THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH IN ITS EXTENSION TO HEATHEN LANDS:

A

SERMON

PREACHED IN AID OF

THE INCORPORATED SOCIETY

FOR THE

PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL IN FOREIGN PARTS;

AT

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, MADRAS,

ON WHITSUNDAY, MAY 14, 1826.

BY

THOMAS ROBINSON, M.A.

DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO THE LATE LORD BISHOP OF CALCUTTA.

———Crucem dico, non lignum sed passionem. Ceterùm Crux ista et in BRITANNIA est et in INDIA et in universo orbe terrarum.

D. Hieron. Psal. 95.

London:

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AND WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL.

1827.

R. Gilbert, Printer, St. John's-square, London.

TO THE

BRITISH INHABITANTS OF MADRAS,

PARTICULARLY

THE MEMBERS

OF THE

ARCHIDIACONAL COMMITTEE

OF THE

Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts,

THIS SERMON,

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS WITH THE SINCEREST FEELING OF ESTEEM AND GRATITUDE

INSCRIBED

BY THEIR MOST FAITHFUL

AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

It may be necessary to apprize the Reader, that the late lamented Bishop of Calcutta had intended on his return to Madras, after his Visitation of the Southern Provinces, to appeal to the Christian Community at that Presidency, in behalf of the Venerable Society here recommended, with a view to the formation of an Archidiaconal Committee, similar to those already established in the other Indian Presidencies, and in Ceylon. This only was wanting to complete his Lordship's plan of uniting every part of his Diocese in co-operation with the labours of the Society; for not only had he recommended it himself from the pulpits of all the principal Churches, but had commanded all his Clergy to do the

same in their several Stations. After the afflictive event which deprived the Indian Church of its loved and honoured Prelate, and THE INCORPORATED SOCIETY of its powerful and unwearied Advocate, the melancholy duty of this last public appeal devolved upon the Author, who begs to acknowledge his grateful sense of the kind indulgence with which he was received, and of the zeal and cordiality by which all evinced their veneration for their beloved Bishop, in the completion of his plans and purposes, in a manner, of all others, the most agreeable to his expressed wishes.

BISHOP'S COLLEGE,
June 14, 1826.

A

SERMON,

&c.

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2 THESS. iii. 1.

Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you.

SAINT PAUL, the great Apostle of the Gentiles, is writing to his beloved converts of Macedonia, to comfort and confirm their minds in the faith and obedience of the Gospel. They had concluded too hastily, from some expressions in his first Epistle, that the end of the world was rapidly approaching, and many were disheartened and perplexed. In this second Epistle he corrects that error, and foretels the future trials of the Christian Church in many an age of danger and corruption, from the pernicious effect of an anti-christian heresy, which was soon to spring up and trouble them. Having warned them of the coming evil, he encourages them to stand fast, and

hold the doctrines they had been taught; and then commends them, with all the affectionate earnestness of a tender father, to the power and grace of God.

But his heart, however full of love for the Church of Thessalonica, was not confined to one field of labour, but diffused itself over every portion of the human race, and embraced in the ample folds of its affection and desire the scattered nations of the earth. He, together with his fellow-soldiers, the Apostles and Evangelists of the Lord, had harnessed himself for that spiritual warfare, which was to cease only with the universal conquest of the enemies of Christ, and the final establishment of his religion. For their success in this holy enterprize, he entreats the prayers of the Thessalonian disciples, and reminds them that gratitude for the privileges they possessed should excite their compassion for others who were yet left in ignorance and sin,—"*Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you.*"

In appropriating these words on the present occasion, you will not wonder that I feel myself in a situation of more than ordinary difficulty and embarrassment. To have brought forward a subject of such magnitude before an audience like this, would, under any circum-

stances, have appeared to me an arduous and perplexing service. But how painfully are those feelings increased when I remember in whose place I stand, and how changed from our former hopes are the circumstances under which we now plead our cause before you! We trusted to have made known our plans and purposes by his voice who was never heard but he bowed the hearts of all men as the heart of one man; and we looked forwards with confidence to your willing and efficient patronage when it should be solicited in the name of the Most High, and by his beloved and honoured servant. But it has pleased the Almighty Governor of his Church, "whose power we are little able to resist, and whose wisdom it becomes us not at all to question, to order it far otherwise; and whatever our querulous weakness may suggest, far better." —His bright and splendid career of Christian labour was abruptly terminated; his plans, almost in the very moment of accomplishment, were left unfinished; and the leader of our peaceful warfare, whose presence imparted hope and vigour to his followers, is removed from them at the very time when his skill and conduct, his spirit and example, seemed to assure them of success and triumph.

His loss is indeed irreparable to all that

were within the range of his authority and influence. Yet something is still left for the survivors; some of those plans may yet be carried forward, and something of the fortune of the day is yet in our own power. For though the instrument is broken, the invisible and directing hand is still near us, and His promised aid is still vouchsafed to our weaker and more humble efforts. It is with us, as with the successors of the first Apostles. The original promise descended together with the duties that were prescribed; and though separated from their great masters at an immeasurable distance, they were bound to labour in the same work, they were supported by the same encouragement, "*Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.*"

I am confident that I do but anticipate the ready and spontaneous feeling of every one that hears me in applying this precedent to ourselves. The plans which occupied his most anxious hopes, and which he purposed to have recommended most warmly to your support, you will not suffer now to fail. I well know the high place he held (and most justly) in your confidence, your esteem, and your affection; and I need only state in plain and simple terms the object which was near his heart to secure for it in this Presidency, not now

only, but for ever, a prompt and delighted acquiescence. Could I have thought myself excused, most gladly would I have shrunk from this service; yet the privilege I have enjoyed of nearness to him,—a nearness not less of affection than of duty, and especially on points most connected with this subject,—seemed to do away with the impropriety, that would otherwise have existed, of a stranger intruding himself upon your notice. I will be careful to state nothing to you which I have not heard repeatedly from him; and I trust, without fear, to your love for his memory, to pardon every less important imperfection.

You are already apprised of his intention to have recommended to your notice the Christian labours of the ancient and venerable *Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, and especially the extension of its missionary institutions to the spiritual wants of our Eastern empire. Before I proceed to state the claims of the Society to your support, I trust it will not be necessary to detain you long with any previous observations on the duty and the encouragements to missionary exertions in general. There was a time, and that too at no distant period, when it was a subject of doubt and hesitation, how far we

might with safety, or with any prospect of success, labour to extend the religion of Christ to heathen and Mahomedan nations. Happily that age of doubt has passed away. The *grounds* of the duty are recognized and maintained by every portion of the Christian Church, and by none more strongly than our own; and the *encouragements* to an unwearied and increasing activity form the subject of thankfulness and joy to every Protestant communion. I must not however pass it over in silence. There may be many of those who hear me, who may wish to be reminded of what they have known before, and many others, perhaps, to whom the subject is entirely new. The time will but allow me a very cursory and confined view of so large an argument, and I must refer you for fuller information to publications which are not difficult to procure, and for plenary conviction to the volume of truth itself.

Assuming then (what I should blush if I thought it necessary to prove in an assembly of professed Christians) the infinite superiority of our religion over every other system of faith and practice, the great duty of missionary labours might be sufficiently established on the very lowest grounds of humanity and be-

nevolence. For, on what principle of natural right are we justified in withholding from the ignorant, the knowledge we possess; or from the destitute and afflicted, the aid and the consolation which it is in our power to bestow? And if this natural obligation is strongly binding for temporal blessings, how much more so for those that are eternal! I assume not now the helplessness and hopelessness of the heathen world (for who but God can know the infinite resources of His mercy, and who shall dare to limit the boundless efficacy of the death of Christ?) but simply, that we are in possession of a far purer and more holy faith, and of hopes and consolations, which to them are utterly unknown; and who, without incurring the charge of selfish and unfeeling cruelty, can deny (even on this principle) *to them that be in error, the light of God's truth?*

But the Christian stands on far higher grounds in this labour of love; no other than the positive and express command of his Saviour, "*Go ye and preach the Gospel to every creature.—Freely ye have received; freely give.*" The commission he gave to his Apostles, those first Missionaries of his Gospel, knew no other limits than the bounds of the habitable world, no other termination than the last hour of time. "*Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing*

them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you;—and Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world." Until that commission is repealed, and that promise withdrawn, I see not how the Ministers of his Church, in any age, who have entered into the labours of the Apostles, can escape from the necessity that is thus laid upon them, according to the measure of their talents and opportunities. VÆ MIHI SI NON EVANGELIZAVERO! should be the motto, not only of the Apostle of the Gentiles, but of every Christian Church. It should be inscribed on the manual of every Minister of the Gospel; it should be deeply graven on his heart. Woe be to me if I preach not the Gospel! Woe be to me, if from any motive of fear or selfishness, from any coldness of love to my Divine Master or to the souls of men, I seek not, by every lawful and prudent means to extend to all, the blessedness and the promises of the Gospel! The choice of proper means will require deliberation and discretion:—the duty itself must be undoubtingly and implicitly acknowledged,

Even if it could be fully established, that idolatry were followed by no social evils in its train, if it could be proved—what has been

so often asserted—that the heathen countries of Asia are less vicious than the nations of Christendom; still there is enough in the very essence of idolatry itself to stimulate our zeal for its suppression. Its rites and observances are in themselves a dishonour to the name of God, and the intricate and elaborate system of its mythology and its sacrifices is not merely the passing insult of a word—(yet even such an insult God is not slow to punish)—but an open, palpable, and lasting defiance to the majesty of Heaven. We are surrounded with their temples and their idols, and are familiarized by long habit with their idle and monstrous superstitions, and the very frequency of these sights has a tendency to diminish, what it ought daily to increase, a feeling of deep compassion for the deluded victims, "*who when they know God, glorify him not as God, but become vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart is darkened.*"

But what is there in this assertion so often repeated, and which it is hardly credible that the assertors themselves can seriously believe—that there is an equal share of social virtue in the heathens of India as in the Christians of our native island? If it be so, I, for one, will gladly exchange the religion of the Bible for whatever system the wit of man may next de-

vise. To what purpose are we blind to the experience of those who have had the best means of information; and who have seen and lamented the vices which pervade and influence the whole mass of society in this country? To what purpose do we blot from our memory the records of the moral greatness and beauty of our beloved country? I appeal not to the more splendid monuments of her public benevolence, her refuges for the orphan and the destitute, her schools of learning, her hospitals of mercy; though in these alone she is unrivalled among the nations of the earth; I appeal to the great aggregate of her private virtue, which adorns and beautifies, preserves and hallows the whole frame of her domestic society. It is this that makes her towns great, her villages lovely. And where, alas! shall we look, in heathen lands, for the general prevalence of veracity and benevolence,—for the sanctity of the marriage vow,—the retiring scenes of peace and love, of order and religion, of useful knowledge, of unshaken loyalty, of active and enlightened patriotism? But add to this general character, the lives of thousands of our fellow-countrymen, spent in the most disinterested and unwearied exertions for the good of others; their days of labour, and their sabbaths of holy rest; their lives full

of whatever can make life useful and admirable, and their death full of hope and joy—and who can for an instant doubt the determination of the question? We must forget the scenes of our early youth, the friends that we have loved, the parents we revere, the examples that animate us; we must forget the very country that gave us birth, if we do not feel with delighted gratitude the pre-eminence of Christian morality.

But in addition to all this, it is most essential to remember that the nominal Christian, in proportion as he is immoral, in the same proportion does he depart from the spirit and the requirements of his religion; the Hindu, whatever crime he commits, though it be forbidden indeed by the laws of his country, may yet plead for it the example and the sanction of the very god he worships.

But it has been said, (and if it can be said with truth, I consent to plead before you this day in vain) that, however superior Christianity may be to Heathenism, yet God will look on each with equal favour. I have read, indeed, that *the times of this ignorance God winked at*, before the coming of his Son—but I also read that *now*, from the first publication of his Gospel, *he commandeth all men every where to re-*

pent *. That God should have created light, and yet should love darkness equally, were absurd to imagine; nor can it for a moment be maintained, without a contradiction, that the blessed God can equally delight in the homage of those who degrade and insult his majesty, and in their worship who believe the revelation of his will, and obey the Gospel of his Son.

It has been said, also, that whatever be our obligation to missionary labours, yet that it is sufficiently obvious, that we have no reasonable prospect of success;—and we are told on one side that the heathen are too good to need reform, and on the other, with equal positiveness and greater absurdity, that they are too vile for any religion to amend. As to the latter part of the objection, the truth will be found, I believe, as in most points of popular opinion, to lie between the two. They who have the most exalted opinion of the native character will hardly venture to place them above the nations of Greece and Rome in all the meridian splendour of their civilized glory: yet to *them*, no less than to the savages of Melita, the Apostles proclaimed the name of Christ as the

* Acts xvii. 30.

only method of salvation. And they who most unjustly despise our heathen fellow-subjects, cannot deny that there are in them the germs of many great and good qualities; nor has it been ever found in the records of past ages, that the inhabitants of the East, under proper cultivation, have yielded, either in intellectual or moral greatness, to the natives of Europe. The truth is, the degradation of their character, whatever it be, is justly chargeable, either mediately or immediately upon the religion they profess; and this must be exchanged for a purer and better faith, before we can hope to amend the other.

As to the despair of success, it proceeds, in many cases, from defective information as to what is actually accomplished; in others from an unwarranted expectation of an immediate harvest; in many more perhaps from a forgetfulness of that on which all our hopes are founded, the word and promise of God. Many have actually embraced the faith of Christ, many have adorned it in their lives by an uniform and consistent course of Christian obedience, and have finished their course with joy. Nor can we with greater justice, doubt the sincerity of such men, than that of those who have been born and educated within the pale of the Christian Church. The numbers of

the converts (I speak not of the converts of Rome and Portugal, which in many districts have brought such disgrace on the Christian name in India, but of our own Protestant communion) their numbers, in different parts of the Peninsula, and of Hindostan, extend to many thousands: the fruit therefore, even in the present early stage of missionary exertions, has not been small. It may be asked, indeed, what are these scattered thousands compared to the millions of India? and it is a question well calculated to rouse our slumbering zeal,—but surely of no weight to drive us to despair. The infancy of works like this is reckoned not by years but by centuries; and little more than one century has passed since the first Protestant Missionary arrived in India. This is but the seed-time of the heathen world; and it were indeed a strange delusion to expect the harvest while the early showers are falling, and the seed is not yet committed to the ground. "*Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient, establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*"

I confess I see nothing in the history of Protestant Missions which the analogy of nature in the operations of God's providence would not

lead us to expect; and nothing which does not strongly remind us of the first age of the propagation of the Gospel, even in spite of all the difference which results from the miraculous powers of the Apostles. It should be remembered too, in all fairness, that had the resources of wealth and power been open to us, far more, in the same space of time, would assuredly have been accomplished. While the Missions of the Roman Church have in times past been fostered with most abundant and even lavish expenditure, and supported by all the power of the pontifical College, our exertions, in a far less space of time, have been cherished only by the benevolence of individuals; and it has only within these few years, and in the Society which I am now advocating, received the official sanction of the Church and Throne of England.

The Churches founded fifty years ago in the Peninsula, and which, under the labours of the apostolic Schwartz spread through many villages, and flourished in the faith and obedience of the Gospel, have languished from actual want of means. Such has been the wisdom and prudence of their first founders, that they have in them a principle of self-expansion to almost any extent: and that too, not in the hasty and abrupt employment of new measures, but as the natural growth of an existing body. Yet this

healthy and natural growth has been checked from mere want of nourishment. They need the fostering care of their nursing-mother, the Church and nation of England—they need the labours of a greater number of prudent, and learned, and holy men—they need that fatherly hand, removed from them, alas! at the very moment when it was stretched out to protect and bless them. Let them but enjoy these advantages in future, and the Churches of Tanjore alone will soon silence for ever the objection of the inefficiency of our Missions.

