen to be rich in faith, and heirs of eternal life. There may be here and there one of another class, but in the general they are of this description, although sadly too few.



SERMON XII.

ON THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

John xiv. 16, 17.

AND I WILL PRAY THE FATHER, AND HE SHALL GIVE YOU ANOTHER COMFORTER, WHICH SHALL ABIDE WITH YOU FOR EVER; EVEN THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH; WHOM THE WORLD CANNOT RECEIVE.

BUT before I enter upon the third proposition, I must not pass over another class of mankind who, although they profess much love and veneration for Christ, and have him frequently in their mouths, will string together a number of pretty epithets, will call him a dear Jesus, a precious Christ, with a jingle of highsounding phrases; and will ring the changes of his blood and righteousness a thousand times over; and yet

there may be dead formality through the whole.

IT is not of repeating the endearing name of Jesus, which makes us spiritual; but it is Christ in us, the hope of glory, which constitutes christians indeed; but how can this be done except by, or through, the influences of the ever blessed spirit of God!

THERE is a sort of orthodox stile in great vogue among some who profess religion. They will speak of the fall of man; yea, not only speak, but earnestly contend for it; and yet there is much reason to fear that they are strangers to the very doctrine which they contend for. So in like manner they speak highly, very highly of all the offices of Christ, and all they say may be strictly true, and yet it may be mere system; nay, it may be the form of sound words, and yet the speaker may be as destitute of the experimental part, as a pillar of marble or brass upon which the good words may be inscribed.

THIS gospel formality is what we all ought to be aware of, who are in the habit of hearing the gospel, or reading evangelical books, lest there should be a resting in the letter; a being satisfied with the form of sound words. It has been the downfall of pure religion in every age and country.

MINISTERS of every denomination have great need to take heed, both of themselves and their doctrine, lest they stumble here,

or rest satisfied with a set of sound expressions without the power of an endless life. What can be a sounder form of words than what is called the Apostle's Creed? and yet it is to be lamented, that numbers repeat it, and have no more sense of it than a poor papist has of his Latin prayers. I reckon the Litany one of the finest, mere, human compositions that was ever penned, taking it upon the whole; and yet, alas! it is to be feared, that it is repeated over and over by multitudes with no more feeling than a parrot feels the words she is taught to articulate.

BUT is there not a danger of ministers getting into a dead form, as well as the hearers? Indeed there is; if we get into a kind of indolent common place way, and barely doing only what we cannot help; or if we are aiming at popularity, or in any wise seeking our own; then we preach ourselves, and not Christ Jesus the Lord.

Now the receiving the heavenly paraclete will happily prevent all the evils which I wish to deprecate, and without which, there is no avoiding dry formality, let the system be what it may. Let it be the *national* establishment, or any body of Dissenters, let them be *Calvinists*, or *Arminians*; for there are dead formalists in both parties; I see it, I lament it; I lift up my voice against it, I cry to God against it; and while it is thus, the professor is but the

walking coffin of a dead soul; and what are called churches, are like houses without inhabitants; or like the prophet's vision of the dry bones; they were collected together into human forms, but there was no breath in them. No, they still lay like the slain in the street till the $\pi\pi$ the breath, or Spirit, as the same word is rendered in the 14 verse, came into them, and then they lived and stood upon their feet, as men alive and prepared for action. (a)

NOR is every ranting enthusiast under the influence of the heavenly Comforter. I have seen enough to convince me of that. Great numbers of this description have appeared for a time, and too many have been like a meteor, or a blaze of straw; and others have been very much wanting in the passive part of religion; they have been impatient, if any thing has opposed them; and very censorious against such as could not exactly agree with them.

Now we are exhorted, To try the spirits whether they be of God; and for a very good reason; if it is of God, it will be like its author. *Learn of me*, said the pattern of perfection, *for I am meek and lowly in heart*. O yes, let patience have its perfect work. That compleat portrait of genuine religion, the thirteenth of the first of Corinthians, runs all in the pas-

(a) Ezek. xxxvii. 8—11.

sive strain. We certainly may be formal in noise and tumult as well as in a more silent way; and therefore let every one seriously and honestly examine his own frame, spirit and temper, so shall he have rejoicing in himself and not in another.

I BELIEVE many have been awfully mistaken on this head, and therefore we must ever attend to that sure mark which our Lord has laid down, *By their fruits, ye shall know them.* *

III. I COME now to enquire why we must receive this heavenly guest. Indeed, I have indirectly shewed the reasons already; and therefore I must walk the ground lightly over again.

1. IF it is the office of this Comforter to

* I think I shall never forget what that venerable man of God, Mr. Whitfield said, to a hot zealot, the first Conference I had the honour to attend in the year 1761, at Spitalfields Chapel, in London. The person Mr. Whitfield address'd, was a high professing Clergyman, who came to the Conference, and who appeared all zeal and activity; but in the course of conversation, he began to shew that his talk was far from being the pure flame of love; yet he avow'd it was all the love of God in his heart, and talk'd very loud. Mr. Whitfield, as I recollect, put his hand upon the gentleman's head, and said, *My dear man, you are mistaken; you have the love of God in your head; but not in your heart.* And it is to be feared it was so; for all was like a flash of water from a lock, it was over soon, for he soon took his leave of us, even in a few months; nor do I remember ever hearing of him since. In short whether we be noisy or otherwise; we may be formal: but let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.

open our eyes, to turn us from darkness to light, to shine into our hearts; then it is needful that we should have this Divine Illuminator, this Holy Director, that he may shew us what we are, and also, guide us into all truth, that he would lead the blind by a way which they know not; that he would still conduct them in paths they have not known, that he would make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. How many dark dispensations have the children of God to go through? and how many darker temptations from the enemy? In many of these, human advice fails, and not the star of a promise, or a ray of direction can they see in the hemisphere of God's word. What need of this infallible instructor, to lead them by a right way to a city of habitation? This candle of the Lord must search our inward parts, that we may discover more into that chaos, that abyss of fallen nature, so that we may see the amazing depth of iniquity which divine grace saves us from; also, the exceeding riches of that grace which is in Christ Jesus manifested to ruined sinners, the glory of which must redound to the author of all our mercies.

2. We have no assurance of our divine acceptance, but by the blessed Spirit; for even the word is a dead letter without the Spirit. But the word and Spirit are two infallible witnesses, whose testimony will

avail; for if the Spirit witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, the word will corroborate the same. And how needful is this for our comfort through this sorrowful region, to give us an expected end? This is a matter of high importance indeed, and made one of the sweet singers in our Israel cry out

Dost thou not dwell in all thy saints,
And seal the heirs of heaven?
When wilt thou banish my complaints,
And shew my sins forgiven!

3. **THE** believer must be quickened by this Spirit of Life; for he cannot quicken himself. The life of God in the soul of man is something like the fire of the altar, it must never go out: therefore this refining fire must descend from above, that all the sacrifices of prayer and praise may come up with acceptance upon that altar which sanctifies the gift. Every thing in religion requires life; as under the law, all the sacrifices were to be led to the altar alive, or they would have been rejected; in reference to which, the apostle says, I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

4. **THE** Divine Spirit must be received, in order that we may be made holy. He must sit as a refiner's fire, that he may purify

all the sons of Levi, all the servants of the living God, so that they and their offerings may be acceptable to God at all times. Indeed we are no farther happy than we are holy; for all unholy tempers are most assuredly unhappy tempers. Nor can we enter the new Jerusalem without a preparation for the inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away, reserved for holy souls who are sanctified by the Spirit of holiness, and made meet partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. For blessed and holy is he who hath part in the first resurrection, of such the second death shall have no power; but they shall reign as king's and priests with God and the Lamb for ever.

5. WE must receive the Comforter as a spirit of intercession; for if an apostle could say, We know not what to pray for as we ought, well may we; but the Spirit will help our infirmities with groanings that cannot be uttered, and he that searcheth the heart knoweth what is the mind of his own spirit, and maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. That is the prayer which is acceptable to God, which comes from the groaning heart. In this manner the psalmist prayed; in this manner Abraham, Jacob, and Moses prayed; and in this manner we must pray if we intend to prevail. But, in order to this, we must have the spirit of grace and sup-

plication, that we may pray with the Spirit, and with the understanding. Prayer is the elevation of the heart to God. Dead forms will avail nothing. It is neither a book, nor the want of a book which makes the business formal; it is a set of dry words without spirit or life, a sort of resting in the *opus operatum*.*

6. IT is necessary that this blessed Spirit should seal the heirs of salvation. The sealing, is making a thing sure; and truly we cannot make our calling and election too sure. It is well to have the great and precious promises sealed upon our hearts, that they may encourage us in the time of trial, in the dark and cloudy day; so that in a season of trial our cry may be, remember the word upon which thou hast caused thy servant to hope; the staff of a promise is of great use; and by which we may pass safely through the dark valley of the shadow of death, and meet a rising sun, which shall never set more. By this divine signet the eternal Jehovah is sealed our Father and our God. We are his adopted children, and therefore it is called the spirit of adoption, whereby we can say, Abba Father. What an honour is this? *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, yea and become the sons of God.* Therefore the

* The work done.

Lord of heaven and earth says, I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters. Thus the saints become heirs of God, and joint heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, their title to every blessing which is purchased by the blood of the cross, is sealed, and consequently their right to the heavenly inheritance is secured to them, as the apostle says, Until ye were sealed by the spirit of promise unto the day of redemption. O may this blessed Spirit, seal or stamp the image of God upon each of our souls!