But we hear of some who had received the faith of Christ, and have apostatized from it. Alas! it is most true—but do we not read also of a *Demas*, who forsook the Apostle, *having loved this present world*, though the teacher whom he followed was gifted with inspired wisdom, and armed with miraculous powers?—do we not read of many even of our Lord's disciples, "*who went back, and walked no more with him.*"

But this is not all: there are many direct encouragements for our perseverance in these labours of love. I might quote to you the full and express declarations of the word of God, that the religion of the Cross shall one day become universal; but the time would fail me to enumerate even those passages which are most obvious and striking. The sublime and

evangelical Isaiah is full of these visions of future glory. The time of its accomplishment is with God. It is for us to trust in the assurances of his word, that in defiance of all opposition, of the chains of ignorance and superstition, and the still more dreadful slavery of passion, these and all other nations of the world shall hereafter rejoice in the universal advent of the Redeemer. But passing over this general topic of encouragement, which is equally suitable to all ages and all nations, there are some peculiar circumstances in our present relation to this country, which, while they powerfully increase our obligation to labour, encourage also, in an equal proportion, our hopes of success. I mean the undisputed sway of the British sceptre, and the establishment of our Church as an orderly and visible communion in almost every province of the empire. It is hard to conceive, (because it is an anomaly in the moral government of God) that the dominion of this vast continent should have devolved upon a little island of the west, for the sole purpose of aggrandizing her children, without some ulterior design of moral and religious good, of which she might thus become the ready and efficient instrument. And why should we not be permitted to indulge the delightful hope,—suggested not less by the probability of events

than by an affectionate love for the communion to which we belong,—that our Church, by holding forth the word of life, may be not the least among the honoured instruments of gathering within the fold of Christ the scattered millions of India?

In close and official connexion with this Church is the ancient and venerable Society which it is now my duty earnestly to recommend to your Christian bounty and support. More than a century has elapsed since *the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* was first incorporated by royal charter; and during the whole of that period her labours have been wisely and zealously directed to the spiritual wants of the vast continent of America. The fruits of her care and zeal are seen in the episcopal churches of that interesting country, whose stated and regular clergy were originally her Missionaries, as those in the remaining British Dominions of Canada and Nova Scotia are to this day.

The events of later years have encouraged her to extend the sphere of her labours to the British Empire in India; and a letter from the King, calling upon the governors of our Church zealously to aid her endeavours, enabled her to collect the alms of the Christian public for this especial purpose through the Churches of the

United Kingdom. It was determined to apply the proceeds of that collection to some plan which might form a solid and permanent basis for their future labours; and they willingly acceded therefore to the suggestion of the first Bishop of India, for the foundation and perpetual endowment of a College for the promotion of this great end.

The objects embraced by this institution are various and most important. The first is one perhaps whose utility is most immediately apparent, the reception of Missionaries on their arrival from England,—to prepare them by all facilities, of books, of native instructors, of leisure and advice, for the field of labour on which they are entering; to direct their view, without loss of strength or time, to those studies and pursuits which will best fit them for future usefulness; and thus to make the wisdom of those who have preceded them available for their encouragement and instruction. They who are at all acquainted with the history of Missions, and who have seen how much of patient labour and ardent zeal has been absolutely wasted during the first years of the young Missionary's residence in this country, from the mere want of libraries, of instruction, and above all, of the advice and controul of those who have already borne the burthen and

heat of the day, well know how to appreciate the wisdom of this part of the design. A second object is to encourage and superintend translations of the Scriptures, the liturgy, and other religious books, into the different languages of the East, and to take care that no work issue from their press, but with the careful revision and approval of the learned persons connected with the Establishment, and a syndicate of revision specially appointed in each several language. But the chief and most important object of all is the instruction of youth, both Native and European, in sound learning, and religious education, with an especial reference to the sacred office, and thus forming a nursery of future labourers in this vast and important field. These advantages are not, however, confined by the parent Society to those employed by herself alone: they are open to all other Societies connected with our Church; and the only condition required of them is that which gives energy, and weight, and sanction to their exertions, a conformity to the direction and authority of our ecclesiastical governors.

These plans, which the time will not permit me now to enlarge upon, but which I hope to state to you more minutely to-morrow, are now in active operation. The Ministers of the

Gospel have already issued from its walls, and some whose humble and zealous labours, especially among the Paharees of Northern India, are not without large promises of future success. But the great and essential value of the Institution is not, in the very nature of things, to be fully seen, till they who have nursed its infancy and watched its growth shall have been long silent in the grave. And it is on this ground that I venture most strongly to ask for it your present liberality and your continued support. The plans of individual Missionaries, however useful and admirable they may be, cease with the life of those who gave them birth; and much general effect is lost by the interruption and change of a regular system of procedure. This will be a permanent and abiding source of knowledge and truth to generations yet unborn.

In the earliest ages of the Christian Church, such Colleges were found abundantly useful for the propagation of our holy religion in heathen lands; such were the Gymnasia of Ephesus and Alexandria; and by the aid of such seminaries the light of the blessed Gospel was first communicated and continued in our own land. And why may we not indulge the pious hope, that the building now raised on the banks of the Ganges may, by the abund-

ant blessing of Almighty God, *(without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy)* become the fountain of spiritual light to the nations among whom we dwell?

But to fill up this large and extended outline, the liberal and continued bounty of our countrymen is absolutely necessary. If it be not supported and extended on a scale of efficiency answerable to the plan of its first foundation, much of what has already been expended will be thrown away. It has been called into existence, and kings and prelates have watched over its infancy; but its steps are yet trembling, and it looks earnestly to you, to care and provide for its weakness. Much yet remains before it can arrive at its mature and perfect age; when the strength and vigour, which it is now acquiring, will be exerted with successful energy in diffusing, to the provinces of India, an hundred fold the fruits of your present bounty.

But though this be the immediate object for which we solicit your pecuniary support, it is not by any means the only one, nor indeed, (when the relations of this Presidency are considered) the most important. The *Venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* have lately transferred their missions in this place and in the Southern Provinces, to the *Chartered*

Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, as the more directly Missionary establishment, and intend, henceforward, to confine their own future labours to other and more appropriate objects. The formation, therefore, and support of an Archidiaconal Committee of this latter Society, similar to those which have already been formed in the Archdeaconries of Bombay, Columbo, and Calcutta, is peculiarly important here—the very field of their Missionary labours. Upon such a Committee the care of all the different Missionary Institutions of the Peninsula will henceforth naturally devolve; and it was therefore that our beloved Bishop attached so much importance to the measure, and desired its establishment so ardently.

It had been at first his intention to have formed the Committee immediately on his arrival at the Presidency; but he delayed it for two reasons; first, that in the course of his southern tour he hoped to gain a complete knowledge of the actual state of the native Christians, and the necessities of the several Missions, and thus be able to speak to you with greater accuracy from immediate inspection—the other, that he might have longer opportunities of personal intercourse with you, before whom he was to plead their cause, and from the increase of

mutual esteem and regard, which would naturally have resulted, he might appeal to your liberality with the more confident hope of full and abundant success. There was, indeed, but little force in this last reason—your love for him would assuredly have been increased by further intercourse, but you did not withhold it from him for a single hour, from the time that he first ministered amongst you at this altar. He could not even then have pleaded with you in vain. The result of his personal observations is a loss never to be repaired, even in that part of his tour which he had already accomplished. You can well imagine how invaluable would have been his mature and deliberate plans for their welfare and revival, when I tell you, that upon those Churches, especially of Tanjore and Trichinopoly, he rested with a complacency and delight which he had felt in no other parts of India, and which (from the unobtrusive character of the Missionaries themselves) he had not expected there.

To the means which were in his power for their future good, he directed both the feelings of his heart and the energies of his mind with unremitting concentration. It were worth a thousand arguments to engage your sympathy and co-operation in the same cause, if you could have witnessed the divine benevolence

and affection of his manner when those native converts flocked around him, to receive his blessing, and to partake from his hands the consecrated elements, in those holy mysteries which seemed yet dearer to them and more venerable, when administered by him, whom all alike conspired to honour, and in the language of their native land. Had he been permitted to return to this place, to tell you what he had seen and felt, he would have rejoiced to dwell on the numbers, the order, the devotion, of their public congregations, and the general superiority of their moral conduct. And oh! with what touching and resistless eloquence would he then have appealed to you in their behalf, and commended to your powerful kindness these humblest and poorest of his flock! With what earnestness would he have charged you by the love you bear to the Saviour of your souls, by your gratitude to that Blessed Spirit, (through whose sanctifying power alone the sacrifice of your own faith can be accepted) not to cease in your labours of love, till the knowledge of that Saviour is extended to all for whom he died, and the light of that Holy Spirit is diffused, like the light of heaven, over all the kingdoms of the earth. Could he now speak to you from the resting-place of the tomb, or rather from that blessed world whence,

enthroned in imperfect and intermediate happiness, he looks down on these holy assemblies of the Churches which he loved,—this would be his earnest and affectionate appeal: "Let not the cause of your Master's kingdom be the less dear to you because I was not again permitted to challenge for it, in His behalf, your allegiance and support. You repaid my love while I was among you, with all dutiful and affectionate observance; you cherish my memory, now that I am removed from you for ever. I ask from you this *proof* of your love, that you would impart to others, by means best suited to that end, the blessings you yourselves enjoy—and let your wealth, your influence, and your prayers, be cheerfully directed to this object, *that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you.*"

THE END.

Printed by R. GILBERT, St. John's-square, London.

A SERMON.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE PARISH-CHURCH

OF

BRIDGWATER,

ON SUNDAY, JUNE THE 17TH, 1827,

IN AID OF THE FUNDS OF

THE BRIDGWATER DISTRICT COMMITTEE,

OF

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

BY

WILLIAM SHARPE, M.A.

(late one of the Chaplains of Trinity College, Cambridge,)

CURATE OF CHARLINCH, SOMERSET.

Printed at the unanimous request of the Select Committee.

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1827.

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RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND

THE LORD BISHOP OF BATH AND WELLS,

PRESIDENT;

AND TO

THE OFFICERS AND MEMBERS GENERALLY

OF THE

BRIDGWATER DISTRICT COMMITTEE

OF THE

SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE,

THE FOLLOWING

SERMON

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In delivering the following Sermon the Author was compelled, by want of time, to omit a few sentences of it; and, though he is not aware that they contain any sentiments inconsistent with those advanced in the rest of the discourse, yet he considers it a duty which he owes to the Select Committee, who did him the honour of requesting that it might be printed, to mark the passages thus omitted. They are from the words "and this is the maxim" to "ourselves enjoy" in page 19; and in page 29, from "but more especially" to "prudence."

Charlinch, near Bridgwater.
Sept. 22nd, 1827.

A SERMON.

DANIEL xii. 4.

"*Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.*"

A SINCERE believer in the truth of divine revelation will peruse with profound awe every part of sacred Scripture, merely from its general character *as* such; but there are certain portions of the holy oracles, which are calculated to produce, in addition to that sentiment, a train of ideas and feelings peculiar to themselves. Among these, Prophecy is especially to be numbered, as tending to give us a faint glimpse of some of the divine perfections, to which we could not otherwise attain. An examination indeed of the works of nature will disclose to an attentive observer a magnificent view of the wisdom of the Almighty as conversant about the properties of *material* things; but it was reserved

for the *word* of God, and in that for the word of prophecy in particular, to exhibit to us that same wisdom penetrating into the deeper, and darker, and more complicated recesses of the *moral* world; foretelling the conduct of beings endued with free-agency; and showing how the separate, insulated acts of individuals and communities, in different countries and distant ages, shall all occasionally work together in effecting one grand final result, which never entered into the contemplation of any of those who were, under Providence, the instruments of its completion. When we thus hear the voice of God, out of clouds and thick darkness, "declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done [1]," what a solemn and impressive conviction does it excite of the boundlessness of the attributes of the divine Mind: how deeply do we feel that, in regard to him with whom we have to do, "as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts [2];" and how naturally does

[1] Isaiah xlvi. 10. [2] Isaiah lv. 9.

our spirit join in the sublime exclamation of the apostle, " O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God; how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out[1]!"

The prophecies of God's Spirit, like the operations of his hands, are either of judgement or of mercy. In tracing the completion of the former class, by the aid of authentic, historical documents, we perceive that not one jot or tittle of them has passed away till all was fulfilled, whether the denunciation was levelled at nations or individuals; that, if Cyrus be summoned as " the Shepherd" of the Almighty to " perform all his pleasure[2]," in his season he comes, armed with power from on high, to execute the great commission; and that, if a splendid metropolis be assigned as " a possession for the bittern," though exalted to heaven it is speedily brought down, and sinks into a place of " pools of water[3]." And from such palpable teaching as this the inference comes home to us with heart-searching force, that

[1] Romans xi. 33. [2] Isaiah xliv. 28. [3] Isaiah xiv. 23.

"verily there is a God that judgeth in the earth[1];" that "his Spirit will not always strive with man[2];" and that, notwithstanding the Lord is slow to anger, unrepented sin will at last, and in the way which to his unerring judgement appears best, receive at his hands its just recompense of reward.

But, subjects of contemplation, not indeed more edifying, though abundantly more pleasing, are suggested to the mind by those prophetic intimations, which speak of the loving-kindness of the Lord. These incite us to praise him for his goodness, and to declare with thankfulness and joy the wonders of mercy that he doeth for the children of men. And among the instances of divine beneficence recounted in prophecy as treasured up for future generations, the plan of human redemption, as it is incomparably the first in magnitude, so is the mention of it in the same proportion more full and frequent. It is "the silver cord," which connects together the whole series of prophecy: amidst the dark forebodings of national devastation

[1] Psalm lviii. 11. [2] Gen. vi. 3.

and destruction, the Gospel promises gleam forth at repeated intervals, in mild and peaceful splendour, like the placid river, which wanders through the primeval forest, and sheds serenity and brilliancy on the gloomy prospect around, as far as its track can be traced. In short, the predicted mercy of God in Christ appears in holy writ as the fathomless ocean of divine love, from which all particular streams of divine bounty were originally derived, and into which they at last return.

The accounts, moreover, which were delivered by inspired men of old, not only minister consolation to us *individually*, but afford abundant gratification to our charitable feelings in regard to *others:* since they both assure us of pardon and peace, as our own undoubted portion, on the terms of the new covenant; and also declare that the benefits of that covenant are limited neither to times, persons, nor places, but are as general as the goodness of God can make them, or the wants of men can require them to be. Delightful is it to read that the waters of salvation are offered to all, who thirst for them,

"without money and without price[1];" and that, when "the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established, all nations shall flow unto it[2];" and to trace the workings of a gracious Providence, by which that grand consummation, of the restitution of the soul of man to the love and obedience of its Maker, shall be pursued and perfected.

The text refers to one of those methods, by which in the divine counsels it was determined that the knowledge of true religion should be enlarged and spread abroad in the world: "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." In which words we are taught that, by the pious and diligent exertions of men themselves, the truths of religion then already revealed, (all pointing to the Christian system as their one, ultimate scope,) together with those to be hereafter communicated, should be thoroughly investigated; their nature and tendency clearly developed; and the knowledge of them extensively published: and thus others, in still

[1] Isaiah lv. 1. [2] Isaiah ii. 2.

increasing progression, be thereby "made wise unto salvation."

From the declaration of the prophet, which has just been noticed, two considerations arise: relating—

I. To the *duty* of co-operating in the divine design therein expressed; and

II. To the *means*, whereby we may most efficiently become fellow-workers with God in his merciful intentions for the happiness and salvation of mankind.

1. Now the duty of extending the knowledge of divine truth may be very clearly deduced even from those passages of Scripture, which, like the text, *predict* the continual extension of it. But it is important that the argument in this case should not be misunderstood; and therefore here the distinction must be again remarked, between the two different *subjects* of prophecy. It is not competent to any man to become of his own accord a minister of God's *vengeance*, though God may have threatened and pre-

pared vengeance against any portion of the inhabitants of the earth; because divine judgements cannot sometimes be inflicted, through human agency, without an *apparent* infringement on the principles of natural equity [1], and we must not "do evil that good may come [2]." Neither, again, are uninspired men adequate judges when "the iniquity is full," of those who are destined to punishment; when the awful moment has arrived, which the divine forbearance has determined not to exceed. Hence in these cases a particular commission must be pleaded, produced, and proved, expressly addressed to the individual who presumes to undertake the execution of it, in order to justify his interference. But, where God proclaims nothing but intentions of pure unmixed *mercy* towards mankind, and appoints themselves as distributors of the free-gift, which blesses both him that gives and him that takes, in every step of the endless commerce and intercourse of charity,—here no such

[1] As would have happened, for example, with respect to the extermination of the Canaanites, unless there had been a positive command for it.