FROM what has been said, it plainly appears, that if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his; he is still in his sin; even his religion is vain, seeing it is not in spirit and truth, but only in the oldness of the letter. This may make us all less zealous for names, sects or parties; a business which some lay mighty stress upon, which excites in them a zeal which is bitter and fierce, full of invective and illiberality; and therefore not according to knowledge. We seldom see a zeal of this kind melt into tears of pity, like him who wept over human wretchedness, and was very ready to help them. The zeal of the prophet expressed itself thus, *If ye will not hear, my soul shall weep for you in secret places and mine eyes shall run down with tears.* The holy man of God was not attempting to play the buffoon over them,

or spouting out his bitter revilings. No, he knew his office better, and their souls were too precious in his sight, and laboured by prayer and earnest intreaties to turn them to the living God. Such was the zeal of the apostle, that he could wish himself accursed from Christ for his brethren the Jews; (a) that is, he was willing to become a taunt, a bye word, or a reproach, among men; or even the most painful or ignominious death; or deemed an execration among men, for the sake of his brethren that they might be saved. He warned the Ephesians night and day with tears; he wrote with tears; he prayed with tears. (b) This is very different to some zealots in our day, who are either announcing their anathemas like so many sovereign pontiffs, or spouting out their irreverent rant like some ridiculous mountebank. That is not the way to promote the cause of the friend of sinners. We see little of that bitter irony, or biting satyr in his language. He did not cry, nor strive, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. Are our fellow sinners in error? draw them out by faith, and prayer with fervent entreaties. That kind of violence can never be too ardent. Here let the love of Christ constrain us to be instant in season and out of season, and our labour will not be in vain.

(a) 2 Cor. ii. 4: (b) Acts xx. 31.

LASTLY, let all who have received the Spirit of Truth, walk in the spirit, and be careful they do not grieve the Divine Comforter, but bring forth all the fruits of righteousness, love, joy, peace, meekness, gentleness, long suffering, and sincerity; remembering that he is the Spirit of Truth, and can by no means be united to any species of falsehood, or dissimulation. We cannot expect grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles. If the tree is good the fruit must be good. The pure fountain must send forth pure streams. Men can know nothing of our experience, but they can form a judgment from our tempers, words, and actions. Let this excite us to abide in the true vine: so shall we have our fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life. **AMEN.**



THE
NATURE AND DESIGN

OF THE

Lord's Supper

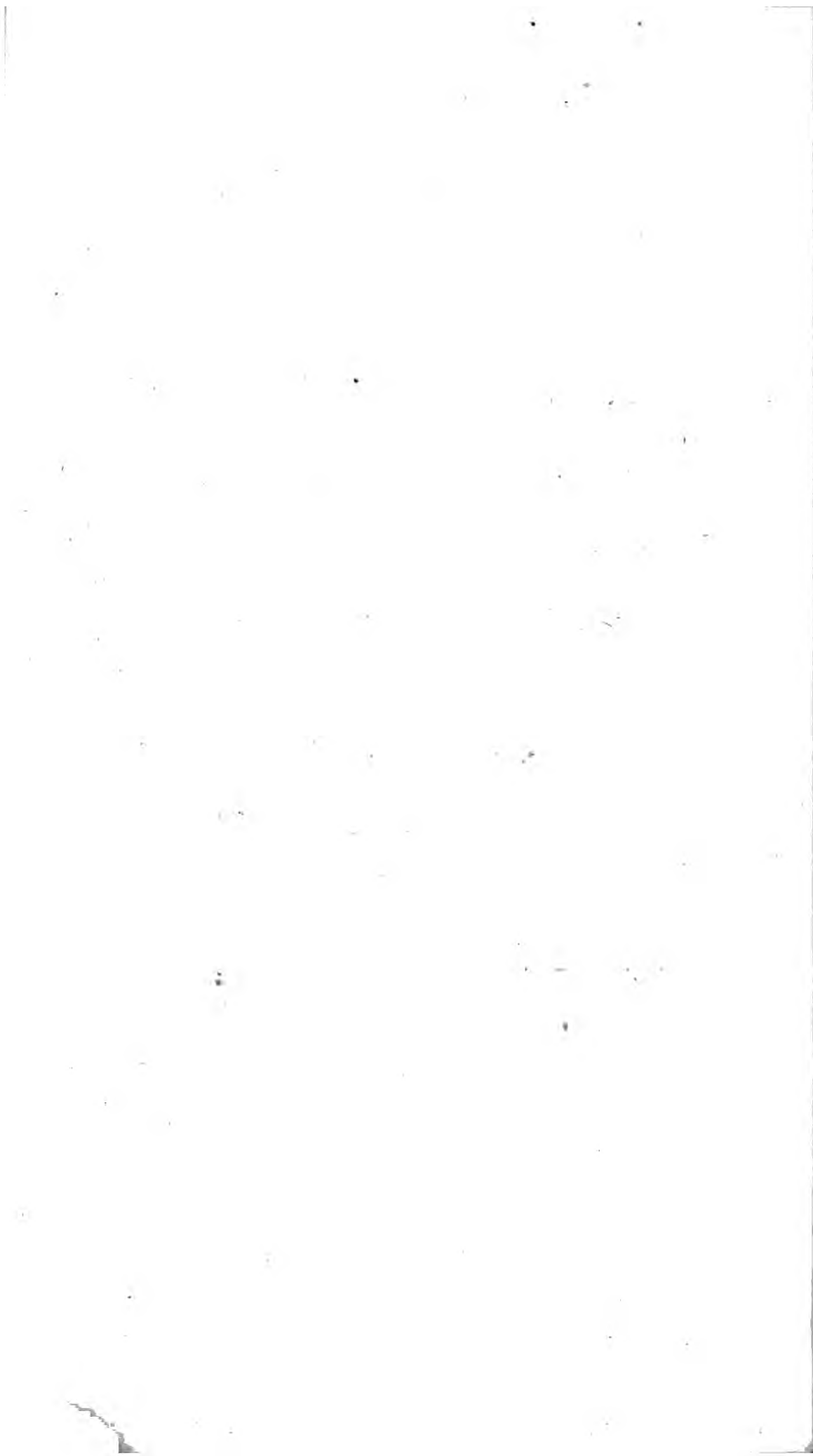
CONSIDERED,

IN

TWO SERMONS,

Preached at Liverpool, January 22d, 1792.

THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME. *Luke xxii. 19.*
EXAMINE YOURSELVES. *2. Cor. xiii 5.*



TO THE READER.

THE blessed ordinance of the Lord's Supper was very much neglected, even among the Methodists, for many years, in so much, that many lost sight of it as an incumbent duty, and viewed it in a very obsolete light; and I fear it has not risen to its proper dignity, in the estimation of many, to the present day; and yet the command is as express as it can be, in three of the Evangelists, Do this in remembrance of me. If we begin to dispute the validity of any one command in the New Testament, it will lay a foundation for laying aside the whole, and so make the Word of God of none effect. This ordinance is to set forth the Lord's death, until he come; and therefore shews the great and necessary importance of the atonement.

IT is now near twenty years since I began to administer that blessed ordinance in Liverpool, and that through much opposition; many well meaning persons, and some truly pious, were so much attached to what was called, the old plan, that is, going to the Church to receive the Sacrament, or rather going no where, for that was actually the case, that they thought it was quite overthrowing Methodism to attempt any change.

However, I saw it my duty, both to administer the Lord's Supper, having received ordination for that purpose, and also to have service in the forenoon ; and I believe it was of God ; and if I ever did any thing in my life with a single eye it was what I did at Liverpool ; and from that time the work has been rapidly rising. Let any one look at the Minutes in 1792, and look at them now. The first time I administered the sacred ordinance, two souls professed to be set at liberty ; a blessed beginning ;

BUT another thing lay upon my mind, and that was, that the people might understand a little of the nature and design of that sacred institution ; I did not know any book that I could recommend upon the subject. Mr. Henry, is perhaps the best ; but then it is too long and too laboured for the generality of plain people, and Burkitt is much the same ; Law's is little better than disguised transubstantiation. I therefore wrote, preached, and printed, the ensuing plain discourses, hoping it might be of some use ; and for the same reason I reprint it for I candidly confess I have not yet seen any thing, that will throw more light upon the subject ; and I hope for a divine blessing upon the same.

T. T.

Manchester, March 28, 1812.

SERMON XIII.

THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1 Cor. xi. 28.

**BUT LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF, AND
SO LET HIM EAT OF THAT BREAD, AND
DRINK OF THAT CUP.**

GOD made man upright; but they, his posterity, have sought out many inventions: and of these, abusing his divine institutions is not the least hurtful; that this was the case with the Jews of old, is very clear, both in the old and new testament. Either they were gone away from his ordinances and had not kept them, (a) or otherwise they had perverted them, and turned them into empty formalities. (b) Hence the Lord makes frequent complaints by his prophets, and often indeed to very little purpose; for they were determined to fol-

(a) Mal. iii. 7. (b) Isaiah i. 13, 14. lviii. 3, 6.

low the imaginations of their own hearts. We find the same stupid, self conceitedness continued in our Saviour's time, insomuch that old customs, and senseless traditions were set up instead of obedience to the words of their Redeemer; thus making the word of God of none effect, that they might keep their empty traditions.

THIS was the case in the primitive church at a very early period, even while the apostles were yet alive, as appears from the chapter before us; and hence the solemn ordinance of the Lord's Supper was abused by the Corinthians, who were grown wise in their own conceit, yea wiser than their teachers, to the great loss of purity and gospel simplicity; and the present day marks out the same evils unto us. Millions are almost avowed infidels, and reject every thing sacred and divine. And among such as pay some regard to the things of God, how much stupid bigotry do we see, and how little heavenly understanding, how little genuine love? Numbers are almost ready to fight to maintain some old obsolete form, some unscriptural tradition, to the destruction, the utter destruction of mercy and the love of God.