[2] Romans iii. 8.

scruples can arise; here is no immediate evil to detract from the value of the distant good; here no particular obligation clashes with the general one of doing the revealed will of God; and here, consequently, we are bound with heart and hand to lend ourselves to God's work.—Indeed, the mere character of the Gospel, independently of all other considerations, will directly lead to the same conclusion: for, if the Gospel be, (as no Christian can doubt it is,) a simple, unalloyed *good*, fitted to advance the highest interests and happiness of man both present and future, then is the duty of labouring to extend the knowledge and reception of it at once established on the broad and solid principle, that, by augmenting the happiness of men, we are doing the will of God.—And, lastly, as a specific proof of the same thing, our Saviour's final exhortation to his apostles may be cited, by which they are charged to "go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature[1]."

2. It is next, then, to be considered how

[1] Mark xvi. 15.

we may most effectually discharge the sacred duty, incumbent on us, of propagating the saving knowledge of the Christian faith.

Now different men have different talents entrusted to them, for this purpose as well as others: and amongst those to whom in this instance much has been given, is to be reckoned that body of men to whom the interests of religion have been in a peculiar manner committed. The ministers of God's word, deficient though they may often be in worldly wealth and dignity, are yet most amply provided with means and opportunites of advancing the kingdom of his Son. Besides explaining the principles of it, and pressing the adoption of them, in their regular doctrinal administrations, they are well qualified, by their learning, their habits, and their leisure, not only to dig deep into the mine of sacred Scripture and extract its hidden treasures, but also to place the result of their inquiries, and indeed the whole aggregate of useful Christian knowledge, in the form best adapted to teach and to move; to suggest the most prudent methods of sending forth God's light and truth into the world;

and by the influence which their opinion on such subjects may be expected to have, and ought to have, with other Christians, to procure powerful practical aid for the execution of their beneficent designs. Nor have the clergy as a body—and it would be a mere affectation of modesty to disguise it,—been either insensible to the calls of this nature, to which their station renders them liable, or backward to answer them. To speak of those of our own Church in particular,—because of them we know most,—they have ever been found, (where they ought to be,) in the foremost ranks of the defenders and propagators of the faith ; with one hand beating down the specious sophisms of infidelity, and breaking the galling yoke of bigotry and enthusiasm ; and with the other, leading forth the mild form of genuine Christianity, arrayed in all her simple loveliness, and presenting her to the observance and the admiration of mankind.

Again :—The controul which, by the natural constitution of the world, the great and rich must always possess over the temporal affairs of their fellow-creatures, may be applied

likewise to the furtherance of their spiritual concerns. Aided by such means, and patronized by such authority, religious education may be imparted to numbers who might otherwise wander in darkness ; much may be done towards introducing a taste for religious *reading* among those, whose leisure might otherwise often be employed to their own mischief ; and, in short, religious knowledge may be disseminated by a variety of methods, which will readily offer themselves to a mind properly impressed with a sense of the important duty of engaging in the task.

Lastly :—It is open to men of *all* classes, high and low, rich and poor, to teach and to recommend, with an eloquence more than human, the saving truths of the Gospel of Christ to all with whom they are connected, or with whom they communicate, by exhibiting in their own daily *conduct* a lively specimen of what real religion is ; what it can do in softening and purifying the heart, and exalting and ennobling the whole character of man.

But power, we know, when directed to mo-

ral no less than physical ends, is enhanced by union and combination; and therefore, for the particular purpose now in our view, the exertions of individuals will become the *most* effective if they can be made to act *together;* and this may be done by aiding public associations incorporated for the express attainment of these truly Christian objects. And, blessed be God! such institutions exist in rich abundance in the happy land wherein we dwell.—For one of them I now appear before you a humble, though most willing advocate; and, in further pointing out to your notice the forcible claims, which the venerable "SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE" has to your attention and support, I may be permitted to offer a few remarks on its designs and proceedings, both domestic and foreign.

The benefits which this noble institution confers on its *own* country, are of two kinds; —according as they primarily affect the *young*, or those of *adult* age.

The education of the children of the poor, as it is the first in *order*, of the points to which

our Society directs its attention, so is it likewise the first in *importance ;* for we can safely trust to nothing but the foundation laid in early youth, for the character and stability of the superstructure which is to be raised in after-life. Indeed in these times, the value of education, in the *general*, seems fully appreciated, though on the nature and degree of that, which ought to be communicated to the lower orders, men of equal ability and integrity are known to entertain different opinions. However, the practice of our own Society on this head is perfectly unexceptionable, for it merely professes to give that elementary instruction, which is necessarily the first step in every plan of education, without attempting to engraft upon it that superior and more varied information, which, in this application of it, appears to many, at least doubtful in its advantages, if not dangerous in its consequences. To one ulterior point, however, it is to be remembered, (though to one only,) our Society *does* direct the rudiments of education sedulously and earnestly; it labours, above all things, to give a competent share of *religious* knowledge.

Fanciful men have sometimes amused themselves and the public, (for, happily, their lucubrations have hitherto had no further effect,) in devising systems of education independent and exclusive of religion. They have protested against, what they call, the *injustice* of prejudicing the mind, by infusing into it, as sacred truth, any religious opinions, before the arguments, by which their truth is proved, can be apprehended: and they have therefore proposed, by way of producing an unbiassed decision, to waive the subject of religion altogether, till the person concerned is qualified to examine and judge for himself; when, it seems, that, by a course of patient and logical investigation, he is to select that mode of it, which may most approve itself to his conviction. All this may do well enough as an otiose theory —a philosophic reverie: but how would it work in practice, and how does it accord with fact? Why, the whole course of nature cries out against it, as a thing impossible. No! we must first strip the world of its allurements, and human nature of its passions; sin must be banished from the earth, and men must become creatures of pure in-

tellect, before such a scheme as this can be brought to bear, and then it will not be wanted. For is it probable, is it credible, that a mind perfectly unbroken to religious restraint, and after a long indulgence in the delight of doing what is right in its own eyes, should ever voluntarily seek such restraint; still more, should take pains to seek it; and, most of all, should readily accept it, and contentedly submit to it, when found? And, again, what is the *season* allotted for this momentous inquiry, and when it is expected to take place spontaneously? It is the dawn of manhood: the period when appetite is strongest, and judgement most fallacious; when pleasure tastes the sweetest, and temptations come the thickest. And is *this* a time for coolly weighing arguments in favour of a system for the conduct of life, which, if embraced, will and must introduce mortification and self-denial in practice; a system, which claims to rule over the whole man, and "to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ?" And what, in the mean while, is to become of the blank tablet of the human mind in its transmission through the early

stages of life? Are there no prejudices, but what proceed from religion, which may perchance warp it; and will men lay aside their nature and their habits on purpose to preserve its purity? If the first inscription it is made to bear be not "holiness to the Lord," and it be at length brought forth, for the first time, after a lapse of years, to receive any religious impression, can it be matter of surprise if its surface should then be found pre-occupied, and covered with deep-wrought characters of contamination? If, even in the soil where the good seed has been sown early, the Enemy still busies himself in scattering tares, which sometimes even threaten to choke the crop, how incessant will be his diligence in the mischievous occupation, and what a rich harvest will he reap at last, where the ground has been left vacant for him, and is ready to receive and cherish whatever may be committed to it? Woe to the miserable victim of such an infatuated speculation! Launched upon the ocean of human life precisely in the most dangerous part of it, without the beacon of religious light, without the anchor of religious hope, without the compass which

points to *heaven*, how shall he avoid, without a miracle of mercy, making shipwreck of his immortal soul!

But, in opposition to the wisdom of man, the wisdom of God speaks thus: "Train up a *child* in the way he should go, and, when he is old, he will not depart from it[1];" and this is the maxim, which has been uniformly acted on by "The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge." And, in teaching religion, it teaches it in, what *we* at least consider its purest form, namely, that in which it is professed by our own Church; for which preference the best reasons are to be alleged. For, if religious knowledge is to be imparted at all with any effect, it must be according to the tenets of some one description of Christians; and, if we cannot, as Christians, reconcile it to our consciences to omit religion in a course of instruction eminently intended as practical, and thus countenance the notion of its being a subject but of secondary import, so neither again can we, as members of the apostolic Church of England, be indifferent

[1] Prov. xxii. 6.

about the particular set of doctrines inculcated with it, and thus tacitly concede the principle, that the opinions of all sects and denominations are grounded on equal scriptural authority. We are exhorted by the apostle, "as every man hath received the gift, to minister the same one to another[1];" and it is strictly complying with the spirit of that injunction, to invite others to partake with us in the peculiar religious blessings which we ourselves enjoy. In this clear Christian obligation our Society has patiently persevered; and what powers of human calculation can enumerate the total sum of spiritual advantages, which its exertions have conferred on the children of our country now for many successive generations[2]? How countless are the hosts of little ones who by its means have been brought to Christ. The angels of many of them, and the glorified spirits of many more, do doubtless at this moment behold the face of their Father which is in heaven[3].

[1] 1 Pet. iv. 10.

[2] The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge was instituted in the year 1699.

[3] See Matt. xviii. 10.

But the bounty of our Society likewise embraces the religious improvement of the *adult* poor, whom it furnishes with excellent materials for that purpose in treatises, composed or simplified by some of the brightest ornaments of our Church, and comprehending, in the mass, a store of Christian knowledge suited to the capacity of the least learned, and illustrated in a manner at once perspicuous, interesting, and impressive. Nor is the utility of this beneficent attempt superseded by the provision made in our Church for the religious instruction of its members in general. They, who are most conversant with the poor, and the very pastors and teachers who are set over them in the Lord, will be among the first to acknowledge the value of such collateral aid, when dispensed judiciously, and under proper controul. And the ground of its value is sufficiently obvious. Public religious disquisitions necessarily presuppose in the persons, to whom they are addressed, a general acquaintance with the subject, and with the principal technical terms employed in treating of it; nor can the style and manner of such discourses be uniformly lowered to the

level of the *most* illiterate. Now the private study of plain religious tracts meets this difficulty; it tends to give the requisite preparation for hearing with understanding, and thus renders the public ministration of the word more edifying; not to mention that books are instructors always at hand, and which therefore may be consulted on emergencies, where other spiritual advice could not always be immediately obtained.

Nor, by circulating the fallible writings of men in conjunction with the dictates of the Holy Spirit of God, is the slightest disparagement thrown on the awful character of the latter, or the smallest doubt implied of their sufficiency for all the purposes, which they were designed to answer. We profess not to set up any book as of equal authority and concurrent jurisdiction with the Scriptures; we willingly acknowledge that the study of the Bible alone has brought many a man to heaven; we presume not to think it wants correctives, but we do believe that it requires explanation, to render it as powerful an instrument as it is capable of becoming; and we assert, with reverence

but with confidence, that, valuable as is the gift of the Bible by itself, when joined with a faithful comment the value of the gift is increased[1]. Indeed why should it be imagined that, in this instance, a different rule should regulate the disposition of divine benefits from that which is known to prevail in all other cases? There is not one single *natural* benefit bestowed on men, from which they may not derive additional advantages by the application of their own skill and exertions. The earth on which we tread, though endued by its Maker with a principle of exhaustless fertility, will not however produce the richness of its fruits without the labour of man: the simple elements of nature, nay the very laws of nature themselves, though originally stamped with such a character of intrinsic and inestimable worth as to be indispensable for the preservation of the universe, have yet been converted, besides and beyond, through the ingenuity and industry of man, into the means of promoting his utilities, his comforts, and gratifications in a thousand different ways. That therefore

[1] See note (A.) at the end.

even the *word* of God should be intended to be made more extensively serviceable through the intervention of men, is just what we have every right and reason to expect, and what indeed, as we have seen, the text itself affirms. Nor is it easy, on any other supposition, to give a reason why a standing ministry should have been instituted by divine authority in the Christian Church, and, still less, why it should have been charged upon that ministry, as one of their principal duties to the end of time, to "be instant in preaching the word," and "by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers [1]."

But to return.—The good produced by the means just described in facilitating the understanding of Scripture, and spreading, together with the knowledge, the spirit and practice of the Christian faith, though most undeniable, is not however of an obtrusive nature, and therefore not likely perhaps at first sight to strike forcibly upon the public view; but it may be easily discovered by attentive observation, inquiry, and comparison.

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 2. and Tit. i. 9. compared with 2 Tim. ii. 2.

It is to be seen in the peace and harmony of the family circle of the cottage; in the increasing regularity, propriety, morality, and industry of the manners of its inmates; in their more upright and friendly dealings with others; in their growing attention to spiritual things; and lastly, it exists, where it cannot be seen, in the consolations and the hopes wherewith the heart is cherished.

Sometimes, indeed, the happy effects of a wide diffusion of religious light exhibit themselves in a more manifest form; and, as an example of the kind which has drawn to itself the attention of the Christian world, and in the production of which our own Society has had its full share of labour, as it ought now to have of praise, I need only point out to your notice the wonderful scenes, which are at present passing in our sister-island. See there how the glorious shining of the Gospel is darting, like lightning, from the one end of heaven to the other; how, wherever it penetrates, it strikes to the ground and crumbles into atoms the massive and gorgeous abominations of superstition; and how, when it touches, as with the angel's

spear, the superficial semblance of Christianity, the flimsy phantom of real religion, unable to abide the searching point, starts up at once in its true likeness, and scares from its presence its own deluded worshippers [1]. True it is, that these great events have been attributed to other causes: they have been said by some to have had their rise in corruption, and their termination in hypocrisy. This has been said, but with how little evidence, or rather, in opposition to how much? For where is the proof that these supposed nefarious causes have been actually in operation; nay, they have been positively denied and disproved in every specific instance where they have been charged. And further, supposing even they have been at work, are they commensurate to the effect; and if they are, and are so diligently employed now, why were they never brought

[1] "Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear
Touch'd lightly; for no falsehood can endure
Touch of celestial temper, but returns
Of force to its own likeness: up he starts
Discover'd and surpris'd."

Paradise Lost, b. iv. l. 810.

into action before, when, (whatever might have been the motive for using them at all,) they were at least as much required as now, and might have been as readily forthcoming[1]. But it is equally unnecessary and unphilosophic, when we already have a cause for certain, existing facts, itself too built upon fact, and competent to the explanation of all the acknowledged phænomena, instead of acquiescing in that, to go and seek for another. And in the present case such an adequate cause presents itself at once in the more general dissemination of religious knowledge, which has taken place of late among the people of Ireland; unless, indeed, we are prepared to admit that additional information does nothing for the cause of truth; that Protestantism and Popery may with equal clearness and certainty be deduced from Scripture; that the hand of the Lord is now "shortened that it cannot save" by the appointed means of grace; the efficacy of the word diminished in trying and proving all things; and that "the sword of

[1] See note (B.) at the end.

the Spirit[1]" has lost its temper and its sharpness.

We are, in the next place, to advert to the proceedings of our Society *abroad*.

In this department of its services to mankind it not only exercises the same vigilant care, as at home, that those, who are already included in the family of the faithful, should be amply furnished with Christian doctrine; but it aims also to bring into the Christian household those, who are yet "strangers from the covenants of promise," and, with that intention, to provide that every one, whom it addresses, may hear and read in his own tongue the wonderful works of God. And, in pursuance of its noble views for calling in the fulness of the Gentiles, aware that truth can have no chance of equitable treatment in minds immersed in ignorance and prejudice, and that the force of argument must be able in some degree to be estimated before rational conviction can be obtained, it lays the foun-

[1] "which is the word of God." Ephes. vi. 17.

dation of conversion in education, thus securing a reasonable faith from those, whom it leads to the acknowledgement of Christ; a faith not consisting in a mere nominal profession, and a submission to outward ordinances, but a faith of the understanding, of the moral principle, and of the heart. Of the success, which has hitherto crowned these efforts, the proofs are most satisfactory; but, when we contemplate the activity and energy of the measures with which this sacred cause is conducted, and the immensity of the field of action over which they are spread, the prospect of the ultimate results, under the blessing of the Almighty, is almost too vast for the mind to embrace, too splendid for its eye to look upon. "Many shall run to and fro," said the prophet, "and knowledge shall be increased:" and observe how accurately and literally his words are verified in the unwearied labours of love, which distinguish our Society. "Great is the company of the preachers," who, under its auspices, are proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation; and, as to the sphere of their operations, "their sound is gone out into all lands, and

their words into the ends of the world." Who then can set a limit to the expectations, which on this subject we are justified in forming, and enjoying in anticipation? Who can circumscribe, even in thought, the number of those, whom the Church of Christ, (and, it may be hoped, that pure part of it, the Church of England,[1]) shall hereafter reckon among her children through the instrumentality of our own Society and of others of a similar character, but more especially of one intimately united with our own in principle, in purpose, and in action, and alike venerable in our estimation with that for antiquity, zeal, and prudence?[2] It would seem, if the thought be not too presumptuous, that our enviable country, as it appears the destined vehicle in the hands of Providence for carrying to every people under heaven the blessings of civil freedom and social happiness, were likewise selected for the still more magnificent work of removing the vail from the hearts of all nations,[3] and enabling

[1] See note (C.) at the end.

[2] "The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts."

[3] See Isaiah xxv. 7.

them to see and to rejoice in the glories of the "Sun of righteousness:" in fine, for placing that only limit to the promotion of Christian knowledge, which is mentioned by the prophet,—when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea[1]".

Such then, my Christian brethren, are the principles and objects of an institution, for one branch of which I would now solicit your charitable aid and patronage. I might remark that, in assisting this particular member of our general Christian confederacy, you will benefit your own immediate neighbourhood more especially; and that to do good to those, who are more intimately connected with us, in preference to others, when we cannot make our bounty as large as the demand for it, is a duty recognised and enforced in Scripture[2]. But the views and claims of the Parent Society and of each of its dependencies are the same, and a benefit conferred on that itself, or on any one of its subdivisions, is of course, reciprocal, or ra-

[1] Isaiah xi. 9. [2] See Gal. vi. 10. and 1 Tim. v. 8.

ther, identical. Hence the interests of the latter will be served by the same means which recommend those of the former, and the most eloquent appeal, which can be made in behalf of the Parent Society, consists in a mere statement of the ends it aims at, which are, as we have seen, to promote the glory of God, and to establish peace on earth by leading men every where to the Gospel of peace through that guidance which *we* esteem the safest and the best. As Christians and members of the Church of England you will not, you cannot but readily admit, that, when a cause so dear to you in both those capacities is essentially concerned, you are bound to support it to the best of your ability. You are well aware—I trust it is made manifest to your consciences—that to Christian knowledge producing Christian practice you are yourselves indebted for all the solid happiness which you enjoy on earth, and for all the hopes of future bliss which support you in the hour of trial; and you will not deny to those, who are less favoured than yourselves, the crumbs from the overflowing abundance of that table of spiritual food, which God in his goodness has prepared for *you*. It

would be a noble employment (and an adequate reward would be annexed to it) of the labours of a whole life, to "save even *one* soul from death[1];" to prevent, even in a single instance, the bitterness of repentance for a course of profligacy and wickedness. What then may be expected at the hands of that gracious God, who wills the happiness of all his creatures, for preserving multitudes in the heavenly road, and for converting multitudes from the error of their way? This is the promise which he has given us in his word;—that, in the general resurrection, "they, that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever[2]."

[1] James v. 20. [2] Dan. xii. 3.

NOTES.

Note (A.) *to page* 22.

That all assistance from human interpretations, in the study of the Word of God, ought to be discarded as unnecessary, and derogatory to the sufficiency of Scripture, is no doctrine of the Church of England, though our 6th Article has been sometimes erroneously cited to prove that it is. But that Article, as will be evident to any one who reads it with attention, maintains the sufficiency of Scripture, as opposed to the traditions of the Romish Church, and not as opposed to interpretations of Sacred Writ. The tenets of our Church on this point are most accurately described in the following extract, and contrasted with those of other Christian communities. "The Church of Rome fetters the judgement by implicit submission to authority. Foreign branches of the Reformation give unbounded licence to the fancy by the unrestricted exercise of private interpretation. But our national Church inculcates a liberal, discrimi-

native, yet undeviating reverence for pious antiquity; a reverence alike sanctioned by reason, inspired by feeling, and recommended by authority. This principle is, in truth, our special characteristic; a principle which has enabled our Church to combine discursiveness with consistency, freedom of inquiry with orthodoxy of belief, and vigorous good sense with primitive and elevated piety. This happy temperament is guarded by the most safe and sober limitations. The Church of England, in the first instance, and as her grand foundation, derives all obligatory matter of faith, that is, to use her own expression, all 'that is to be believed for necessity of salvation,' from the Scripture alone; and herein she differs from the Church of Rome. But she systematically resorts to the concurrent sense of the Church Catholic both for assistance in the interpretation of the sacred text, and for guidance in those matters of religion, which the text has left at large; and herein she differs from every other reformed communion."—(Appendix to the admirable Sermons of Bishop Jebb, in which the two positions here laid down are most satisfactorily established.)

Note (B.) *to page* 26.

A few words may here be added to expand and illustrate the reasoning of the text. First then it

may be asked, where must the funds come from, which could induce upwards of 3000 persons *, not only to make a public profession of faith contrary to their real belief, but also to persevere in that profession, in defiance of all the terrors of spiritual censures, and the temporal privations consequent upon them? Again, if bribery is so effectual now, it would have been equally useful for a similar purpose in former ages, when however it seems it was not had recourse to. Further, what is the motive which can induce persons to attempt making conversions by these corrupt practices? Is it an increased attachment on their own part to the Protestant faith, and a desire, for that reason, that it should be embraced by others? Then is it to be supposed that they could employ such dishonest means for the promotion of a religious purpose; for it is a Protestant doctrine, that the means must be justifiable as well as the end. Or shall it be said, that it is because they think their own security requires that their dependants and neighbours should be of the same religion as themselves? They had much more reason to think so during the Rebellions, which have at different times existed in Ireland, (when, however, they adopted no such means of self-defence,) than they have in the

* This was stated in the public journals a considerable time since, as the number merely of the *public* converts to Protestantism up to that period, exclusive of those who had conformed privately.

present *comparatively* tranquil state of that country :—not to mention that a *hypocritical* conformity would be perfectly useless for the end in view on either of the suppositions last made. Finally, how extraordinary it is that, in such an extensive conspiracy as this must be, if it is one at all, not a single individual has yet been found, who, from any of the various corrupt motives which influence associates in guilt, has ever betrayed the secret; that not a single link of this long chain of deception has yet been loosened; that not one of the authors, patrons, or agents of this confederacy has yet been traced and brought to light. And, so far is this from being the case, that in the only instance, in which any attempt has been made to exhibit charges of the kind, now referred to, in an authenticated shape, the attempt has recoiled upon its authors. In a Report drawn up by some of the Roman Catholic Prelates of Ireland, who had been deputed to examine into the particulars of these conversions, accusations to this effect had been brought against individuals, which were afterwards solemnly denied on the oaths of the accused parties themselves. No less than thirteen examples of such calumnious assertions, (taken either from the Report itself, or from other statements circulated by the Roman Catholic priests,) with their respective refutations annexed to each, have been published by "The British Reformation Society," and these are declared to be only a few out of the whole

number which might have been produced. Surely then the evidence for the reality and sincerity of these conversions is most preponderating and decisive.

NOTE (C.) *to page* 29.

It is the manifest duty of the civil rulers of a country, where a national religion is established, which they themselves are required to profess as a qualification for the situations which they hold, to endeavour to extend the same system to the more remote dependencies of that country, wherever the ground is not already preoccupied; such dependencies being part and parcel of the empire, the religious constitution of which they are, by their office, bound to uphold and protect. It is likewise their duty, as *individuals*, to promote, as far as they can, that particular system of religion, which they believe best calculated to teach the genuine doctrines of Christianity, and their opinion on that point is, in the case supposed, decided by their own preference and profession. These observations apply to the situation of our own country, which has immense territorial possessions in every quarter of the globe, many of them consisting of new colonies, whose institutions, both religious and political, are, as yet, perfectly open, and will be just what the mother-country chooses to make them. This is particularly true of our colonies in Australia, South-

ern Africa, and North America. There is no fear indeed that our Government will ever, by its own free choice, introduce into these colonies a religious establishment different from that of the mother-country; but some vigilance may be necessary to guard against the chance of other classes of religionists acquiring so strong a footing there in the outset, that it will take the selection of the form of religion out of the hands of the governing powers, and compel them to establish by law that which has already taken the lead in fact. The most obvious, appropriate and effectual method of preventing this inconvenience would be by laying, at as early a period as possible in the existence of the colony, the foundations, at least, of a national Church, on the model of our own, even where the structure cannot be completed in all its parts; and thus providing the means of spiritual instruction as soon as ever it may be wanted. Much has been done in this way of late years by our own rulers, (for which they have deserved the gratitude of their country, and indeed of the Christian community at large,) in the formation of the sees of Calcutta, Jamaica, and Barbadoes. It is to be hoped they will continue to exert themselves in so good a work, for there is still ample room, and a rapidly increasing demand for such exertions. And, by way of facilitating the appointment of *supreme* church officers, it might be useful to bear in mind, (what no one, who at all understands the subject, can

doubt,) that civil titles and large revenues, however desirable in a highly refined and wealthy state of society, for the more dignified, and therefore the more efficient discharge of the episcopal office, form no *necessary* parts of it, and that it may subsist in all its integrity without them. Such was the episcopate in the Apostolic times, and such, if necessary, it might be now.

In reference to this subject, it is impossible to avoid incidentally remarking the singular service which our two venerable Church-Societies have collaterally rendered to religion, and continue to render to it, by bringing before the notice of Government, from time to time, measures of a religious nature, backed by the great weight of their own opinion and recommendation. In truth they form a most valuable channel of communication between the Church and State, now that the natural and authorized Legislature of the Church, the Convocation, has ceased to exercise its proper and constitutional functions.

By the same Author.

AN EXAMINATION

OF

CERTAIN PREVAILING OPINIONS

ON SOME OF THE

FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY,

IN

A COURSE OF SERMONS

PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.

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A LECTURE.

EPHESIANS V. 25—27.

Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

THE word Church has various meanings in the New Testament. It sometimes signifies, such Christians, whether more or fewer, as assembled to worship God in one place, being commonly in those days a chamber in a private house. Thus St. Paul speaks of the Church which was in the house of Aquila and Priscilla;[1] and addresses an Epistle to Philemon, and to the Church in his house.[2] Sometimes it signifies all the Christians of one city, or neighbourhood, or province, whether worshipping in one place or in many: thus we

[1] Romans xvi. 5. [2] Philemon 2.

read of the Church of Corinth, and of Thessalonica; of the Churches of Galatia,[1] and of Asia.[2] Sometimes, in the opinion of many Protestants as well as Romanists, are intended by the word Church, the rulers or heads thereof, who exercised a jurisdiction over particular assemblies, or over the collective congregations of any city or province, or over the whole Christian Church. Thus that passage is frequently understood:[3] *If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church;* (i. e. the rulers thereof,) *but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen man and a Publican.* But it is also used to designate the whole body of believers in Christ, who were (as the original words both in Greek and Latin signify,) called or gathered out of the unbelieving world by the grace of God, and united into one body, distinguished in the New Testament by various names, such as *Disciples, Saints, Believers, Faithful, Elect, Christians,* and *the Church.* In this last sense we are to understand the word in the text: *Christ also loved the Church;* i. e. not merely, the little assembly who worshipped him in the house of Aquila, or of Philemon; nor only, the Christians of Corinth, or of Asia; nor alone, the rulers or ruler of the Church or Churches; but all, who having been called to faith in him by the grace of the Holy

[1] Galatians i. 2. [2] 1 Corinthians xvi. 19.
[3] Matthew xviii. 17.

Spirit, formed that body of believers which collectively bore his name. In this sense also, St Paul speaks of himself as once *persecuting the Church;*[1] of Christ, as *the Head of the Body the Church;*[2] and exhorts the elders of Ephesus to *feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*[3] But I need not multiply quotations to the same point. The relation of the Church in this sense, or of the whole company of the Faithful to Christ is variously set forth, as that of the Body to the Head—of the wife to the husband—of the household to the master—and of the fold to the shepherd: and St. Paul in his First Epistle to Timothy, speaks of *the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.*[4]

There is received both by Roman Catholics and Protestants a declaration or Confession of Faith commonly called the Apostles' Creed, probably because it contains such truths as accord with the Apostles' writings, and the belief of which may be gathered thence to be essential to the faith of Christians. Though not the most ancient Creed exant, it is unquestionably of very great antiquity. It contains this clause; "I believe—in the Holy Catholic Church;" in Latin, "Credo in Sanctam Ecclesiam Catholicam." There is also a Creed, called the Nicene, (because drawn up at the great

[1] Philippians iii. 6.
[2] Colossians i. 18.
[3] Acts xx. 28.
[4] 1 Timothy iii. 15.

council of Nice, in the year 325, and completed in that held at Constantinople, A. D. 383,) which has these words, " one Catholic and Apostolic Church :" or in Latin, " Unam, Sanctam, Catholicam, et Apostolicam Ecclesiam." Both these Creeds are read in the Morning Service of the Church of England every Sunday; and the latter, regularly in the Mass of the Roman Church; and in the services of both Churches the reading of the Nicene Creed follows next after the Gospel of the day; because, I conceive, supposed to sum up in few words, the fundamental truths of those holy Gospels, of which a select portion has just been read to the people. I advert to these two Confessions of Faith, because all true Protestants (though some may not particularly use, I know none who object to them,) as well as Roman Catholics admit of and concur in them both.

Now in one respect Protestants and Romanists will agree in the interpretation of the words, " One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church :" Both will say, " We mean by them, not any assembly of Christians meeting in one place of worship, nor the Christians of any one city or province, nor the ruler or rulers of the Church, but the whole body of the Faithful, or Believers in Christ Jesus; in fact, what is called in the Text, and elsewhere in Holy Scripture, *the Church.* But as to a farther explanation, they will greatly differ. The Romanist will say, " I believe in one, holy,

Catholic, Apostolic Church, by which I understand the Church of Rome, and none other: and I hold the word Church in the Text and the Church of Rome in her true members to be synonymous and convertible terms, of the same import and extent. And all other, whether churches or individuals, though they be called Christians, being not in the Communion of the Roman Church, are not members of what is denominated in these Creeds, the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church: neither do they belong to that Church, which, as the Scripture says, *Christ loved and gave himself for it.*" That these are the avowed sentiments of the Church of Rome on this subject may be proved by reference to her authorised books of instruction, used in this country. I shall quote from two of these. "We must believe the Catholic or Universal Church of Christ, of which he is the perpetual head, and his Spirit the perpetual director; which is founded upon a rock, and is ever victorious over all the powers of death and hell. This Church is always one, by all its members professing one Faith, in one communion, under one chief pastor, succeeding St. Peter, to whom Christ committed his whole flock."[1] "Q. *What is your profession as to the article of the Church?* A. It is contained in those

[1] Garden of the Soul: p. 14. A Book of Doctrines and Spiritual Instruction in very great use and esteem among English Roman Catholics.

words of the Nicene Creed, " I believe one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church." Q. *What do you gather from these words?* A. 1. That Jesus Christ has always a true Church upon earth. 2 That this Church is always one, by the union of all her members in one Faith and Communion. 3. That she is always pure and holy in her doctrine and terms of communion, and consequently free from pernicious errors. 4. That she is Catholic, that is universal, by being the Church of all ages, and more or less of all nations. 5. That this Church must have in her a succession from the apostles, and a lawful mission derived from them. 6. (Which follows from all the rest) That this true Church of Christ cannot be any of the Protestant sects, but must be the ancient Church, communicating with the Pope or Bishop of Rome."[1] Thus you will clearly perceive, Brethren, that the Church of Rome identifies herself with the Church of Christ, and to the entire exclusion of all other Christian bodies or Churches. Against such a view, and such statements, we are *Protestants*. We also profess to believe in One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church; and which we hold to be that Church, which *Christ loved and gave himself for;* but we do not believe this Church to be the

[1] See a Tract entitled, " Grounds of the Catholic Doctrine, as contained in the Profession of Faith, published by Pope Pius IV."