MANY, very many are the abuses we find of sacred things, even now, and that shocking profanation of the Lord's Supper is not one of the least. Improper persons administer it; improper persons receive it;

such as are shamefully ignorant of its nature, and such as are a disgrace to religion in their lives. People are often urged to go to Sacrament, as 'tis called; yea, it is often carried to persons just dying, to be their sure passport no doubt, while ignorant of the real design of that blessed institution.— To attempt a remedy in this case, is the design of the present discourse; and let me entreat your calm and candid attention, while I endeavour to explain and inforce the advice in the text: *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.*

FROM hence it may be proper to consider, **FIRST**, For what ends we may eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

SECONDLY, Let a man examine himself whether these holy ends be answered in him.

I. FIRST, then, for what ends are we to eat of that bread and drink of that cup?

1. THAT we may profess our faith and confidence in the Saviour of the world; and herein evidence that we belong to him; owning and avowing him to be our Lord and Redeemer: also acknowledging that we take him for our prophet, priest, and king; for our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; so that we acknowledge no salvation in any other, well knowing that there is no other name given among men whereby we can be saved but the name of Jesus. So that we “ renounce

our own, both righteous and unrighteous deeds, and live in him transplanted, and from him receive new life." Therefore "we do not presume to approach his table trusting in our own righteousness, but in his manifold mercies," manifest in dying for us upon the cross.

" He sunk beneath our heavy woes,
 " To raise us to his throne ;
 " There's not a gift his hand bestows,
 " But cost his heart a groan."

IN him is life to the dead, strength to the weak, rest to the weary, and pardon to the guilty: this we announce to all the world by eating of that bread and drinking of that cup.

2. WE call to mind his death and passion, which gave satisfaction to that justice which we have offended, that law which we had broken; and thereby had brought ourselves under the curse, seeing it is written, *Cursed is the man who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* (a) But the eating of that broken bread, and drinking of that wine poured out, plainly point unto that sacred body, rent and torn for our offences, that precious blood shed to make reconciliation for transgression: there we see him *wounded for our transgressions,*

(a) Deut. xxvii. 26. Gal. iii. 10.

bruised for our iniquities, that by his stripes we might be healed. (a)

AMAZING spectacle! **Amazing** mystery! **Astonishing** wonder! Here is justice demonstrated, here is justice satisfied! Here is love stronger than death. Here is redemption from the curses of the law, from the sword of justice, from the wrath of God, from the guilt, power and nature of sin; yea, from the power of the grave and from everlasting damnation! O 'tis Christ crucified! To the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to all that believe, Christ the power of God, and Christ the wisdom of God.

- " 'Tis myst'ry all: th' Immortal dies!
- " Who can explore his strange design?
- " In vain the first born seraph tries
- " To sound the depths of love divine:
- " 'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
- " Let angel minds enquire no more.

IT is an amazing instance of human depravity that we need a means of this sort, to perpetuate the memory of so important a transaction; but at the same time it shews the amazing importance of the atonement made upon the cross; and in this striking ordinance we set forth the Lord's death until he come: thus should we discern the Lord's body, nailed to the cross, and taking

(a) Isaiah liii. 5.

away the sins of the world. Can any thing in the universe render sin more odious, or the world more contemptible, than our incarnate Jehovah making his soul an offering for sin, expiring in tremendous agonies upon the cross?

3. **BY** eating of that bread, and drinking of that cup, we call our sins to remembrance; a very unpleasing meditation, but yet a necessary one, and what we find holy men very often engaged in. And it seems the great annual atonement under the law was to answer that end, and therefore the Apostle says, *But in those sacrifices, there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.* (a)

AND if that shadowy ordinance was to call sins to remembrance, much more this standing memorial, which testifies that Christ hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God. Here then we are called to look back, and trace it to its polluted fountain. Thus we may see that by one man's disobedience many were made sinners—that through the offence of one, judgment is come upon all men to condemnation; so that we were shapen in iniquity, and in sin conceived. Having heard of him by the hearing of the ear, but now the believer's eye sees him, and seeing him, abhors himself in dust and ashes.

(a) Heb. x. 3.

CAN any thing shew the malignity of sin like the amazing offering for sin? And shall not that feeling sensibility drive us to the fountain open for sin and uncleanness? to that blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel? Some tell us that St. Peter could never hear a cock crow, without weeping, it bringing to him such a keen remembrance of the sin of denying his Lord and Master. We often find David mourning like a dove, and deploring in bitter sighs and deep groans, his past sins and follies. It was this painful reflection which brought that blessed declaration from St. Paul's heart and pen, *It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.* (a) Precious saying! Worthy of all acceptation indeed!

How well is it for us that there was a St. Paul? and that he felt himself a sinner? that it made him so amazingly skilful in pointing to the sinner's only refuge. This is a needful qualification in all the ministers of the gospel. I mean a heartfelt acquaintance with themselves and their Saviour; thus, while we view and receive the symbols of our Saviour's broken body, should not the remembrance of our sin be grievous, and

(a) 1 Tim. i. 15.

the burthen of it intolerable to bear? Yes,
our feeling cry should be,

“ Ah, give me, Lord, my sins to mourn ;
“ My sins, which have thy body torn ;
“ Give me with broken heart to see
“ Thy last tremendous agony :
“ To weep o'er an expiring God,
“ And mix my sorrows with thy blood.”

O MY fellow sinner, let thy pride, anger, lust, love to the world, unbelief, and in a word, a nature so polluted that it is altogether as an unclean thing, and thy very righteousness as filthy rags, I say, let all this be written, if possible, in tears of blood! Yea, and even let that blood be washed in the blood of thy dear Saviour! But then, let the abhorrence of thy sin be manifested in forsaking of it; don't let thy confessing sin be a plea for living in it. Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. No, let the time past suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles. Surely you cannot indulge that which hath so mangled, rent and torn the Lamb of God! Surely you cry out,

“ 'Twere you, my sins, my cruel sins,
“ His chief tormentors were ;
“ Each of my crimes became a nail,
“ And unbelief the spear.”

4. WE eat that bread, and drink that cup, in remembrance that Christ died for

us, and thereby strengthen our faith in him. But then, it is necessary to observe, that we must have faith in him. I fear a grievous mistake lies here; and that is, many think they have faith who have it not; that they draw a false conclusion from false premises: Many conclude themselves believers because they have been baptized, and because they give their assent to the being of a God, and some other articles which they have been accustomed to hear. And I fear the ceremony of baptism is adopted instead of regeneration. And I think the established form gives too much encouragement for this conjecture; only attend unto it. "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to *regenerate this infant* with thy Holy Spirit, to receive *him* for thine own *child* by adoption, and to incorporate *him* into thy holy church." The same dreadful error is confirmed in the Catechism. "Who gave you this name? Answer. "My godfathers and godmothers, in my *baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.*"

Now let any reasonable man consider this; and is it any wonder that so many thousands are resting without faith when they are here taught to do so? yea, confirmed herein? What is a fundamental error if this be not? This makes me say, We

must have real faith before we can encrease therein.

Now then it is natural to ask, What is faith? I answer, *The substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen.* (a) But does repeating a few words, perhaps by an ungodly man, and throwing a little water in the face of a child make it a believer? Surely *that* faith is the gift of man, and not the gift of God. With this pitiful fancy many deceive themselves, crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace; no peace with God, nor, properly speaking, with their own consciences. However, we know that we are justified by faith, and have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now where true faith is, there is true hope, and love, and every grace of the Spirit; and to strengthen this faith, the death of its divine object is set fresh as evidently crucified, so that we "take, and eat, in remembrance that Christ died for us, and we feed upon him by faith with thanksgiving." O, we need this sensible refreshment! Life is filled with many, very many, trials, sharp and strong, which are calculated to weigh down and depress the inner man, and sure to discourage the servants of God in their way to Zion; and therefore if we mean to keep our head above

(a) ¹ Heb. xi. 1.

water, there must be a constant looking to Jesus the author, till he becomes the finisher of our faith: the saints overcame the great red dragon by the blood of the Lamb; that is, by faith in that blood, and so must we; seeing we have the same red dragon to combat with.

HUMAN nature is frail, and stands in need of divine support; and if the soul is alive to God it needs that support, and where is that to be found but in Jesus? *I am, says he, the bread of life; the bread which came down from heaven; he that eats of this bread shall live for ever.* Here is the true nourishment of a never dying soul, by which it is strengthened in its warfare; and this is what is particularly held out in the Lord's Supper.

5. **THE** eating of that bread, and drinking of that cup, is a token of our communion with Christ, and fellowship one with another. Herein is neither Jew nor Greek, male or female, bond or free, but we are all one in Christ Jesus. *The cup of blessing, which we bless, which we pray for a blessing upon, and for which we give thanks, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread.* (a) *For know ye not that your bodies*

(a) 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

are members of Christ. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular. (a)

* **THE** visible church on earth is an organized body, in which every pillar, or officer, hath its appointed place, as also every stone or member; and care is to be taken that every member, and every officer be fit for their place. As St. Peter says, *Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ—But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.* (b)

THE nineteenth article is a very proper definition of the church of Christ, and a very clear proof that the church of England, as a body, is not the church of Christ. Take special notice of the words, “The visible church of Christ, is a congregation of *faithful* men, in which the *pure word* of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered according to *Christ's ordinance* in all those things that of necessity belong to the same.” Now I ask any sensible, candid man, who has read his bible, and a little of church history, and thought

(a) 1 Cor. xii. 27.

(b) 1 Pet. ii. 5—9.

thereon, Is this the case with the established church? Where is that particular assembly of them? what parish church throughout the kingdom, where the communicants are a congregation of *faithful men*? and where the *pure word* of God is preached, and where the sacraments are duly ministered, according to *Christ's ordinance*? Is that minister a faithful man, that is, one that has faith in Christ, and faithful in his duty, who will hunt, play at cards, go to plays, horse races, balls, and assemblies; who is a pot companion with the men of the world? I think few will say he is. Then here is a flaw in the chief pillar. Surely this unfaithful shepherd will have an unfaithful flock. The old adage will be verified, *Like people, like priest.* (a) Or can we think those faithful men who go to the Lord's table purely to be qualified for a place in the revenue, or a commission in the army, or some other honourable or lucrative office? Or such as can curse and swear, or accompany their compliant vicar or curate in their scenes of folly? Or can we say the gospel is purely preached where Christ is scarcely named; but where a phantom, called reason, is put in the place of Christ, faith or the new birth?

WILL you call that the gospel which frequently ridicules experimental religion

(a) Hos. iv. 9.

under odious names, such as enthusiasm, fanaticism, insanity and the like? Has not this christless preaching well nigh made most of those structures called churches heathen temples? Where does our Lord authorize such men to preach such doctrine? Nay, does he not forbid them? (*Psalm* 1. 16.) Does he not say, *I sent them not nor commanded them, therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.* (a) Can there be any communion with either people or preacher of this stamp? What communion hath light with darkness, or he that believeth with an infidel? With such the apostle says, *no, not eat.* (b)

BUT there is a communion, a divine fellowship, with the children of God, begotten of the same Father, and born of the same Spirit, bearing the same yoke, and fighting against the same enemies, enlisted under the same banner, and travelling to the same country; and all living upon the same bread of life, that bread which came down from heaven, the flesh of the Son of Man which is meat indeed, and that blood which is drink indeed, being all partakers of that one bread of which this sacred ordinance is a sacred emblem.

HEREIN they can set their amen to that solemn prayer, "that they all may be one, as thou, Father, *art* in me and I in thee;

(a) *Jer.* xxiii. 32. (b) *1 Cor.* v. 11.

that they also may be **ONE IN US.**" (a) If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (b)

6. **IN** eating that bread, and drinking that cup, we profess to give up ourselves entirely to him who died for us. For we are not our own, we are bought with a price; and therefore are called to glorify God in our bodies and spirits which are the Lord's. And certainly this would be virtually done if we were quite silent, but it is formally done, by every communicant in the church of England, in as solemn words as can be. And hence we find them using these striking expressions, "And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto thee; that all we, who are partakers of this holy communion, may be filled with thy grace and heavenly benediction." In words we cannot be more express, or speak more to the purpose, and draw a very weighty obligation upon ourselves, and thereby bind ourselves by a most awful vow, to be entirely devoted unto the Lord. Not only so, but in some respects we call upon the celestial host to witness for or against us in the same, saying, "Therefore with angels and

(a) John xxiii, 21. (b) 1 John i. 7.

archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name; evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. Amen."

IF this be the language of the heart it will be seen in the life; but if otherwise, what words can sufficiently describe the perfidy and hypocrisy of such a procedure? Yea, such an one condemns himself out of his own mouth, and calls angels and archangels to witness against himself. For we are not our own; we are bought with a price; and therefore we engage to take up our cross and follow a despised master. The breach is made up, and we ratify the solemn treaty by sitting at his table and eating and drinking in remembrance that Christ died for us, and we feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving. Such are the blessed ends of this divine ordinance.

SERMON XIV.

THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1 Cor. xi. 28.

**BUT LET A MAN EXAMINE HIMSELF, AND
SO LET HIM EAT OF THAT BREAD, AND
DRINK OF THAT CUP.**

HAVING in a former Discourse considered the design of the Sacred ordinance, it is now time to attend to the second thing proposed, namely, the qualifications which are necessary in all who are willing to communicate profitably; and here the text says, *Let a man examine himself.* Examine himself! how weighty, and yet how hard! But what is the rule by which he is to examine? the bible, undoubtedly, the only and sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice.

To be a little particular here,

1. It is necessary that he should examine his own knowledge of divine things. I

do not mean that he should be nice and critical in religious matters; our needful knowledge, like our needful food, lies very open to every honest enquirer; and though the things of God are deep, and mysterious, yet, where there is sincerity and gospel simplicity, God will not leave such an one in the dark; his Spirit will guide him into all truth, and if needs be he shall not want an outward teacher. We find an honest eunuch, a man of figure and dignity, reading his bible, though sitting in his chariot, perhaps glad to catch the quiet season for that purpose. It is plain his understanding of divine things was but dark, for though he was reading that remarkable chapter, the fifty-third of Isaiah, yet he did not know of whom the prophet was speaking, whether *of himself or of some other*; but having an ear for divine instruction, God sent him a teacher, *who preached Jesus* unto him from that very chapter, and not in vain, for he believed in him of whom he heard; was baptized and went on his way rejoicing. (a) Another instance of the same kind we see in Cornelius, the centurion, who was an honest seeker into divine truth; and as he was fasting and praying for heavenly wisdom, an angel is sent to him, who orders him to send for Peter, *who should declare unto him what he ought*

(a) Acts viii. 26—40.

to do. (a) We see how God honours the messengers of the gospel. The angel might have told Cornelius what was left for Peter to do ; but we see God is pleased to honour a gospel ministry, and use ministers of his own appointing—that though the wise and prudent reject the things of eternity, yet are they revealed unto babes ; for so it seemeth good to the Father of mercies.

THIS leading branch of knowledge is very humbling ; it is such a discovery of a man to himself as stains the pride of all his glory, and lays his honour in the dust, in that he feels himself full of wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores ; and the more he knows of himself the greater cause he feels to be humbled in dust and ashes. Indeed the human heart, with the manifold turnings and windings of iniquity found therein, may be compared to the prophet Ezekiel's chambers of imagery ; for no sooner had he beheld one group of abominations, but it was said unto him, *turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these.* (b)

THUS he sees the doctrine of the fall, or rather feels it in his own poor diseased soul, and it exactly tallies with what he reads in the book of God. He reads, *For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, mur-*

(a) Acts x. 3, 4, 5. (b) Ezek. viii.

ders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride foolishness ; All these evil things come from within, and defile the man. (a)

IT is equally necessary for him to know that he cannot save himself, and that by the righteous law of God he is doomed to die everlastingly ; that he cannot redeem his soul, or give to God ransom for either himself or his brother. (b) That the Ethiopian can as soon change his black skin, or the Leopard his spots, as that he who is accustomed to do evil should learn to do well. He must then enquire in what light he views his Saviour, or what his ideas may be of redemption by the blood of an incarnate God.

DOES he consider ? that it is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, that Jesus trod the wine-press alone, and of the people there were none with him ; and that by the blood of his covenant alone the prisoners shall be brought out of the pit in which there is no water ? Has he a clear scriptural view of all the offices which Christ sustains, as prophet, priest, and king ? Does he see him as the way, the truth and the life ? The only way for a poor ruined sinner to come to God ? Has he a tolerable idea of the dignity of his person ? that the fulness of the Godhead

(a) Mark vii. 21, 22, 23. (b) Psalm xlix. 7.

dwells bodily in him, that all things were made by him, and without him nothing was made? So that without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh.

HAS he a proper conception of justification by faith? faith in that blood which was shed for ruined and undone sinners, and by which their sins are fully expiated? Now this kind of knowledge a man may obtain who hears the gospel and is simple hearted, though he be no scholar; nay, though he cannot read a letter, so that if he perish for lack of knowledge, it is his own fault.

2. HE should examine his repentance. If it is true, that all have sinned, then it is equally true that all need repentance. And indeed so we are told, *For at the times of ignorance God winked; but now hath commanded all men every where to repent.* (a) Now wherever there is real repentance there will be a sincere sorrow for sin, according to the degree of sensibility the penitent feels, and that is a sacrifice well pleasing to God; for the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart God will not despise. Whatever depth of sorrow there may be in the penitent, we are very certain he will forsake his sin; he will "not dissemble or cloak it before the face of Almighty God;" for he that cover-

(a) Acts xvii.

eth his sin shall not prosper; but he that *confesseth and forsaketh his sin, he shall obtain mercy.*

HE must, in the very nature of things, forsake his sin: for his servants we are to whom we obey, whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness. He cannot serve two masters. If he sincerely seeks Jesus he will let his sins go. He will deliver up his pleasing sins; the pleasure of them is gone; he is slain to that wherein he was held, and is led captive by it no more. He will sacrifice his profitable sins, his sinful gain: he cannot pursue that which he knows the word of God condemns. And if there be any honour, or credit in dishonouring the Most High, he humbly lays it at the foot of the cross, so that he may count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Saviour and Lord.

3. BUT the sincere communicant must examine his faith; seeing without faith we cannot please God; and the lowest degree is, *that he that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and is the rewarder of all them who diligently seek him.* (a) But this is but the faith of an heathen, thus far he believes. But the faith of a christian must behold *God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses*

(a) Heb. xi. 6.

unto them. (a) He must behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. Christ was lifted up on the cross, like the brazen serpent upon the pole; and now he is elevated upon the gospel pole, *that whosoever believeth in him may not perish but have everlasting life.* (b) For all things were written and done, *that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and in believing we might have life through his name.* (c)

Now let the communicant examine what confidence he has in that adorable Redeemer, whether he cordially receives him for his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. Dost thou believe him an able Saviour? Dost thou believe him a willing Saviour? Dost thou renounce not only thy sins, but dost thou renounce thine own righteousness too? Canst thou feelingly say,

“ Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,
 “ My beauty are, my glorious dress;
 “ 'Midst flaming worlds in these array'd,
 “ With joy shall I lift up my head!”