Church of Rome, (though we hope that many of her members be included in it,) but a Church far more universal in its extent, and materially different in its character. What this Church is, or in other words, what meaning a Protestant attaches to the term *Catholic Church*, when he speaks of it, or uses it in these Creeds or in his prayers, it is the object of this discourse to show, and to endeavour to prove its correctness in opposition to the views and definitions of Romanists. I believe I have made a fair statement of the case. And I pray God that I may treat it scripturally, usefully, candidly, and so as to convince gainsayers, and especially to benefit you, my dear Brethren of the Church of Rome, who may hear or read this discourse.

"The Church," as Roman Catholics affirm and Protestants must admit, is unquestionably distinguished by four marks, for both profess to believe in One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church. These marks are 1. Unity: "in one"—2. Sanctity: "in one, holy"—3. Universality: "in one, holy, Catholic"—and 4. (what I may be allowed here to call Apostolicity:) "in one, holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church." Therefore, Protestants do as much affirm and believe the Church of Christ to be One, and Holy, and Catholic, and Apostolic, as Romanists; and therefore the frequent accusation of the latter that Protestants split the Church into portions, or deny its unity,

and hold many Churches is not correct; for in these Creeds they constantly assert that unity; and as they certainly do not give the same meaning to the words, One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic, which Romanists do, they may justly claim to be heard in explanation, and not be at once set down as uttering with their lips what they do not understand, and cannot intelligibly explain.

1st. then: UNITY is a mark of the true Church. This, say the Roman Catholics, consists in the being under *one head*, not only heavenly, which is Jesus Christ, but an earthly head also, which is the Pope or Bishop of Rome, the Vicar of Christ:—in the holding *one faith*, (which is summed up in the Profession of Faith, published by Pope Pius IV. or contained in the decrees of the Council of Trent, and received as essential to Salvation:) and in having *one Communion*. And that I do not mistate the sentiments of the Roman Catholic Church respecting herself, and that unity which is to characterize her, I refer you, in addition to the two Books already quoted, to the abridgement of Christian Doctrine, being an exposition in question and answer, of the chief points of faith and practice, and set forth by the authority of all the present Vicars-Apostolic in this country.[1] You will

[1] The following questions and answers are found in p. 15.
Q. *What is the ninth Article of the Creed?*

clearly perceive from it, that Roman Catholics not only identify their Church with the Holy Catholic Church, with that Church which is designated in Scripture, the Body, Household, Spouse, and Fold of Christ, but also make her unity to consist in that I have just stated. From this statement we Protestants in our view of the unity of the Church do in the main dissent: in part we assent to it. We believe the Church to be one body, having one Head, Divine, Heavenly, Spiritual, the Lord Jesus Christ; ruling and instructing it in every place and age visibly by his servants the pastors and ministers of the

A. The Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints.

Q. *What is the Catholic Church?*

A. All the faithful under one Head.

Q. *Who is that Head?*

A. Christ Jesus our Lord.

Q. *Has the Church any visible Head on earth?*

A. Yes, the Bishop of Rome.

Q. *Why is the Bishop of Rome the head of the Church?*

A. Because he is the successor of St. Peter, whom Christ appointed to be the head of his church.

Q. *What is the Bishop of Rome called?*

A. He is called the Pope, which word Pope, signifies Father.

Q. *Is then the Bishop of Rome our spiritual Father?*

A. Yes; he is the spiritual Father of all the Faithful.

Q. *Has the Church of Christ any marks by which you may know her?*

A. Yes; she has these four marks; she is one,—she is holy,—she is catholic,—she is apostolical.

Q. *How is the Church one?*

A. Because all her members agree in one faith, are all in one communion, and are all under one head.

Church, and by his written laws contained in the Sacred Scriptures; the one being enlightened and guided, the other unfolded and explained by the grace of the Holy Spirit. But of such visible and earthly Head as the Pope, we know not, neither can allow it to be in any wise essential to the Church's unity: and that, because we no where find it mentioned in Holy Scripture, "which, (as St. Chrysostom says) contains the only method to discover the true Church of Christ:" nor in the most ancient Confessions of Faith, nor in the sense in which Roman Catholics understand it, in the works of the early fathers. Much is said in the writings of the Apostles respecting the Church, and much which declares or necessarily implies its unity, as where it is compared to a Body, a Wife, a Household, for these figures involve the idea of unity. Yet no where is there the slightest reference to any visible or earthly head as part of, or essential to that unity. We read *there is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism.*[1] *He* (i. e. Christ) *is the head of the body the Church. Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence.*[2] *Let no man beguile you of your reward, in a voluntary humility and worshipping*

[1] Ephesians iv. 4, 5. [2] Colossians i. 18.

of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.[1] *Ye were as sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.*[2] In these and very many other passages One Head of the Church, and one only, is spoken of, i. e. Christ, and there is not the slightest reference to any other. Surely it is, to say the least, singular, if such a visible Head existed as the Pope, designed by Christ to fill such an office in the church as to preside over it, that no reference should be made to him in those Epistles, which as the Church of Rome herself admits, were written to instruct men in the things which regard their salvation. It is most remarkable that not one apostle, in his letters, should ever refer to, or remotely hint at the existence of such an authority, even in passages which naturally and almost necessarily led to mention it. St. Paul, speaking of the Church of Christ says, *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the Church: first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles, &c.*[3] Compare with which, a parallel passage, *He gave*

[1] Colossians ii. 18, 19. [2] 1 Peter ii. 25.
[3] 1 Corinth. xii. 27, 28.

some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the knowledge of the Son af God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.[1] It is extraordinary indeed, that in enumerating the overseers and instructors of the Church, the apostle should totally omit all mention of that authority, which, if the Romanists are right, had been given by Christ, and set in the Church, to be his own representative on earth, the Chief Overseer and Ruler of Bishops and Pastors, the Head of his body the Church, and the recognition of whom is now held to be, and must have ever been on their showing, essential to salvation. I call upon any Roman Catholic to adduce one single passage from the Epistles of the New Testament, which will admit of fair reference to any such supreme authority or visible head of the Church, as the Pope or Bishop of Rome, or of any other city. And this silence of these inspired writings speaks volumes against the divine right of Supremacy claimed by the Popes. Neither is there reference to it in any ancient Creed. Besides the Apostles' and the Nicene Creed, which we all know well

[1] Ephesians iv. 11—13.

are quite silent on this subject, there exist many Creeds or Confessions of Faith, drawn up in the first four centuries by councils, or by fathers, or by individuals. They much resemble the Apostles' Creed, and differ little from each other. Most of them contain a declaration of belief in the Catholic Church, but not one refers, however remotely, to the existence of any such visible Head of the Church as the Pope, nor to the See of Rome. And yet these creeds were written for the very purpose of producing, or maintaining, or delaring the Unity of the faithful. Faith in Christ, and as the Saviour and Head of his Church, is an essential article of them all, but there is a total silence as to any other head. Now had the acknowledgement of such a head been essential to the church's unity, would all mention of it have been omitted in formularies drawn up in order to exhibit the unity of faith of all the faithful? Would every one of these sixteen or seventeen ancient Confessions of Faith have omitted an article of belief so important and fundamental, as the supremacy of the Pope and See of Rome is held to be by her adherents?[1] I advert now

[1] Besides the Creeds of Irenæus and Tertullian, which will be referred to after, I give here that handed down to us by the author of the Apostolical Constitutions, and which may be referred, at the latest, to the end of the third century. He brings in the Catechumen making his profession in these words: "I believe and am baptised in one unbegotten, the only true God

to the Fathers; these are often referred to triumphantly by the advocates of the Church of Rome, as speaking of that See and its Bishops in language which clearly proves their acknowledgment of the supremacy of the one, and the singular dignity and authority of the latter. I should go out of the limits of my subject to discuss fully a point which will form a special and

Almighty, the Father of Christ, the Creator and Maker of all things: and in one Lord Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, the first-born of every creature, who before all ages was begotten, not made, by the good will of the Father, by whom all things were made in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, who in the last times came down from heaven, and taking flesh upon him, was born of the Holy Virgin Mary, and lived an holy life according to the law of God his Father; was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and died for us; and the third day after he had suffered rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, and shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end. And I am baptised into the Holy Ghost, that is to say, the Comforter, which wrought effectually in all the saints from the beginning of the world, and was afterwards sent to the apostles by the Father, according to the promise of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and after the apostles to all others, who in the Holy Catholic Church believe the resurrection of the flesh, the remission of sins, the kingdom of heaven, and the life of the world to come."—The Creed of Jerusalem after reciting almost verbally the first articles of belief which are in the Apostle's Creed, adds, "And in the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who spoke by the prophets:—In one baptism of repentance, in the remission of sins, in the Catholic Church, in the resurrection of the flesh, and in life everlasting." Not a word or a hint respecting Papal Supremacy.

separate subject of discourse. Much of that language of deference which some of the Fathers use respecting the Roman See, is very naturally accounted for by the weight which that See would acquire, as the episcopate of the capital of the Roman Empire, and of that city which was the chief seat of temporal power, the source whence emanated all the authority that regulated the affairs of her widely extended provinces, the seat of appeal from all quarters, and the resort of her subjects of all tribes and languages. A few politic and ambitious men would easily find occasion from these circumstances to acquire an authority which in succeeding and darker ages it would not be difficult to stablish and confirm by wrested passages of early Christian writers, and even false interpretations of Holy Scripture. Spiritual aid would be brought in to strengthen and complete what was first erected on the basis of temporal importance. Such was the case, in fact, with the Church of Constantinople, which in the fourth century disputed precedence with the See of Rome, and claimed a superiority over all the rest of the episcopal order: and why? because by the division of imperial authority, that city had become joint mistress of the civilized world, and as afterwards by the fall of the Western Empire she became sole capital, her Church threw off all acknowledgement, not only of dependance, but of communion with the See of

Rome. But that even those Fathers who have spoken in the strongest terms of the authority of that See, did not regard it in the light in which, in later days, the Papacy has represented itself and claimed to be regarded, may appear from referring to their expositions of the principal, and with one exception the only passage in which the divine right of supremacy of the Bishops of Rome is pretended to be founded. *I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.*[1] Now many of the Fathers especially observe that the power of the Keys (as it is called) here given to Peter, was extended afterwards to all the apostles:[2] and many of them, as Justin Martyr, Chrysostom, Athanasius, and Augustine, by the rock, understand not Peter, but his confession of the Saviour: *Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God.* Whether this is the right interpretation of the passage is not the question. It only shows that they who gave it did not find in the words what the Romanists have since discovered. Those who by the ROCK,

[1] Matthew xvi. 18, 19.

[2] Matthew xviii. 18. John xx. 21—23. Acts xv. 23. and 2 Corinthians xii. 11.

suppose Peter himself to be meant, yet understand not the passage as conveying to his successors the power claimed by the Popes. Indeed, that Peter was ever Bishop of Rome, or even at Rome, is altogether a very questionable point. A careful and impartial examiner of the writings of the earliest Fathers will be surprised to find how little bearing on this subject, even the avowed advocates of the Church of Rome are able to extract from them, with all their confident pretensions. These excellent men exhort much to unity, and enlarge upon it, but it is a unity in Christ, not in the Pope; a unity in the true Catholic Church, as we Protestants explain that term, not in the See of Rome; further than as that See, from the rank it derived from the capital of the Roman empire, is sometimes adverted to very naturally as a leading portion of the Church Universal. Cyprian, an eminent Father in the middle of the third century, is often particularly adduced in support of the Papal Supremacy. But on an attentive examination of the passages referred to, (and particularly of his treatise on the Unity of the Church, where we may expect him to speak out most clearly)[1] he will be found to be referring to the Supremacy of the

[1] See "Difficulties of Romanism," by Rev. G S. Faber, book ii. chap. iii. p. 348. I have carefully reviewed the original language of Cyprian, and am satisfied that Mr. Faber's remark to this purport is correct.

United Episcopate of the Church, as the ruling power therein, and not to the Supremacy of the See of Rome.

Neither then in the Holy Scripture, nor in ancient Creeds, nor in the earliest Fathers do we find subjection to any visible earthly head, whether at Rome or elsewhere made an article of Faith, or essential to the Unity of the Church. In all we find *One Head* spoken of, *the Lord Jesus Christ*, and union to him, the character of his body the Church. It has not two heads. And *Him* every true Protestant in every part of the world, and all true Christians, to whatever particular part of the Church, or outward denomination they may belong, recognize as *the One only Head.*

But agreement in one Faith is also an essential part of the Unity of the Church. So says the Roman Catholic, and so says every well-instructed Protestant. Agreement in the Faith, but not in the faith as set forth by the Church of Rome in the decrees of the council of Trent, or in the Creed of Pope Pius IV. but as taught in Holy Scripture and in that alone; so that whatsoever is not contained therein, Protestants receive it not as an Article of Faith, nor regard it as essential to salvation. Roman Catholics are apt to suppose that because there are differences as to forms of worship and some matters of Church discipline among Protestants, there is therefore no unity of Faith and Doctrine: and

that on the other hand, because there is an external appearance of agreement in worship and discipline in their own Church, there is that entire Unity of Faith which entitles her exclusively to be considered the one true Church. Both these suppositions are erroneous.

All Protestant Churches concur in their belief of the Articles of Faith, contained in the Apostles' Creed: and that these are not unimportant, hear the testimony of the Church of Rome herself. In one of those books of instruction already quoted, is this:—*Q. What are the chief things which God teaches?* A. They are contained in the Apostles' Creed."[1] Now, by *the chief things which God teaches,* does the Church of Rome mean things to be believed as essential to Salvation or not? If she does, then all true Protestants, in believing the articles of the Apostles' Creed, believe all things essential to Salvation. If she does not, then there are things essential to Salvation, which are not among *the chief things which God teaches.* An absurdity which surely no Romanist will maintain. In the belief of "the chief things which God teaches," all true Protestants and true Christians, whether of England, or of Scotland, or of Germany, or of America concur. I say therefore, Brethren, that true Protestants, in every part of the earth, have herein a unity of

[1] Abridgement of Christian Doctrine—page 5.

Faith, and just that unity, and just as much unity as the persons who compiled that and other ancient Creeds agreeing therewith, required. And in all the public confessions of Faith, drawn up during the first four centuries after our Lord, all such Protestants agree. The Apostles' Creed, and indeed Creeds in general, may be defined to be, " A Summary of Articles of Faith, expressing concisely and comprehensively the doctrines held to be essentially necessary to everlasting Salvation. The Holy Scriptures may, in a more extended sense, be called the Creed of Christians: but as these, beside the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, comprehend also a great variety of truths of less importance; it became expedient for the Church to frame a compendium of the articles of indispensable belief, which might be readily learned, easily understood, and effectually retained by each of its members."[1] One of the most ancient of these now extant, was composed by Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, the disciple of St. John. " The Church disseminated through all the world, even unto the ends of the earth, received from the apostles and their disciples, the belief in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth, the Seas, and all that are therein. And in one Jesus

[1] See Shepherd on the Common Prayer, Vol. i. p. 209. " Of the Creed."