DOST thou hear him call the weary and the heavy laden to come to him? and that such as come he will in no wise cast out. Art thou then looking up to him now? Does not that bread, now broken, as a

(a) 2 Cor. v. 19. (b) John iii. 15. (c) John xx. 31.

finger, point to thy Saviour, broken upon the cross for thee, and crushed beneath the load of thy numerous offences? O look! look at that awful agony! See that amazing sufferer! Hearken to that most doleful cry, My God! My God! why hast thou forsaken me! Once again, I say look; see blood and sweat, flow mingled down! O my sins! my cruel sins: what have ye done! O what love! O what sorrow! Sorrow and love mingled together! Rent, rent, hard heart! give way, thou cursed unbelief! "Heaven weeps that man may smile! Heaven bleeds that man may never die!" Lord, what is man, that thou shouldest thus be mindful of him! O let thy dying love constrain the outcasts to come in, and let my worthless heart abide in thee for ever.

4. BUT it is highly necessary that the believer, should examine his frame and temper, when he eats that bread and drinks that cup; for while he commemorates the death of his meek and lowly Saviour, should not the same blessed mind be in him which was also in Christ Jesus? Should not he be a rich partaker of all the passive graces of the divine Spirit, and become the true imitator of him who hath left him the brightest example? who did no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth, who when he was reviled, reviled not again, and when he suffered he threatened not? The term lamb, so frequently given to our Saviour,

is not only figurative of the atonement which he made, but also expressive of his holy harmless nature; we scarce know any animal more inoffensive than a lamb; true emblem of the precious Lamb of God.

AND is not that the very appellation which he gives to all his followers? they are in many places termed sheep, and he is called their shepherd; (a) and in some places they are termed lambs. (b) Now should not these sheep, these lambs express that very nature of which their names should be an emblem? Most certainly they ought; yes, to *lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisy and envies, and all evil speakings. As new born babes to desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby, seeing they have tasted that the Lord is gracious. They should put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, Above all put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. Thus also should the peace of God rule in their hearts, so that they may be thankful. Such tempers clearly shew to whom we belong, and into what Spirit we are baptized, a clear manifestation whose image and superscription we bear.*

(a) Psalm xxiii. 1. lxxx. 1. Ezek. xxxiv. John x.
 (b) Isaiah xl. 10. John xxi. 15.

5. IF we are conscious of giving any just occasion of offence, of injuring any one in word or deed, there should be a readiness to acknowledge the offence and also to put it away. While we are receiving the blessed seal of our pardon there must not be a continuing of the offence, well knowing that our blessed Saviour came not to save us in our sins, but to save us from them.

OR if we have received any injury or offence, there should be a readiness to forgive. Bless them that curse you ; do good to them that hate you ; and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you. Thus may you evidence yourselves to be the children of your Father who is in heaven. Then if thine enemy hunger, feed him ; if he thirst, give him drink, so shalt thou heap coals of fire on his head.

6. WE are called to examine what our intentions may be : how we intend to demean ourselves for the future. If we profess to dedicate ourselves to God in that divine ordinance, in what manner do we intend to live ? Close examination will discover many things which have been amiss in the time past, and the discovery of those fatal by-paths should be a sufficient inducement to shun them, and this calls for a holy resolution so to do. Thus we find the psalmist resolving *to take heed unto his*

ways that he might not offend. (a) But, then, remember, there must be a taking hold of divine strength, or our resolutions will be like a thread when it is touched by the fire. Through Christ strengthening me, I can do all things; but, truly, of myself I can do nothing. No; I must be strengthened by his spirit's might in the inner man, so shall I prevail, and be more than conqueror through him who loved me.

WE see in that admirable song of thanksgiving, the eighteenth psalm, all the victories which the psalmist had obtained, the honour is entirely ascribed to the living God. Hence he compounds a bright assemblage of epithets taken from the different weapons of war, and applies them to his Almighty helper. *The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength in whom I trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*

THUS will glory be given to whom it is justly due, and that is to Jacob's mighty God. Indeed we are sufficiently apprized of that in the case of Israel of old. For though they had just taken Jericho, and, flushed with victory, marched to Ai, with very great confidence; but sin, prevarication, having crept in among them, Jehovah was displeased, and he drew back his help-

(a) Psalm xxxix. 1.

ing hand; and what was the consequence? they were smitten and fled from before the men of Ai: *Wherefore the hearts of the people melted and became as water.* (a) The true image of ourselves. And on the other hand, what could withstand them when the Lord was on their side? Nothing. Nations and kingdoms gathering together were nothing, he who sitteth in the heavens laughed them to scorn; the Lord had them in derision. Such a series of conquests I defy any other history for exhibiting as we meet with in the tenth chapter of Joshua: the different kingdoms were taken as soon, almost, as the army could march to them; and the whole mystery is unfolded in the forty-second verse, viz. *Because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel.* Thus let Israel's God be my God and through him I shall prevail; yea I shall overcome all by the blood of the Lamb.

FROM hence we see the exceeding great privileges of the gospel dispensation. How cheap, simple and easy are the ordinances? And how well are they calculated to express their great ends and designs? What a yoke of trouble and expence were the rites and ceremonies under the law? A yoke which neither we nor they could bear. (b) But indeed their end is fully accomplished; the great fulfiller of all the

(a) Joshua vii. 5. (b) Acts xv. 10:

types having appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; the glorious Sun of righteousness being risen, all those clouds are for ever dispersed.

WE have great reason to bless God for the reformation, though not so perfect as one could wish; yet many superstitious fopperies are abolished, and among the rest the abominable fiction of transubstantiation, by which the God of heaven was horribly insulted, and the simple people shamefully imposed upon; and for the denying of which idolatry many perished in the flames. But still, like the death of some destructive monster, whose vile carcase leaves an ill savour in the country round; so, though the beast of transubstantiation be slain, yet there is the dead carcase of consubstantiation, the image of the beast, if possible a more unintelligible jargon than the other, left behind. I have sometimes been asked, what is consubstantiation? But I really could never tell.—I can tell what they say it is; but such terms as admit of no rational ideas, it is hard to say what they mean. Nearly related to this is the formality of consecration, and by laying hands on the elements, and muttering a few words over them, we are taught to believe that some degree of holiness is communicated to the bread and wine; yea, though the consecrator is a very unholy man. Surely this is leaving the word of God to follow the

traditions of men: I can find nothing of this consecration of bread and wine in the new testament; nor does it appear that such a consecration, or consecrater were necessary to give a validity to the Lord's Supper. It is generally believed that for a time, the primitive christians communicated every day; and that is a sufficient proof to me that the ordinance did not require the presence of ministers; for I apprehend there were not such numbers as to be in every place where believers were. Wherever a number of pious souls were met together, who were admitted as members of the church by baptism, no doubt but there were persons among them who could ask the divine benediction upon the ordinance, as they had the promise of their Saviour to be in the midst; and thus eat and drink in remembrance of their dying Lord, and did by faith discern their Saviour's body broken for them. No doubt but when ministers were present, they would take the lead in that, as well as other parts of worship; but I still call upon any man to prove from scripture that their presence was absolutely necessary to give validity to the ordinance. I say, let them prove it that can from the new testament. As for other legends, let them be called apostolical canons, or epistles, or writings of fathers, I think we should be careful how we set them up in opposition to the word of God.

SHOULD not care be taken who are admitted to that divine means? And can that be done without knowing the state of the communicants? I apprehend not. This is yet attended unto in the church of Scotland; nay, and I believe in all the protestant churches abroad; yea something of the kind in the church of Rome, only, it is miserably perverted, by making it into an auricular confession, and the receiving the priestly absolution. There discipline is turned into a horrid abuse.

BUT the right use should be maintained, and the abuse avoided. At any rate persons should have tolerable apprehensions of the thing; which cannot be expected without instruction and discipline, and they ought to be regular in their lives. Less than this cannot be dispensed with upon the principles of the word of God. To help in the former case a little, has been the design in the preceding discourse, what success it may have, the hearers, and time must make manifest.

LASTLY, As we shall ere long be judged ourselves, it becometh us to be very serious in divine things, and more especially in those solemnities in which we profess confidence in a dying Saviour, and likewise a vow for ourselves to be devoted unto him. *Let a man, that is, every man, examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread,*

and drink of that cup. Let these memorials of a bleeding Saviour, lead the sinner unto him, and confirm his faith in him daily; let it excite gratitude and thanksgiving from day to day; so that he may do this in remembrance of his death and passion till he is raised from this dark abode to view, in the realms of unclouded bliss, his once crucified, but now exalted Saviour, world without end. Amen.



A
SERMON

ON

KEEPING THE SABBATH;

Preached in Oldham-street Chapel, in Manchester,
October 13, 1811.

YE SHALL KEEP MY SABBATHS, AND REVERENCE MY
SANCTUARY: I AM THE LORD. *Lev. xix. 30.*

TO THE READER.

THE sacred day of the Lord being so much neglected, I thought it my duty to choose as public a time as I could, to urge the important duty upon my hearers; and therefore made choice of a Sabbath evening.

I fear the Christian Sabbath is too much neglected, even by many who profess religion, by making little jaunts to see their friends, or by giving way to do many trifling things which might as well be done on any other day. The Lord's Day ought to be filled up in the Lord's work; and let as little as possible be done in the way of dressing victuals, as is consistent with the circumstances of the family, and even to be more sparing at the table than on the week days, so that the mind may be better disposed for a much higher entertainment.

T. T.

SERMON XV.

REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY.

Exod. xx. 8.

**REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO
KEEP IT HOLY.**

THINK not, said our blessed Lord, that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." Even the ceremonious part, he came to fulfil, even the minutest parts were to be accomplished in him, and in that sense he "is the end of the law for righteousness to such as believe." Many of the ceremonies were trifling, and insignificant in themselves, but as they pointed to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world, they were important, and worthy of the greatest attention. In short, that law was the shadow of good things to come, but when the good things were come, the shadows

fled. We need no lamps when the sun is risen. Thus, the sun of righteousness being risen, all those figurative emblems cease. But it is far otherwise with the moral law, that is the very picture of the deity, and must be coeval with himself: the sum of which is "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind and strength; and thy neighbour as thyself." Time can never wear this out, it will be binding to all eternity. Nor let us fritter it away by saying, Christ has fulfilled for us. God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might, *not be destroyed*, but fulfilled in *us*, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. How absurd would it be to object honouring my father or my mother, by saying, My Saviour did that in my stead, and therefore I am free from that obligation; and so to answer every command, how ridiculous would that kind of reasoning be? And yet, it is the creed which some maintain. Now I apprehend the command in the text to be of that permanent nature, and, that it is lasting as time; at any rate, it is arranged among those which are unalterable, nor does the changing the seventh day for the first, change the obligation. Indeed, some suppose that what we call the first day of the week was the original

sabbath, and that a mistake crept in, either during the time of the flood, or the Egyptian captivity, or the forty years journey through the wilderness; and very possible, such a mistake might happen. Be that as it may, the change took place in the primitive church during the time of the apostles, very likely at the resurrection. Hence we read upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, (a) that is, to celebrate the Lord's Supper, as was the practice every Lord's day. And hence the apostle exhorts the Corinthians, "upon the first day of the week, that each should lay by him in store," for the charity, "as God had prospered him." (b) Hence we find the breaking bread was the common practice on the first day of the week, and most likely was the Christian Sabbath, called *Κυριακος ημερα*, the Lord's day, in honour of our blessed Saviour. *εν τη κυριακη ημερα* that St. John was in the Spirit, in so extraordinary a manner, as if the Lord was pleased to honour that day as well as his servant, with those glorious revelations which will extend through the various tracks of time into a glorious eternity. Indeed there were some in the primitive church, who kept both the seventh and the first day of the week as a Sabbath; but the first day hath been held sacred by the

(a) Acts xx. 7. (b) 1 Cor. xv. 2.

pious in all ages, except the Quakers, nor has any thing which they have said satisfied me as to the lawfulness of their conduct.

HOWEVER, the design of the present discourse is not to argue that point, I am addressing those who profess to believe the morality of the sacred day, and own that it ought to be kept holy; and still I fear, do not pay that attention to it which they ought; and yet the command is introduced with a striking memento above the rest, *Remember, the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy.* The word, *remember*, hath something emphatic in it, as though it was to call to remembrance something, or things of importance, and so undoubtedly it does, things of vast magnitude, and which shall lead me to enquire,

FIRST, what in the Sabbath we are to remember.

SECONDLY, how it ought to be kept holy.

FIRST, then what does the Sabbath remind us of? It may be necessary to observe, that the word *sab*, Sabbath, signifies rest.

1. IT reminds us that God made the world and all that it contains in six days, but on the seventh day he rested or ceased from his work. This proves that the world is not its own creator, which is now a doctrine much in vogue, wild and irrational as it is; and yet those very advocates for the

self existence of matter, and all its modifications must have reason for every thing in religion, or they will reject it. In the present case, the Almighty is very particular, and asserts that *in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it; that is, appointed it to be kept holy.* Now this is truly rational and satisfactory, and becoming the mouth of the most high. Indeed he hath made every thing beautiful in its season, and wisely adapted to the purposes which he intended. Some things are of great utility, more needful than others, and these he hath granted with a bountiful liberality, and wisely calculated to answer all our necessities, as in the articles of light, air, and water. These are absolutely necessary, and he hath made wonderful provision for them all. The same we may observe in materials for our habitations in stone and timber. The same in all kinds of vegetation and grain for the use of man or beast. The same we see in the construction of different animals, such as are most useful we have in the greatest abundance, so that the pious contemplator may say, "Great and glorious are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all." For the invisible things of him from the creation are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are

made, even his eternal power and godhead; so that those infidels who put God out of the question, "are without excuse." So that it requires no small degree of faith or rather presumption, to become a thorough pasted infidel, if there is such a miscreated being among the human race. Yet there are many fools who say in their hearts, there is no God. They try to work themselves into that persuasion by running away from themselves and not thinking at all. But by their fruits they are known, for as they profess not to believe the existance of the deity, so they act consistently, saying, "our tongues are our own, who shall lord over us?"

2. **THE** sacred sabbath reminds us of our Lord's resurrection from the grave; and as we said, was a principal if not the whole cause of the day being changed. Hence we are informed it was the custom for the primitive church to stand at prayer on the Lord's day, whereas on other days they were wont to kneel in their devotion. The resurrection was a matter of the greatest importance, the whole fabrick of christianity might be said to rest on it; and therefore it behoved the primitive preachers to prove wherever they came, the truth of the resurrection. Moreover, it was a doctrine beyond the stretch of human reason, the wise men at Athens sneered at it; while Paul spake of God as the creator and and moral governor of the world they gave

heed to what he said; but when he “preached to them Jesus, and the resurrection, they mocked,” it being a subject beyond their capacity, the line of their reason could not fathom it. It was wisely done that there should be a monument as a lasting memorial, that he who was delivered for our offences was raised again for our justification. The apostle makes that the efficient cause of our final acquittance. “Who, says, he shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God who justifieth; it is Christ that died, **YEA, RATHER IS RISEN AGAIN**, who ever liveth to mak intercession for us.” A most animating doctrine indeed?

3. **THE Sabbath** also reminds us of the rest and peace which every true believer enters into. For, says the apostle, “we who have believed do enter into rest.” They rest from guilt and condemnation. For “there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus makes them free from the law of sin.” This is the rest which our Saviour so sweetly invites every weary and heavy laden sinner to; and what is implied in that strong expression, the peace of God which passeth all understanding, which keeps the heart and mind in the love of God. This is a privilege which every child of man is called

to seek after ; that we may have no more doubt of our acceptance than we have of our existence. A blessed deliverance from all tormenting fear which must make life comfortable.

4. **MOREOVER**, it reminds us of a deliverance from every tormenting temper, which is indeed a great salvation. Supposing we had no existence after death, no more than the stock of a tree, yet, if it were possible we could get rid of pride and self will, peevishness, fretfulness, and low minded envy, certainly it would be our wisdom to have them destroyed. These are "the foxes which spoil the vines." They are tares of a precious nature, and effectually destroy our happiness, and I may truly say, If we do not destroy them they will effectually destroy us. What doth it avail a man, though he wallow in wealth and soar upon the wings of fame, so long as he is tormented with this scum and smoke of hell? These are the works of the devil which the Son of God came to destroy. That he may feel all the peaceable fruits of righteousness, dwelling in the heart of the true believer; so true is it that "the work of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance for ever." Such is the rest provided for all "who embrace and hold fast the blessed hope of eternal life."

5. **I MAKE** no doubt but the christian

sabbath has some reference to that glorious period "when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and his Christ for ever." Then "shall every knee bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord to the glory of the Father." The gospel will be preached to all nations, and the Spirit universally poured out to make it successful; the whole earth shall be at rest; the very brute creation shall cease tearing each other to pieces; for their nature will be changed, and consequently their appetites. In that happy time, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, without hurting it, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion, and the fatling together," and they will be so mild and inoffensive that "a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed," that is, sociably together; "their young ones shall lie down together: the lion shall eat straw like the ox, the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." (a) Such shall be the physical change in the brute creation. Let them

(a) Isa. xi. 6—10.

have all the force which imagination can give them in their typical or moral application. I have no objection to the angry, covetous, cruel man being changed into a new creature, I know it must be ere he can enter into the new Jerusalem; but we are never to discard the literal meaning of any passage, unless there should be a real absurdity in it: and I am sure I can see none in the above passage. The infidelity of the Jews will be removed, and the fulness of the gentiles brought in glorious time! "Then shall the root of Jesse stand for an ensign to the people, and to him shall the gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious." *

6. BUT remember, "there yet remains a rest to the people of God." The eternal rest which Jesus hath prepared for them that love him. The bodies of his saints which have long laid in disgrace, and undergone a great number of changes and modifications, shall be changed like unto Christ's glorious body, according to his mighty working, whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself. How amazing is the change? "It is sown a natural body," with all its propensities, "but it shall be raised a spiritual body. It is sown in weakness, but it shall be raised in power:

* See my Sermons on the Millenium.

it is sown in corruption: it shall be raised in incorruption." (a)

I APPREHEND salvation will not be compleat till the bodies of the saints are raised out of their graves, and in their glorified state united to their glorified souls, and then will be brought to pass the saying, "Death is swallowed up in victory." Yes,

Now salvation, long expected,
See in solemn pomp appear;
All his people once despised,
Now shall meet him in the air.
Happy Mourners, &c. &c.
Lo! on clouds, He comes, He comes.

THE sabbath now begins which shall never end. This blessed state of glory is unchangeable, it will suit the saints, and they shall be prepared for it. Every one will have an exercise suited to their wish and capacity. One star will differ from another, but none will either despise or envy another. No, every vessel will be full; yea all, "all will be filled with all the fulness of God."

SECONDLY, how is the christian sabbath to be sanctified? How kept holy?

1. **IT** is assuredly necessary to prepare for it before-hand. We read of the "preparation for the sabbath," that is, they so ordered and disposed their affairs that they might have as little to do as possible of

(a) 1 Cor. xv. 42—44,

worldly matters. To be sure, there are numbers who cannot adjust affairs as they would; such shops as deal in eatables are obliged to be up late on Saturday night; also farmers, are under an absolute necessity of attending their cattle, milking their cows, and disposing of the same, cleaning their vessels on the Lord's day. Such as go to sea must be attentive to their business, on the sacred day. But even these might so contrive matters as to have much less to do than they generally have. But there are multitudes who are not so circumstanced, who are all hurry and bustle on Saturday evenings, which might be prevented by a little timely care; the consequence of which is, they lie in bed much longer on the sacred day than they do on others, nor are their minds impressed with that solemn reverence which it ought to be. We see how men of the world act, how they will scheme and contrive against the market, or a fair, that they may have as little as possible to do, and by that means have little to interrupt or hinder; and why should not christians act in the same way upon a nobler principle? The matter is, the men of the world are alive to their work, their hearts are fully engaged in it, and many professors sleep over their work, or look upon it as a sort of by-business, which may be done in a sort of desultory manner, when nothing stands in the way. And what is that but "offering the lame and the blind unto

God!" With such sacrifices God cannot be well pleased.

2. **AVOID** all carnal company and needless visits, or receiving visitors on the solemn day. Many err in this matter most shamefully. In so doing there are several evils; there is generally more done in the way of cooking than ought to be, or otherwise would be, and that is creating more work than ought to be. The Jews were forbidden even so much as to light a fire on the sacred day. The good old puritans were very conscientious in that particular; they were very sparing in the business of the kitchen on the Lord's day, usually preparing what they deemed necessary the night before. Besides, when on the visiting plan, there is a temptation to indulge the appetite more than is consistent with that temperance becoming the christian at all times, but more especially on that sacred day. Some persons will take the sabbath to visit their friends, on purpose to save the time taken up on another day; but certainly it is wrong; "Will a man rob God?" Hath the Lord given us six days to provide for the body? And can we not give him one day out of seven? Then shun every thing which would interfere or mix with the service of God.

3. **LET** as much as is possible be spent in the service of God, both in public and in private. Not that I would advise the running from one place of worship to

another from morning to the evening. I fear some place a great part of religion in running up and down. But let not one duty clash with another, let every exercise have its proper time and place. Let private duty have its due share of time and fervency, both in prayer, reading and meditation; not neglecting the house of God. Let the whole day be filled up with such exercises as are suited to the solemnity thereof. Acts of mercy to either man or beast are necessary, and therefore lawful; and therefore such as have not time on other days, may very properly and profitably spend an hour or two in visiting the sick and praying with them, or waiting on them; for the Lord delights more in mercy than in sacrifice; but all other visits should be avoided.

4. **AVOID** worldly conversation, such as upon trade or traffic, or politics, the dearness and cheapness of markets. Six days are surely enough for matters of that sort. What end can such converse answer? only to bring deadness and stupidity upon the mind, and render it dull and unfit for that reverence becoming the Lord's service and the house of the living God. It is very common for even professors of religion to forget themselves, and let their conversation grovel, which shews where the heart is; for "from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." It is one of the conditions which the Almighty lays down, which he required of

his church in the days of old. "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath *from* doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking *thine own* words, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of thy father Jacob; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (a) And again, "Blessed is the man that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing evil. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep my sabbaths, and choose *the things* that please me, and take hold of my covenant. Also the sons of the stranger that join themselves to the Lord to serve him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant. Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer." (b) On the other hand, how highly is the Lord displeased with such as made light of his sabbaths, wishing them to close that they might return to their worldly traffic.

IN short, a considerable part of true

(a) Isa. lviii. 13, 14. (b) Isa. lvi. 2—7.

morality stands or falls with the keeping or neglecting the sacred day.

5. IT might be well to guard our thoughts on the sacred day; for if our thoughts are employed in matters of trade, or any worldly avocations, we are real sabbath breakers, though we should be in the house of God from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. And I do not think the enemy is wanting at those seasons to bring the world, and the things of the world to the mind at the same time; and as long as there is the tinder of corruption in the human heart, the sparks of the enemy will kindle the flame, and if we are on our knees all the day, if our thoughts are in the world what will it avail? It might be well to remember this on a sabbath morning, and lay it feelingly before the Lord. Beg of him to bring every thought into captivity to his blessed will. This also shews the necessity of being careful in our conversation; for worldly conversation is sure to beget worldly thoughts. There is the greater need to be careful herein; for thoughts are concealed from all but God and ourselves; our words are heard, and our actions are seen; but who can accuse you of thinking? or, who can say, they saw your thoughts, in the shop, or in the field, or wandering to the ends of the earth?

6. LET the day be properly closed as becometh the day of the Lord. Many

think when public duty is over the sabbath is over, and very likely all they have heard or read is over, or quite forgotten; and, if so, how is it likely to bring forth the fruit of good living? If the seed is devoured, by the fowls of the air, as soon as it is sown, there is little hope of a fruitful harvest; or if the seeds of all pernicious weeds are plentifully mixed with the pure grain, the husbandman can tell you which is like to be the most plentiful crop. Excellent is that divine prayer, "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name."

Guard well thy thoughts,
Our thoughts are heard in heaven.

"I HATE vain thoughts," said the psalmist, "but thy law I do love." "Wash thyself, O Jerusalem! how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?" We may form a little idea of the state of our mind by attention to the current of our thoughts; for where our treasure is, there is our heart also. Let no one rest till he can say, My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed, I will sing and give praise!

UPON the whole, we have abundant cause to bless God for the christian sabbath, it is a barrier against infidelity; it is a standing memorial, that God is the creator of the universe, and that nothing created itself, or came by chance. Indeed, all his

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works praise him ; for in wisdom he made them all. They are all calculated to answer the end of their creation, *viz.* the glory of the creator, and the happiness of the creature ; so that every believer may sweetly sing,

Part of thy name divinely stands,
On all thy creatures writ ;
They shew the labour of thy hands,
Or impress of thy feet.

THERE is not a flower that buds, there is not a bird that sings, but all proclaim the divine creator, and all glorify him as the fountain of existance, and his wisdom and goodness appear in all ; yea the heavens, and all their shining train are as so many shining lamps, to point us to their glorious maker. Their magnitudes and utility are as so many flaming heralds of the glory, majesty and honour of the ever blessed God ;

“ For ever singing as they shine,
“ The hand that made us is divine.”

ACCORDING to the tenor of the foregoing discourse, the sabbath reminds us of our glorious redemption, which indeed is more wonderful than that of creation ; it is “ Creation more sublime ; it is the labour of the skies.” When Jehovah made the world, “ he spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast ; the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy.” God said, let there be light, and light issued from its radiant

shrine, "Chaos heard his voice, and wild uproar stood ruled." But in redemption, it was labour, pain and reproach; it was torture and death to redeem a lost world. His soul was made an offering for sin; it was there he felt the smart, the wormwood and the gall. In all the painful process which his sacred body underwent, we never find that it extorted a word of complaint, or even a groan; but his righteous *soul was exceeding* sorrowful, even unto death. But this sacred day reminds of his triumphant resurrection. O yes, he burst the barriers of the tomb, as a proof that he had paid the mighty debt, and of course, both the bondsman and the poor insolvent debtor are honourably free. Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the floods clap their hands, and the trees of the wood break forth into singing, Salvation to our God, for he hath redeemed us by the blood of his cross. Let the sabbath sun never set without this being deeply impressed upon our hearts!

LET the sacred day lead us to meditate deeply, and sweetly upon that rest which the Redeemer hath purchased for us. He hath entered into that eternal rest as our forerunner, and in his own right hath taken possession for us poor sinners, and there he is making intercession for us. He hath overcome the sharpness of death, and rests from all his works, and opens the kingdom to all believers. There he reigns till all his

enemies shall become his footstool; the last enemy, which is death, shall be destroyed, and the mediatorial kingdom given up to the Father, and the human nature absorbed in the divine, and Jehovah is all in all. **Triumphant day!** blessed and eternal jubilee, when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess Christ Jesus to be all and in all, to the everlasting praise of God the Father. Seeing the Almighty hath laid so weighty an injunction upon keeping the sabbath, and in its own nature is calculated to remind us of such important concerns as our creation, redemption, and eternal life; how inexcusable are all the neglectors of the sacred institution!" Yea, how lamentable that the day of the Lord should be turned into a day "of reveling and frantic mirth!" that there is more drunkenness and other kinds of profligasy carried on in that day, than in all the six days besides. "Shall I not visit for these things?" saith the Lord." And among such as profess to pay some attention to the sacred institution are ready to cry out, what a wearisome day it is, when will the new moon end and the sabbath be over, that we may return to our secular employments! How shameful! what will these people do in heaven? How irksome must the everlasting praises of God and the Lamb be to such? O let us count it an high day of glad tidings, a happy prelude to the eternal sabbath with the infinite Jehovah, his saints and angels for evermore.



A

SABBATH-DAY'S JOURNEY

TO THE

HEAVENLY CANAAN.

BEING AN

EXHORTATION

Delivered in a Society of Christian People.



A Sabbath-Day's Journey, &c.

AS God, by his kind providence, has been pleased to appoint one day in seven for his own immediate service, we cannot sufficiently admire his wisdom herein. It seems admirably adapted both for soul and body. Ever since the fall, man has been obliged to eat his bread with labour and toil ; therefore stands in need of the rest of one day in seven, that those springs of animal nature, so relaxed, may be wound up again, and the jaded spirits, quite sunk with toil, may be recruited with fresh vigour. Were these times of respite more frequent, the proportion remaining would not be sufficient for the poor to earn their bread ; and should there be fewer sabbaths, the body would be too much oppressed with labour, neither would there be sufficient time for waiting upon God : So that one day in seven seems to be the happy medium. As to the exchanging the seventh day for the first, it is not very material ; at least, it is not the business of this small tract to discuss the

controversy; and the practice of the Primitive Church is thought a sufficient precedent for the same.