Christ, the Son of God, who for our Salvation was incarnate. And in the Holy Ghost who preached by the Prophets, the dispensation of God, and the advents of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ, his being born of a virgin, his sufferings, resurrection from the dead, ascension into Heaven in the flesh, and his coming again in the glory of the Father to gather in one all things, and to raise from the dead the flesh of all mankind, that to Jesus Christ our Lord, God, Saviour and King, according to the good pleasure of the invisible Father, every knee may bow, both of things in Heaven, and in Earth, and under the earth : and that every tongue may confess to him, and that he may exercise righteous judgment upon all, consigning to everlasting fire all spiritual wickedness, both the angels who transgressed and became apostates, and ungodly, unjust, lawless, and blasphemous men—and bestow life upon all those that are just and holy, that have kept his commandments and abide in his love, either from the beginning of their lives, or the time of their conversion, investing them with immortality and everlasting glory." "The faith thus delivered, (says Irenæus) the Catholic Church throughout the world retains with one consent, as if it were animated with one soul, and spake with one mouth. This is the belief of the Churches of the East, of Egypt, of Africa, of Spain, of Germany, and of the Celts, as well as of the Mediterranean

Church of Palestine:" and in the words of Tertullian;[1] "it was the belief of those parts, which though inaccessible to the Romans, were yet subject to Christ:" and we add, *it is, and has been the faith of all true Protestants in all parts of the earth.* "This faith, (continues Irenæus,) like the Sun, illumines the world: (but it was only half a Sun and hardly that, if the additional articles of Pope Pius's Creed are essential to Salvation.) Being one and the same, neither the most eloquent teacher, nor the most eminent ruler in the Church can add any thing to it." Indeed—not add? How has the Church of Rome, or the eloquent teachers of the Council of Trent, or that eminent ruler in the Church, Pope Pius IV. added a belief in the Pope's supremacy, in Purgatory, in prayers for the dead, in the Mass, in the invocation of the Saints and other things, and added it as essential to Salvation, not one of which is found, (as all may decide,) in this or in any other ancient Confession of Faith? That unity of Faith which is characteristic of the true Church, is unity in the chief things which these

[1] This ancient Father says: "There is one rule of Faith only, which admits of no change or alteration. That which teaches us to believe in one God Almighty, the maker of the world, and in Jesus Christ his Son, who was born of the Virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, the third day rose again from the dead, received into Heaven, and sitteth now at the right hand of God, who shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead, by the resurrection of the flesh."

Creeds deliver as compendious summaries of the principal doctrines of Scripture. And this unity Protestants have. And is this no unity? Are Protestants so immensely and inseparably divided? Is there no agreement among them, when all that the Church of Christ for the first four centuries publicly declared she held essential to Salvation, they publicly and constantly hold? Is there no unity of Faith among them, when one true and upright Protestant travelling through the earth, wherever he meets with another true and upright Protestant, shall find him believing in the same God, the same Saviour, the same Holy Ghost, the same way of Salvation by Faith in that Saviour's merits, the same necessity of holy living, and of dependance on Divine grace, and a renewal of heart and life, all the records of the same blessed volume of Inspired Truth; yea, every thing in the Apostles' and other ancient Creeds? And where, with the external appearance of concord so greatly boasted of in the Roman Church is her entire unity of Faith? I speak not now of unity of Spirit, but I ask where was the perfect unity of Faith in the members of that Church, when two of her most celebrated and zealous monastic orders disputed respecting the immaculate conception of the Virgin, the Franciscans as vehemently maintaining as the Dominicans opposed it?—when the Jesuits and Jansenists broke in upon the slumbers of their

Church by long and loud contention respecting the doctrines of grace?—when it is a notorious fact, that not only Popes have decided against Popes, but Councils [1] against Councils, and the Church of one age against the Church of another; and what canonized Saints taught in one age as Divine Truth, and was received as such in the Church for centuries, the Pope and his Cardinals in later times condemned as pernicious error? [2] On a point of fundamental importance as it respects the authority of the Roman Church, and the obedience of her people, there is an entire disagreement among them; viz, where that Infallibility resides, on which she supports her pretensions; some placing it in the Pope alone, some in general councils, some in both united, and others, sometimes in one, and sometimes in the other.[3] But on every essential and fundamental point, on every doctrine which the Sacred Scriptures teach, as necessary to Salvation, and

[1] The council of Constantinople in 754, decreed against image worship, and ordered the removal of images from Churches: the second council of Nice, in 787, decreed the re-establishment of image-worship.

[2] The doctrines of Augustine respecting Roman Corruption, and the nature and efficacy of Divine Grace, were condemned by successive Popes, in the 17th century, while the contests which arose on the subject, produced at least as bitter animosities, and as much of party spirit and feuds, as the Romanists can lay to the charge of the Protestant Communions.

[3] See Fabers Difficulties of Romanism. Chap. i. Book ii.

which early Creeds, and early Fathers confirm as such, there is among true Protestants, and real Christians of every Church and age, a unity of Faith, and such as is essential to the true Unity of the Church.

True Protestants will concur also with Roman Catholics in allowing that the Unity which both admit to be a token of the true Church is a Unity of Communion. They maintain also that it exists among themselves fully to the degree in which it can be required as a mark of Unity; and that beyond this it has not so existed in the Romish Church, that that Church can say it has been always and alone characterized by Unity in Communion. Among all real Christians as well as Protestants there is an entire communion in the object of worship. They all have one and the same Father; one and the same Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, *of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named;*[1] and one and the same Holy Spirit. In them is strictly fulfilled that prayer of Christ, *That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*[2] The union of the Father and the Son is not a visible, tangible, nor external union. It is mysterious and spiritual. And such is the communion existing between all true Christians. It

[1] Ephesians iii. 15. [2] John xviii. 21.

does not exclude, but it does not necessarily consist in outward communion. They all have one object, to glorify God, serve their Saviour Jesus Christ, and save their own souls, and those of others: they have all the same enemies, Satan, the world, and sin; the same hope, mainly the same trials, cares, and temptations; they have a communion of interests, joys and sorrows. One and the same Blessed Spirit dwelling in them all, knits and unites them to each other, in the Communion of the Church Militant; and by his hallowing influences and holy affections, and blessed hope which he produces in them, knits them to the Holy Angels and Spirits of the just made perfect in the Communion of the Church Triumphant; and thus is fully effected the Communion of Saints. And by the same Spirit they have a union mysterious and spiritual with the Father and the Son, as well as with each other, and form what the Church is represented to be, one body under one invisible Head—one wife of one heavenly spouse—one household under one Divine Master—one fold under one good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. Roman Catholics define the Communion of Saints, to be "a Communion of all holy persons in all holy things."[1] I object not to the definition, if it be only made clear what "all holy things" mean. Are all external rites and cere-

[1] Abridgement of Christian Doctrine—p. 17.

monies intended? Is it uniformity of worship that is designed by the term? Then this communion exists not in their own Church; for to this day the Maronite Churches in Asia, including very many thousand members, all subject to the Pope and Roman See, have their own ceremonies and rites of worship. "Among them (says a respectable historian,[1]) there is nothing to be found that savours of Popery, if we except their attachment to the Roman Pontiff." In truth, there is less of external and actual communion in worship in Roman Catholic than in Protestant congregations. For in the latter all who really worship say the same prayers and perform the same devotions at the same time: whereas, among the former each individual may say those prayers, and perform those devotions which he or she may most approve; and while the Mass is going on at the altar, a hundred different prayers may be saying by so many worshippers: so that could any one note down the devotions of the members of any Roman Catholic congregation at the same time, from the Priest to each of the worshippers, he would record an infinite variety of forms and modes of prayer; some repeating *pater-nosters*, or *our Fathers*, while others are saying, *aves*, or *Hail Marys*; one making an act of Faith, while another

[1] See Mosheim, Ecclesiastical History, vol. iv. p. 264. cent. xvi. chap. ii.

is repeating an act of Hope, and another an act of Contrition: one reciting, it may be, the Litany of Jesus, and others the Litany of the Virgin; and all saying something different from the service performing at the altar. Some would be found praying to one Saint, some to another, some perhaps to God; so that a congregation of 500 or 1000 persons, may be saying at the same time and place, nearly as many different prayers, and may have as many different objects of Latria or Dulia, i. e. of Supreme or inferior worship. Assuredly then Roman Catholics have no right to condemn Protestants as having no external communion in worship among themselves, because they have different forms of prayers, or because some have forms and some not, while there is so great a medley of devotion found among themselves. But if they intend not an unity in all external rites and ceremonies, then in how many and in what? Where do they draw the line? All great Protestant Churches receive the same Sacraments, of Baptism and the Lord's Supper: admit of the same leading parts of public worship, prayer and praise, and preaching of the word; nor do they differ so much even in external ceremonies as may be thought, seeing that in such as have most of these, they are few and simple. But if this "communion of all holy persons in all holy things," is not in externals, but is an internal and spiritual communion, such

as I have already described, then does it not include every one, who by participation of the Holy Ghost, is made a member of Christ's mystical body, a stone in his Spiritual Temple, an inheritor of Heaven? It is a communion to which no one Church has exclusive claims, or a superior claim above other Churches. It is a spiritual, invisible, but actual union. *Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit—whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.*[1]

This, then, is the true Unity of the True Catholic Church: by which all the Faithful in every age and part of the world, by whatever name distinguished, are knit together into one body: a Unity in essentials; a real Unity as it respects subjection to one Head, agreement in one Faith, and Communion in one Spirit. Whereas, the unity which the Roman Church pretends, of subjection to an earthly head, the Pope, agreement in the belief of things neither taught in Scripture nor found in ancient confessions of faith, and communion in external rites, is an invention of her own to rivet more strongly those chains of spiritual domination by which she holds her members bound in the prison-house of her Superstition.

[1] 1 John iv. 13—15.

I have dwelt largely on this point of *Unity*, because it is what the Romanists regard as their strongest hold against Protestants, with what truth I have endeavoured to show. But,

2nd. HOLINESS is a Token of the true Church. We believe in One *Holy* Church. The Church is holy (say the Romanists) " because she teaches a holy doctrine, invites all to a holy life, and is distinguished by the eminent holiness of so many thousands of her children."[1] The definition may be correct, but I question its application to the Church of Rome. Certainly it is not applicable to her exclusively. Doubtless there have been, and I hope are very many holy persons in her communion: but assuredly not fewer in the Protestant communions. Let the Romanist be satisfied with the former concession, if he will not assent to the latter assertion. I shall be glad if it tends to satisfy him that all Protestant advocates are not so prejudiced, as to deny the existence of real piety in a church which they must nevertheless consider in her spirit and doctrines hostile to it. But I wish here once for all to observe that we are not setting up Protestantism, in opposition to the Church of Rome, as containing within itself alone the Church of Christ. Far from it. The one holy and true Catholic Church, (as I have already shown,) embraces all of every

[1] Abridgement of Christian Doctrine—p. 16.

particular denomination or Church, who are comprehended therein by its four characteristic marks.

I shall not enter into any discussion of the claims of many of her canonized Saints to the reputation which the Church of Rome has given them, nor shall I do more than say, that we cannot allow her to claim as exclusively her own, those holy individuals who adorned the first six or seven centuries of the Christian era. We believe the Roman Church as she now is, had no existence at that time; that her corruptions and peculiarities are most of them of a later date, since even towards the close of the sixth century Pope Gregory the Great declared, "Whosoever claims the universal episcopate is the forerunner of Antichrist:" and that the Fathers, and Doctors, and Saints, and Martyrs, and Confessors of the primitive Church were in their faith and doctrines what the Church of Rome now calls Protestant Heretics, and were most strictly members of the same Church with ourselves. And these things we undertake to prove, but they fall not within the compass of my subject to night. I shall confine myself to the showing that true Protestants are at least as favourable in their doctrines and discipline to true holiness as the Roman Catholics, and that therefore the title of Holy Church is as applicable to them collectively as it is to the Church of Rome exclusively. Were the latter identical with the

Holy Catholic Church, that for which *Christ gave himself, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that* it might not have *spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish,* and were indeed so one and the same with this Church, that Protestants as separated from her, are unavoidably schismatics, heretics and profane, then we might justly expect to find a peculiar and marked distinction as to holiness and morality between her members, and these supposed schismatics—and between countries where she alone has influence, and such as are flooded with Protestant heresies, with separatists from a holy Church, and therefore from that holiness which is to characterize her. Is this the fact? I wish not to enter into odious comparisons: but contrast the most decided Roman Catholic countries such as Italy, Spain, and Portugal, with the most entirely Protestant, such as England, Scotland, or Sweden. Now is there any such superiority in morality and holy living of the Roman Catholics of the former nations over the Protestant population of the latter, as we should expect if the Roman Church was the same with that Church which was designed to be holy, to promote holiness, and to be ever visibly characterized by the holiness of her members? Has the influence of the Church of Rome made the former countries peculiarly moral, has the absence of it rendered the latter singularly de-

praved? If we are to judge of causes by effects, and of principles by practice as evidenced by facts, and in an obvious state of things, who would identify the Church of Rome with the one holy Church, that is familiar with those lands where her authority is dominant? or who would venture to affirm that there was such a distinction in morals between Romanists and Protestants, that these latter were evidently void of all claim to be members of the true and holy Catholic Church, while the former alone could attach that privilege to themselves? Nay further: go to the city of Rome itself, and gather the character of the Roman Church from the very precincts of the chair of her earthly head, from beneath the very eye and immediate personal superintendance of the Bishop of Bishops, the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Surely there, if any where, we might expect to find the sanctifying and sanctified character of the only holy Church, if the Church of Rome and the Church of Christ be one and the same. But is it so? Has the holy Church, (we must ask,) even in this her chief seat of dominion, where she reigns in all her majesty, and in that city which Christ himself (if Roman Catholics are right) has made her very centre, where all her characteristics should be most conspicuous, and whence, like the rays of the sun, they should emanate to give light, and cause admiration to the remotest portions of her empire, produced or exhibited any peculiar

sanctity? Has not the very contrary been the observation of most who have visited her, and the frequently repeated complaint even of her own votaries? In fact, within the immediate influence of Rome itself, if any where, (I appeal to history for the truth of the declaration,) Christianity has failed of its legitimate and direct effects, the moralizing of man; and the Church is peculiarly wanting in one of her characteristic marks. And matters were even worse before the Reformation, as we learn from those who then visited Rome, and wrote of her. I maintain the correctness of this position, which presents, if not solely a conclusive, yet a weighty argument against the exclusive claims of the Roman Church. For if the holiness of her members is always (as we all admit,) to characterize the true Church of Christ, and that Church (as the Romanists say,) is the same with the Church of Rome, she will be characterized by it to a degree which will mark her out from all other Christian communities: otherwise she wants one of her distinctions. It is easy to find the causes of a state of things which is become a fact of history, and a matter of observation with those who are acquainted with Roman Catholic countries. They exist in the doctrines and discipline of the Roman Church. The tenet of a future state of temporary punishment, from which the sinner may be delivered by either his own alms and devotions, or by the prayers and good

works of others, which is in fact her doctrine of Purgatory, indirectly opens the door to unholy and careless living. It is the eternity of the punishment of sin which gives it its peculiar terror: and whatever affects this truth, weakens a check which God has given to the powerful impulse of evil passions. If masses to be said after death, and the prayers and intercessions of survivors for generations, and the merits and good deeds of others shall be able (as the Church of Rome teaches,) to liberate the soul from punishment, and open to it heavenly bliss, a period even of a thousand years of suffering presents (not only not the same check to the indulgence of sin which an eternity of misery, as taught by Scripture and Protestants, presents, but) not even a check sufficient to operate effectually as a restraint from it. There is a hope and a prospect of final escape from consequences given to sinful man, which if not an encouragement to risk them, weakens one of the strongest checks against risking them, when passion is seeking to silence the remonstrances of reason, of conscience, and of duty. It is the belief of the vast mass of the members of the Roman Church that pardon of sin directly follows, and is necessarily connected with, the absolution of the priest given after confession.[1] Such a belief is the

[1] I do not charge the Roman Church with avowedly teaching this monstrous notion; but it is so direct and natural a result

natural result of her doctrines of Penance and Absolution. Sin will be easily committed, when it is so easily remitted. It is a well known fact of history, that the pardon of sins was purchasable for certain stated sums; and under the eye and with the sanction of the Supreme Head of the *Holy* Church, men might commute with money for their offences, agreeable to a list of prices for each particular offence, which was publicly set up at Rome. Was Christ or Satan most served by such a traffic? The sale of indulgences (a monstrous doctrine yet defended by the Roman Church) is too well known to be denied.[1] In fact, the Roman Church has substituted external observances for internal compunction; outward duties for contrition of soul; and facilities have been given to the commission of evil, because the pardon of it is attached to means which do not necessarily include the entire forsaking of it. Now Protestantism and genuine Christianity know not these deceits. They ever

of her tenets respecting auricular confession and priestly absolution and penance, that not only the licentious and the thoughtless, but the uninformed, and, as is the actual fact, the great bulk of her members hold it, to the imminent peril or ruin of their souls, and the abounding of all iniquity in the earth.

[1] For a brief but forcible statement of facts as to this point, I refer the reader to an excellent tract called, "Romanism contradictory to the Bible," by Thomas Hartwell Horne, M. A. Printed for T. Cadell, Strand. 1827.

point out but one only Atonement for sin, the blood of Jesus Christ: to the meritorious efficacy of which no penances, alms, pilgrimages, fastings and mortifications can add any thing, as they cannot produce its blessed effect. In order to this are required, *Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.*[1] The former Protestants teach to consist essentially, not only in confession to God or man, but in a hearty sorrow for sin, and a diligent immediate forsaking of the same:—the latter, they affirm from scripture, while alone it justifies us before God, inasmuch as by it we apprehend Christ who *is our righteousness,*[2] is always, if genuine, productive of true piety, of holiness, of love to God and man. And it is the concurrent doctrine of true Protestants that if we desire to get to be with God in heaven, we must seek to do his blessed will on earth; and that all who have not so sought to please and obey God, whenever they die, will be punished with everlasting fire with the devil and his angels. The text particularly refers to the method by which Christ sanctifies his Church in its members: *that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.* By "*the word,*" can only be here meant the scriptures, or written word of God, and the great instrument which he has appointed

[1] Acts xx. 21.

[2] Jeremiah xxiii. 5, 6. 1 Corin. i. 30. Romans iv. 25.

to be used for the conversion and instruction of man. Thus he prayed for his Church: *sanctify them through thy word, thy word is truth.*[1] All Scripture (says St. Paul) is profitable for *doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*[2] Whether the Church of Rome, or Protestants most highly regard, and most diligently use *the word,* to edify and sanctify the souls of men, all may judge. The former withholds it from the bulk of her members, and justifies herself in so doing; the latter put it into the hands of all to study with prayer for the grace and teaching of the Holy Spirit, to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest, that thereby God their Saviour may sanctify them; *even with the washing of water by the word,* and present them as a part of his glorious Church, *holy and without blemish.* And they may more reasonably lay claim to the title of Holy Church who constantly use, in order to produce holiness, the instrument of its production which God has appointed, than that Church which locks it up, and either uses it not at all or sparingly. I think it evident then, that the Church of Rome has no peculiar claim to the title and character of *Holy,* if judged by actual fact as to the state of countries and people under her influence, by the direct tendency of some of her peculiar doctrines, and

[1] John xvii. 17. [2] 2 Timothy iii. 16.

by her neglect of the scripturally recognized means of sanctification: nor is she therefore identical with the Holy Church spoken of in the Scripture, and in the ancient confessions of faith referred to. No! that Church includes all, whether Protestants or Roman Catholics, who are made holy through the atoning blood of a Saviour, and the influences of his Holy Spirit: in whose hearts that Spirit has written those *two great commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind—and thy neighbour as thyself:* [1] who walk in newness of life, denying their sinful lusts and passions, seeking to please God, and glorify their Saviour, and to *be found in him, not having their own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, even the righteousness of God by faith.* [2] Of such is the one holy Church composed—some triumphant in heaven, some militant on earth. Every age has witnessed an augmentation of their number, and increased that company which, as St. John describes, *stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; who had come out of great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,* [3] and who with "the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellow-

[1] Matthew xxii. 37—40. [2] Philippians iii. 9.
[3] Revelations vii. 9. 14.

ship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, and all the holy Church throughout all the world" are ever to be before the throne of God, serving him day and night, freed alike from sorrow and from sin.

3rd. UNIVERSALITY is a characteristic mark of the true Church of Christ; for Protestants believe not less than Romanists that this Church is *Catholic* in the full but appropriate meaning of that term. The explanation already given of what we understand by her Unity and Holiness will illustrate while it establishes her Catholicity. For we believe the Church to be *one*, because, consisting of all believers in Christ, under Him their one and only head, and having on all points which the Scripture (confirmed by ancient Creeds,) lays down as fundamental truths, one and the same faith, and united by a communion of union to one Saviour, and of participation of one and the same Holy Ghost; and to be *holy* as well as one, because these are holy before God through the merits and atonement of Christ, applied by faith, and holy in their life through the Spirit's sanctifying influences, and both by doctrine, example, and exertion, promoting holiness in others. Now we believe also that there never has been any period since the commencement of the Christian era, (it is unnecessary to go beyond this,) in which such a body of faithful persons have not existed: sometimes many in number,

sometimes few, yea, even very few, "as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough."[1] But some there have always been, to whom the above description of the Church will rightly apply. So that God has never been without his faithful witnesses among men, nor the Saviour without a company of genuine disciples, nor the Holy Ghost without his temple, nor the world without a Church in the midst of her, nor the mass of the ungodly without a portion of the true *salt of the earth,*[2] nor the dominion of the Prince of Darkness without those who *let* their *light so shine before men, that they seeing* their *good works, glorify* their *Father which is in heaven.*[3] Nor have the gates of hell ever so prevailed against this Church, (for it is to the Church so understood that the promise of Christ is given,[4]) as ever to extinguish her light, prevent her voice being heard, or her existence discerned; still less so as to utterly destroy her, or cause her to cease to be, even for an hour. Even in the darkest centuries, when the See of Rome had assumed to itself all rule and power in the visible Church, there was still this body of the Faithful, composed of some who were in the outward communion of that See, and of some who were not, but even then *protested* against her errors, and shed their blood in attestation

[1] Isaiah xvii. 6.
[2] Matthew v. 13.
[3] Matthew v. 16.
[4] Matthew xvi. 18.

of that pure truth which, with various degrees of clearness, they saw and professed. For while we deny the exclusive claim of the Church of Rome to identify herself with the Church of Christ, or to any peculiar holiness, we allow many of her members, in all ages, since her corruptions became manifest, to have been members of the true Catholic Church, united in one head, i. e. Christ, in one faith, and one communion, and eminently holy in their lives.[1] Such were the venerable Bede, Boniface, Archbishop of Mentz, Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, Bernard, Abbot of Clairne, (who has been called the last of the Fathers), and I would hope, his pupil Pope Eugenius III, Archbishop Bradwardine, Vincent Ferrerius, with not a few, I am willing to think, of those of both sexes who have been enrolled in the saintly list of the Roman Church; such in latter times were Pascal, and Fenelon, and many of the Portroyal Divines: such, in short, have been many who either in the various stations of laical rank, or of ecclesiastical rule, or in monastic seclusion, (a soil indeed unfavourable to, yet not altogether unproductive of, the genuine fruits of the Gos-

[1] See Milner's History of the Church of Christ: a book worthy to be read by every one who would know what is properly meant by *the Catholic Church*, and indeed by every Christian. A cheap edition of this valuable History is now publishing, in monthly numbers, by the Religious Tract Society, No. 56, Paternoster Row.

pel,) exhibited those fruits from under the cumbrous cloak of Papal bondage and superstition.

On the other hand we find from history that even in the darkest ages there were many good and holy men who rejected the tyranny of Rome, and were in principle and practice what are now called Protestants: such were Claudius of Turin, and Peter Waldo and his followers in the south of Europe, and Wickliffe, and Lord Cobham, and others in England, and John Huss and Jerome of Prague in Germany. So that to the question, "where was your Church before the Reformation?" we reply, she is as old as Christianity itself; she has existed ever since the days of the Apostles, and we can trace her in a succession of holy persons through every intervening age, who *fought a good fight, kept the faith,* and for whom we doubt not, *is laid up that crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give them at that day; and not to them only, but to all them also that love his appearing.*[1] And the smallness of their number in no wise detracts from their claim to constitute the Church of Christ: for His own declarations, the instructions of Scripture, and observation show that the true servants of God, in the most prosperous periods of the church,[2] are to be but a *little flock.* Here

[1] 2 Timothy iv. 7, 8.

[2] It is perhaps hardly necessary to observe, that the millennial period will be an exception to this statement.

then is a complete Universality, and we are justified in saying, that the Church is *Catholic*, because she has subsisted in all ages in Unity and Sanctity.

But Romanists make the Universality of the Church to consist also *in teaching all nations, and in maintaining all truths*. I have shown that the latter has marked the true Church in the sense in which we Protestants explain that term at all periods. I wish it were as easy to show that the Church of Rome maintained nothing but the Truth, and that in the additions she has made to the pure confessions of faith of the first four centuries, she had not, not only obscured, but undermined that truth: nay, in some points, denied it.[1] By requiring these additions to be

[1] The Profession of Faith, of Pope Pius IV. makes these (besides other) additions, to the Apostles' Creed. "I most steadfastly admit and embrace Apostolical and Ecclesiastical Traditions and all other observances, and constitutions of the same (the Roman) Church. I also profess, that there are truly and properly seven sacraments of the New Law, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord;—that in the mass, there is offered to God, a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead—that there is a purgatory,—that the Saints are to be invocated, and that their relics are to be had in veneration; that images of the Mother of God, and of other Saints ought to be duly honoured—I acknowledge the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, Roman Church, for the mother and mistress of all Churches: and I promise true obedience to the Bishop of Rome, successor to St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and Vicar of Jesus Christ. And I freely profess and sincerely hold this true Catholic Faith, *without which no one can be saved.*"

received at the peril of damnation, she runs the risk of excluding her members from the true Catholic Church, and greatly endangers their Salvation. We cannot limit the mercy of God, nor say what allowances He may be pleased to make for ignorance, misapprehension, prejudices, or force of education; but we do fear much for those who, with Scriptural light around and before them, cling with tenacity to errors subversive of the truth as it is in Jesus. And most solemnly and affectionately do I exhort my Roman Catholic Brethren, to search for themselves the Holy Scriptures, with earnest prayer to God, to show them the truth, and deliver them from all error. Never have there been wanting faithful men who have held and believed all those truths which the Apostles believed and taught, and which all true Protestants now hold and teach, and this is all that is necessary to constitute the Church's universality, as it respects the maintaining all truth. If to teach all nations be a proof of the Church's Universality, the Roman Church cannot in the present day put in any exclusive claim to be concidered the Church of Christ. There are not many known parts of the earth, where Protestants have not missions, and these more or less successful to the Conversion of Pagans and Idolaters. The inhabitants of Greenland, and of the South Sea Islands, numbers of the Esquimaux, and of the Hottentots, and many both in the East and

West Indies have been converted to the Christian faith, within the last seventy years, by the blessing of God on the zealous labours of Protestants. Whereas the missions of the Church of Rome are now comparatively few, feeble, and inefficient. And the Jews are also the objects of the charitable zeal of the Protestant Churches. So that it may be very satisfactorily proved, that while we hold Universality to be a token of the Church of Christ, we have no reason to look to the Church of Rome, to find this or any other points wherein it consists, but may, without any reference to her, justly and truly say, that we believe in One, Holy, *Catholic* Church. And this Church we confidently believe shall finally be extended through all the earth, and as it respects its diffusiveness no less than its perpetuity, shall be most appropriately and in the fullest sense of the word denominated, Catholic. Not only shall many in many lands confess Christ, but *all shall know* him *from the the least to the greatest.*[1] As the Prophet Micah has foretold, *In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted upon the hills, and people shall flow unto it.*[2] God fulfil the promise given unto his Son, *Ask of me, and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine*

[1] Jeremiah xxxi. 34. [2] Micah. iv. 1.

inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.[1] "The Church of Christ in its primary institution was made to be of a diffusive nature, to spread and extend itself from the city of Jerusalem, where it first began, to all the parts and corners of the earth. From whence we find them in the Revelation crying to the Lamb; *Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation.* This was a reason which the ancient Fathers did render, why the Church was called Catholic; and the nature of the Church is so described in the Scriptures."[2] And this reason certainly applies in the present day with equal or greater truth to Protestant confessions than to the Church of Rome. The Catholicity of the Church consists in fact, in the extension of purity of doctrine and holiness of life; in other words, of genuine Christianity. There is extant an exposition of the Apostle's Creed by Ruffinus, who flourished about the year 390, in which he thus speaks respecting the clause "the holy Catholic Church." "There is one holy church, in which is one faith, and one baptism—in which one God the Father, one Lord Jesus Christ his Son, and one Holy Spirit are the objects of faith. This is the holy church, having neither spot nor wrinkle." Re-

[1] Psalm ii. 8.
[2] See Pearson on the Creed, on the Holy Catholic Church.

specting the See of Rome, or the Pope, or papal authority, he adds not a word. How differently do Roman Catholic writers define the Church! and how much nearer to the sentiments of the Fathers on this subject, is the view I have given of those entertained by true Protestants!

We profess to believe with Romanists, that the one, Holy, Catholic Church is also,

4th. APOSTOLIC. In the Abridgment of Christian Doctrine, I find this word thus explained, in answer to the question, "*How is the Church Apostolical?*—A. Because she comes down by a perpetual succession from the Apostles of Christ, and has her doctrine, her orders, and her mission from them." It is evidently the doctrine of the Church of Rome, and which she sedulously aims to inculcate on all her adherents and to enforce upon others, that the Church of Christ and herself are one and the same: that therefore it is just as true to say that the Apostles laboured to found the Roman Catholic Church, as it is to say that they laboured to found the Christian Church. But this is utterly unsupported by Scripture, or by the writings of the early Fathers. In the writings of the Apostles, all individual Christian Churches are spoken of as being on an equality; or if any difference is shown to any, it is to the Church of Jerusalem, and not of Rome. The latter, for any thing which appears to the contrary, was on an entire

equality with the Churches of Ephesus, and Corinth, and Thessalonica, of Galatia, and of Asia. St. Paul addresses the Church of Rome in the same style as he does other churches to which he writes. In neither of his epistles does St. Peter advert to such superiority, or intimate that any peculiar Apostolical authority was derived by the Roman Church from its connexion with himself. And if he was (as the Romanists affirm) bishop of Rome at the time he wrote, or was to be in a few years, the omission of such intimation is more surprising in writings which were to instruct the churches in time to come, respecting the way of salvation. Clement of Rome wrote to the Corinthians to settle their differences; but this he did, as he himself informs us, at their desire. He addresses his letter from the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth, as to an equal; and in various parts of it, where he could scarcely have avoided referring to the Papal authority, had it existed, he is as silent on the subject as the Apostles Peter and Paul had been before him. Equally so are Ignatius and Polycarp, contemporary writers of the first century. That is, in none of these writers is there any thing said to lead to a conclusion, that there was something peculiarly Apostolical in the See of Rome, and that it had thereby a Divine right of supremacy over other sees and churches. Yet had this see occupied that not only prominent, but

singular rank which its own adherents have since given it, can we suppose this never would have been, if not directly taught, at least so intimated as to have been inferred? What says Irenæus? "Things being made thus plain, (he is alluding to the derivation of doctrine from the Apostles) it is not from others that truth is to be sought, which is easily learned from the Church (or in the words of the original, quam facile est ab ecclesiâ sumere), for to this Church, as into a rich repository, the Apostles committed whatever is Divine truth; that each one, if so inclined, might thence draw the drink of life. This is the way of life; all other teachers must be shunned as thieves and robbers. For what! should there be any dispute on a point of small moment, must not recourse be had to the most ancient Churches, (observe, he does not say, to the Church, or Church of Rome, but to the *Churches*,) where the Apostles resided, and from them collect the truth." I receive the quotation as given by a Roman Catholic Priest, but I draw a different conclusion from it, for it appears to me to teach not the supremacy of Rome, but the entire equality and equal Apostolic authority of all the Churches which the Apostles founded. Again, "To know what the Apostles taught, that is, what Christ revealed to them, recourse must be had," (not to Rome, but) "to the *Churches* which they founded, and which they instructed

by word of mouth, and by their Epistles. For it is plain, that all doctrine which is conformable to the faith of *these mother Churches* is true, being that which they received from the Apostles, the Apostles from Christ, Christ from God." Tertullian who lived in the second century, says; "Let those who are near to Corinth, go to Corinth: those who are near to Philippi, go to Philippi: those who are near to Ephesus, go to Ephesus: those who are near to Rome, go to Rome: and those who are near to Thessalonica, go to Thessalonica. In each of *these principal Churches,* where the Apostolic autographs are lodged, and where the pure Apostolic tradition eminently flourishes, those who are in difficulties, may best seek genuine information." I advert to these authorities to show how little foundation there is for the position assumed by the Roman Church, of a peculiar Apostolic dignity and authority being possessed by her, by which she is entitled to lord it over other Churches, and indeed identify herself, and those only who are in subjection to her, with the Apostolic Church of Christ. I may add here that by the 28th canon of the council holden at Chalcedon in the year 451, it was resolved, that the same rights and honours which had been conferred upon the Bishop of Rome, were due to the Bishop of Constantinople, on account of the equal dignity and lustre of the two cities.