2. Now considering the Supreme Being so kind in allowing six days for the necessary avocations of life, and in appointing a particular day for his own immediate service, should we not be thankful, and make the best improvement we can of that one day to our spiritual advantage? How this therefore may be done is the intent of the following thoughts. But let it be premised, that without Divine Grace we can do nothing. All directions without this are but just like giving commands to the dead, which should excite in every one to *look diligently, lest he should fail of the grace of God.*

3. LET us then proceed to sketch out what may be called, *a Sabbath-Day's Journey*; in order to which it may be necessary to set out a little the night before, or at least to make a little preparation for the journey, which may be something analogous to the preparation for the sabbath, of which we read in the scriptures.

4. LET all worldly business be concluded as early as possible on Saturday night, so that some time may be devoted to religious exercises in the evening, such as prayer, reading, meditation, self-examination or christian conversation. Supposing some such thoughts as these were to exercise the

mind : “ I am a week nearer my latter end ; am I so much advanced in the Divine life ? How has the past week been spent ? How have I profited in the means ? Have I neglected none ? How have my tempers been ? Have they been such as God’s word approves, or condemns ? What knowledge have I gained of precious Christ ? How have my words or actions been ? Have they been seasoned with grace, or have I reason to be ashamed of the whole ? ”

5. **BUT**, alas ! too many are all hurry and bustle on Saturday evening, more so than any other evening in the week. This is utterly wrong ; nor need it be the case, unless with some individuals, who may keep some sort of public business ; all others, by being a little more diligent in the beginning of the week, may so dispose of their affairs, as to have some time on Saturday for the above-mentioned purposes ; and if they will not use as much diligence to profit in the ways of God as to gain the world, it is very plain they love the world most.

6. **HAVING** adjusted your affairs so on Saturday evening, and laboured to have your mind withdrawn from the world, rise as early as on other mornings ; for why should we make the Lord’s-Day the shortest ? While rising, let some such ejaculation as this take place and engage your thoughts : “ Lord Jesus, this day commemorates thy rising from the grave for my justification :

let me not be groveling on the earth; but as I have laid the world out of my hands, let its thoughts be laid from my heart, and its cares utterly abolished, so that I may be in the spirit on this thy day, and offer thee spiritual and acceptable sacrifices through the blood of the cross."

7. **BEING** by this time dressed, throw yourself at the feet of your Lord and Saviour, and, sensible of his favours, praise him. Praise him for his own compleat perfections; for his goodness in sending his Son to die for the human race; for sending his spirit to lead and guide us into the way of truth; and for his gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation to all who believe; for sparing you the night past, and returning your eye-sight, hearing, speech and understanding; also for the weekly return of the Sabbath, and every privilege therein. Confess your sins, wants and weakness, and humbly implore such things as you feel you stand in need of, and let it be well attended unto, to know your wants, and from thence let your requests be made known to God.

8. **CONSIDER** what the things are which prevent your profiting in the publick means of grace, and spread them before the Lord. If you have no family, spend some time in reading some experimental part of God's word, meditating thereon; but if you have a family, call them together, tell them the

end and design of the Christian Sabbath, and likewise what kind of worship God expects, what sort of tempers and dispositions are necessary to true worshippers, and sing a few verses, and pray with them. When this is over, it will be time to attend the morning sermon, when there is any, as is the case in most large towns; and sermons at that time either are or ought to be, adapted to the state of serious people, and consequently the most experimental.

9. LET the subject of discourse, during the breakfast, be upon what has been heard, not in a captious criticising manner, but such things as may be most profitable, and suitable to your own state, or the states of such as are about you. No one can tell how useful it is to speak in a serious manner of what we hear from time to time; it not only helps the understanding, but also impresses it upon the memory, and has a tendency to make a deep and lasting impression upon the mind.

10. LET as little be done in the way of dressing meat as possible; so that none be hindered from attending public worship; and upon your return from church, take a little time to meditate again upon that which you have heard, or speak of it at your table, so that every common meal may be converted into a kind of an ordinance. Eat a sparing dinner to prevent drowsiness, and let the interval of public worship be

spent either in reading, meditation, or spiritual conversation. Heads of families will find employment enough among their children and servants.

11. AS there is a sermon in many towns, in the evening, at six o'clock, it would be well to bring all the family with you who can go, and, indeed, invite every one to attend; for the Sunday evening sermons are, or ought to be, calculated for people unawakened; therefore if you love the Lord, and your fellow-sinners, labour to persuade all you can to give attendance.

12. AS soon as you come home, retire for a time, and call over the principal things in your own mind which you have heard, and enquire how your own heart has been affected; note down any thing which you believe would be particularly useful, either by way of caution, encouragement, or exhortation. Lay your defects before the Lord in humble prayer; such as wandering thoughts, coldness, inattention, forgetfulness, or carelessness. Give thanks for any good you may have received, begging that it may abide and be useful in every future period of life; and it might be well to have a little book to make memorandums in, and note down whatever may be of service, which may be a help to your memory, and may have recourse to it afterwards.

13. BEFORE supper, call your family together, sing a few verses, and in a lov-

ing manner make enquiry how they have spent the day, and what account they can give of what they heard. Mildly reprove what you have seen amiss in them, such as sleepiness, trifling or inattention. Commend, in a prudent manner, whatever may be praiseworthy in any of them, that they may have all encouragement you possibly can give; then recapitulate the substance of what you have heard in the House of God, shewing in one view the whole subject, what it condemns, and what it encourages, and then subjoin a short exhortation, how it ought to affect the practice of each one the ensuing week. Close the whole with solemn prayer, suited to the business of the day.

14. **AFTER** supper, let every one spend the remainder of the evening in such exercises, either in private or familiar conversation, as may have a tendency to impress every thing useful upon the mind; so that the Sabbath here on earth, may be a happy emblem of that eternal rest, which remains for the people of God. Then all our toil shall cease, and sorrow shall be no more, but one uninterrupted scene of praise for ever. Thus may our time pass away in humbleness and fear, in fellowship below with God, his people, ways and ordinances, till we join the church triumphant above.

15. **THE** time of night, and a weak body, may now call for repose; some hints upon

the same, by way of meditation, may not be unsuitable.

A Meditation on putting off your apparel.

“ AM I now putting off these badges of my sin and shame? Just so, O my soul, wilt thou put off this vile body, and stand unclothed before the Judge of the living and the dead. But, O my soul, hast thou put off the old man and his deeds? Hast thou put off pride, unbelief, envy, hatred, malice, evil desire, vain-glory, hypocrisy, covetousness, self-righteousness, with every abomination? Hast thou put off the guilt of sin? Is it done away in the precious blood of the Lamb, so that thou dost not lie down under the heavy guilt of one unpardoned sin? Hast thou put on the Lord Jesus? Hast thou put on his strength, wisdom, righteousness, meekness, patience, humility, love, zeal, sincerity and truth? Is he the joy of thy heart, and thy portion for ever? O then, let me praise him, let every breath be spent in praise, and every power and faculty be devoted to him for ever.”

16. AT laying down :—“ And does this frail body call for refreshing repose? Is it wearied with its various infirmities? Must it stretch its wearied limbs, and soon pass

into a state of insensibility? Just so must it lie down in the silent grave,

“ The dreary regions of the dead,
“ Where all things are forgot.”

“ The necessity of sleep seems to be the effect of sin, and therefore an awful image of death, the wages of sin. But, O my soul, art thou safe in the hands of thy saviour? Then fear not death, let not thy frail flesh tremble at the thoughts of dissolution; for though it is sown in dishonour, it shall be raised in glory; though it is sown in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption; though it is sown a natural body, it shall be raised a spiritual body; then fear not, O my soul, commit thy All into his hands who gave himself a ransom for thee; he will not leave thy body finally to perish in the grave, but will raise it once again; fashion it like his own glorious body, and make it a meet inhabitant of the New Jerusalem. Therefore will I lay me down in peace, and take my rest, for it is thou, Lord, who makest me to sleep in safety.”

17. ON covering yourself in bed:—

“ Thus will this frail body be covered, in a little time, in the cold grave, with its vile original, “ *ashes to ashes, dust to dust,*” but blessed be God, it is “ *in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection to life eternal.*”

To be sung before sleep.

O may my guardian, while I sleep,
Close to my bed his vigils keep ;
May he celestial joys rehearse,
And thought to thought with me converse.

Lord, lest the tempter me surprize,
Watch over thine own sacrifice ;
All loose and idle thoughts cast out,
And make my very dreams devout.

BUT when I have done, I must add,
without Christ all the little rules that can be
given, however prudential, will avail no-
thing ; therefore get a real acquaintance
with him, and keep it ; so may you live a
life of faith in the Son of God here, and a
life of glory to all eternity :

Even so, LORD JESUS! AMEN.

A Midnight Hymn.

BEFORE the rosy dawn of day,
To thee, my God, I'll sing :
Awake, my soft and tuneful lyre,
Awake, each charming string.

Awake, and let my flowing strain,
Glide through the midnight air ;
While high amidst her silent orb,
The silver moon rolls clear.

252 **A SABBATH-DAY'S JOURNEY.**

While all the glittering starry lamps,
 Are lighted in the sky ;
And set their Maker's greatness forth,
 To thy admiring eye.

While watchful angels round the Just,
 As nightly guardians wait ;
In lofty strains of grateful praise,
 Thy spirit elevate.

But soon the sky with golden beams,
 Thy skilful hands adorn ;
And paint with chearful splendor gay,
 The fair ascending morn,

And as the gloomy night returns,
 Or smiling day renews ;
Thy constant goodness still my soul,
 With benefits pursues.

For this, I'll midnight vows to thee,
 With early incense bring ;
And e'er the rosy dawn of day,
 Thy chearful praises sing.

FINIS.