And this Council is considered to be one of the general or œcumenical councils.

All therefore (it would appear from Scripture, and the early Fathers,) who hold the Apostles' doctrines, may claim a succession from the Apostles, and a relation to that Catholic and Apostolic Church which they founded. Some learned men have supposed that the Apostle Paul personally founded the English Church, or introduced Christianity into Britain. There can be no doubt however, of its introduction into this country at a very early period; probably in the beginning of the second century, and by the immediate successors of the Apostles. England therefore might claim Apostolical Institution for her Churches, with little less pretension than the Church of Rome claims it for herself. But by the term Apostolic, we understand nothing so exclusive and particular: but that there has ever been since the days of the Apostles, a body of Faithful persons, holding themselves, and conveying to others, the doctrines which they taught, in communion with the Apostles, in doctrine, in faith, in spirit, and in mission; and that by a chain of successive links of one generation of them after another: so that they can trace up the Religion they hold, in a regular gradation, to its twelve first founders, and constitute in every age that Church which they founded in the first, and are such as those Founders

would recognize to be of the same body, household, and communion with themselves. And these persons, as they have always been, more or fewer in number, so are they found scattered through the world, wherever Christians are known, united to one Head, Jesus Christ, having the same faith, holding the same essential truths, and being in one communion of the Holy Spirit, holy before God through the righteousness of Christ freely imputed to them, and increasingly holy in heart and life. Thus they form one holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church.

There are points in which the Church of Rome bears so little resemblance to the Church of Christ, as it was in the days of the Apostles and their successors, that when she claims to herself exclusively the title of the Apostolic Church, it is not possible to overlook them; and in which she exhibits so little of the Apostolic spirit, that her very assumption compels us to mark the contrast. The Apostles and ministers of the primitive Christian Church were men who passed their lives in preaching the pure word of God, and in endeavouring by argument, entreaty, and exhortation, to win men to Christ,—and who, remote from worldly pomp and ease, lived a life of suffering, of self-denial, of unostentatious but incalculable labours. The Church was assimilated in spirit and practice, to her founders and pastors. To labour, to suffer, and to love, cha-

racterized the primitive Disciples of the Cross. Where in the Romish Church is the resemblance to this apostolic model? Is it in labours? We find long and tedious services in a language the people understand not; splendid and gorgeous, and almost countless ceremonies; there is music, and chanting, and recitation, and incense, and processions, and bowing to images, and changes of attitude, and changes of dress;—but where is the diligent preaching of the Gospel of salvation? where the public ministration of the word which St. Paul so solemnly charged on the first Bishop of Ephesus?[1] Where is that unwearied use and application of scriptural truth to rouse the careless, convert the bad, instruct the ignorant, recover the strayed, and comfort the mourning, which characterized the apostolic labours of those who with this weapon only, the sword of the Spirit, shook deep and long-established Paganism to its base, and reared on its ruins the visible temple of the Christian Religion? Alas! go through the Church of Rome on the Continent (and with few exceptions those countries where her rule extends,) and you will find an unpreaching prelacy and an unpreaching priesthood. You will see but the skeleton of that body of apostolic labour which the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles of the New Testament, and early ecclesiastical records ex-

[1] 2 Timothy iv. 1. 2.

hibit and inculcate—but the bones of that heavenly meat of God's preached word which was ordained for the life and nourishment of the souls of the faithful. Do we look at external appearances? We search in vain to discover through the cumbrous load of earthly grandeur, and of a splendour which vies with all that princely pride ever made use of to dazzle vulgar eyes, or gratify its own vanity, for the simplicity, the solid but unassuming dignity, the power of godliness without pomp of show, which characterized at its commencement, and ever is to characterize, that *kingdom which is not of this world.* I doubt not that the pious members of the Church of Rome experience with all true Christians *that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God;* but worldly dignity, and secular pomp and power are as much the characteristics of the spirit of the Roman Church, as they are opposite to that of the true Church of Christ. And as to the charity of the Church of Rome, the spirit of love so peculiarly the spirit of Christianity, and of its Divine Author and its earthly founders, is this her characteristic? I wish not to write bitter things, or to plead the cause of Christian charity in terms and arguments which may seem even to savour of the want of it. But the truth must be told. The Apostles and early Christians argued, intreated, warned, and instructed men, they prayed and wept for souls: but they neither

committed, nor would have sanctioned the commissal of, the body of the most obstinate unbeliever or pernicious Heretic, to the flames of corporal punishment. We cannot forget that though the practice may be disused, the principle is yet recognized by the Church of Rome, which little more than two centuries since, in thirty years alone caused to perish under the hands of the Inquisition, 150,000 human beings. And this *in love to souls! The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.*[1] The reproof given by Christ to the irritated apostles when they would have called down fire from heaven on those who received him not when he came to them in person, may fitly be addressed to that Church which ever sanctioned the institution of such a tribunal of blood, in support of a religion of good-will, tenderness and love: *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. The Son of man is not come to destroy mens' lives, but to save them.*[2] And let it be observed, that one of their general councils, the third of Lateran, in the year 1179, under Pope Alexander III. expressly sanctioned and required the persecution of heretics, even to death. Was the council (I ask Roman Catholics) right or wrong in this decree? Do you say the council, with the Pope at its head, was wrong? Then where is your Church's infallibility? Do you

[1] Proverbs xii. 10.

[2] Luke ix. 56.

say, it was right? Then you justify the persecution to death of all your church considers heretics.

So little claim has the Roman Church, if you regard her ministrations and her spirit, to the title of the Apostolical Church; whereas she has marks which painfully distinguish her from it. But while we must affirm, that in these things there is far more of resemblance to the Apostolic Church among Protestant communions, and must believe that those of the Roman communion, who have been true members of the Church of Christ, have been, in the main, dissentient from their own communion in doctrine, spirit, and practice, we would give the title of Apostolic Church to all those who, in every age and part of the world, and of every communion, have held the faith and imitated (as far as difference of station and circumstance required) the example of the Apostles. To them we may apply the language used by St. Paul of the Jewish and Gentile converts. *Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father: and are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God: And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone: in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; in whom*

ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.[1]

This is the true Israel of God, on which may His peace rest for ever! To redeem and save this Church the Eternal Son freely came down from heaven, and offered himself upon the cross; making, by that one offering of himself once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. And by his holy word he has (in every age) drawn and gathered into this church those whom he hath chosen unto life; uniting them to God, himself, and each other by the indwelling Spirit, whose influences, like washing of water by the same word, cleansing their hearts, prepare them to be presented to him at his coming *a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but holy, and without blemish.* Into which blessed company I do earnestly invite all to enter.

We admit that there have been, and are in the Church of Rome, many who belong to this company, and are a part of the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic Church; for the Holy Spirit is not limited in the exercise of his power, nor the Saviour in the manifestion of his love.

But we also must hold that the Church of

[1] Ephesians ii. 18—22.

Rome, so far from being one and the same as the Catholic Church of Christ, is an opponent thereof; and has, by her doctrines, her practices, and her spirit, kept many back from coming into the fold of Christ who would have entered: inasmuch as those doctrines are subversive of the gospel, those practices evil and dangerous deceits, and that spirit secular, domineering, and intolerant. And these things we undertake with God's blessing, to prove to those who attend these lectures: and we essay this, not in anger, but in love; not with railing accusations, but plain arguments and facts; not with authority of man, but of the word of God, seeking not theirs but them, and *the profit of many that they may be saved.*[1]

[1] 1 Corinthians x. 33.

THE END.

A

VISITATION SERMON,

PREACHED AT NORTHAMPTON,

ON

MONDAY, JULY XVI, MDCCCXXVII,

BEFORE THE

RIGHT REV. HERBERT MARSH, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH.

BY THE

HON. AND REV. GEORGE SPENCER, M.A.

RECTOR OF BRINGTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE,

AND DOMESTIC CHAPLAIN TO THE LORD BISHOP OF CHESTER.

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TO

THE RIGHT REVEREND

HERBERT,

LORD BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH,

The following Discourse

IS

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS LORDSHIP'S

OBEDIENT AND GRATEFUL SERVANT,

GEORGE SPENCER.

A

SERMON,

&c.

ACTS XX. 28.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

THE church of God, of which mention is made in this text, is a congregation of people, whom he hath chosen and separated to himself, out of the midst of a lost and wicked world. They are justified by his grace through faith in the blood of Christ, they are made the children of God, by adoption, and inheritors of everlasting life. The Spirit of God is shed on them abundantly through Jesus Christ; whereby they are sanctified, and preserved by his power unto salvation.

To purchase for them these inestimable benefits, the only Son of God came down and suffered death, arose again from the dead, sits at the right hand

of the Majesty on high, and having all dominion given to him both in heaven and in earth, acts as the chief Shepherd of the flock; by the supply of his Spirit he governs and comforts and sanctifies them, and at the last, he shall return, and gather them to himself, that they may behold his glory, and be with him for ever.

It is the Lord himself who thus works for them and in them; but he has appointed instruments, by whom he will convey to them his gifts. The Church is compared sometimes to a vine, of which Christ is the root, and his people the branches; sometimes to a body, of which he is the head, and they the members. To each member proper functions are assigned for the good of the whole: each true branch is ordained, not only to bear fruit itself, but to contribute to the beauty and perfection of the entire tree.

But from among the congregation, some are peculiarly called to carry into effect the purpose of Christ, which is, to sanctify and cleanse the Church, that he may receive it glorious and unspotted. To this end, he hath ordained some as his Ministers for the good of their brethren; and to them he gives authority and talents, as he hath thought convenient, by the due exercise of which, his great kingdom is strengthened, and increased, and carried on to its perfection.

The powers with which these have been entrusted,

and the functions which they have been appointed to perform, have varied, according to the varying necessities of his people. When his kingdom was first to be fully set in order, he sent forth Apostles, whom he enabled, by the inspiration of his Spirit, to declare what are the doctrines of that faith, and the rules of that practice, which he enjoined upon his people; and as they were to reveal "mysteries which had been kept secret since the world began," and which therefore others could not be required to believe, without proof of their divine authority, he worked with them as they preached, and confirmed the Word to those who heard with signs following. The perfect faith being once delivered to the saints, and consigned to records, of which the genuineness is undoubted, succeeding ministers were neither to add to it, nor diminish from it. They were to declare no new revelation, and therefore needed no extraordinary miraculous gifts. Their duty was, "to hold fast the form of sound words which they had received," and "to commit the same to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also;" so that by the preaching of this faith, the people of God might be continually fed and edified.

The Church thus received a regular constitution, and has continued in the same general form to the present day: yea, and shall continue for ever. The small company assembled at Jerusalem, on the

day of Pentecost, of the further increase of which through divers countries, we read in the Acts of the Apostles, has now grown into that vast body of the Christian Church, to which we belong: and among this people there hath been kept up, in a like unbroken line, an order of ministers and overseers, among whom you and I, my Reverend Brethren, have, through the mercy of God, been honoured with a place. The churches and congregations which we respectively serve, are similar to the Church of God at Ephesus, and belong to the same great body; and we ourselves have the same office towards them, ordained by the same authority, and for the same purposes, as those elders whom St. Paul addressed in the words of my text.

The present is an occasion, when the consideration of such a passage is most appropriate. We are now met together in a solemn way, to receive the advice and direction of our spiritual ruler. And it is the custom of our Church, that in such assemblies of ministers, one should be appointed from among them, to speak a word of exhortation to his brethren. This office has fallen upon me, and God grant that I may fulfil it with humility and faithfulness. My intention is, to draw from St. Paul's admonition to the elders of Ephesus, general topics of reproof and encouragement, applicable not only to you and me, but to elders of

the Church in whatever time or place; and whatsoever may be said according to his will, I pray that God will bless to the good of us all, and through us, to that of our flocks.

Let us then consider, first, what the office is, to which we are called, and secondly, how we best may execute it.

I. It is an office, of which the dignity is high, and the reward excellent: but "to whom much is given, of them shall much be required;" and therefore also is its danger great. We have the oversight of the flock of God which is among us; and by the titles given to Ministers in various parts of Scripture, we may learn the nature of our charge.

1. We are called Messengers of good things, Preachers of glad tidings to sinners, sent to shew unto them that are lost through sin, the way of salvation: and we are entrusted with full powers to receive all who will come, and to pronounce to them pardon and peace. Great is our reward even here, in the joy which fills our heart, if by the words of this Gospel, we turn many souls unto righteousness; and greater our reward hereafter, when we shall "shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever." But "woe unto us, if we preach not the gospel;" for then, as far as in us lies, we defeat the counsel of God towards his flock, and shall have to answer for their loss.

2. Again, we are watchmen of the Lord. God hath set us to give his people warning. And in the faithful discharge of this duty there is great honour, and most comfortable assurance of divine support. But it must not be neglected, nor executed with timidity, or else we shall be despised here, and condemned hereafter. "Be not dismayed at their faces," said God to Jeremiah, who had a similar calling, "lest I confound thee before them," and we must remember that if we see any of our flock in sin, and warn them not, and evil come upon them, their blood will he require at our hands.

3. Elsewhere, we are called "stewards of the mysteries of God." Like upper servants, we are set over the family of God, to give them their meat in due season, according to their several necessities. We are to divide to them the Word of Life; that is, by doctrine drawn from holy Scripture, we are "to warn the unruly, to comfort the feeble-minded" and the sorrowful, "to support the weak," to inform the ignorant, to encourage and strengthen those who stand grounded in the faith. The wants of God's people are continual; for they are daily harassed with divers temptations, and in many ways sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before them; and yet it is not his will that one of them should perish or faint for want of food. It is required then of us, his stewards, that we be, with-

out ceasing, diligent and faithful; and "blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing." But if we do not watch, and he come suddenly, and find us careless, we shall "have our portion with the hypocrites." And in proportion to the value of the treasure with which we are entrusted, so is our responsibility. If one immortal soul perish through our negligence, our scandals, our ignorance, the loss cannot be compensated by the worth of worlds, and the horror of our punishment cannot be described by language.

Such is the care which we are bound to take of "all the flock;" for the words of my text shew that not one is to be neglected, because the Lord tasted of death for each, and having thus purchased all, will require an account of all at our hands.

But not only have we to answer for the souls of men; we have to care for the honour of God himself, even the jealous God. We are set to stand in the courts of his house, and to keep his holy Temple. When worldly corruptions, heresies, schisms, and other roots of bitterness spring up, and trouble his heritage, it is a dishonour put upon his name. The congregation of the faithful are his holy temple. For his Spirit dwelleth in them; and "if any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy." If by our fault the ministry be blamed, if we give men just reason to despise us, and through us they learn to despise and neglect the worship and cere-

monies of God, our sin, like that of the sons of Eli, is "very great before the Lord."

I have now endeavoured to state, according to the Scriptures, the nature and objects of our ministry. If these things be strictly true, (and very imperfect I feel has been my statement of them) we have either great things to hope for, and rejoice in, or else great things to dread. If we have indeed such an account to give, we may well ask, who among us shall be saved? How shall the very best escape in the presence of his Judge? There is not one of us, who has not been guilty of numberless failings and omissions in time past; not one, who, for the time to come, has not more to do than his own strength will compass. Can we then rejoice in our ministry? Yes: we may rejoice, if we have from the heart believed on the Saviour whom we preach to others. By his merits we have obtained mercy; by his intercession, we shall find grace to help us in time of need; and so we faint not, but devote ourselves freely to the work before us, depending on his promises, which will be made good to all believers, that in so doing we shall both save ourselves and them that hear us, and that when the chief Shepherd shall appear, they shall be to us a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

II. Since then we have so rich a prize before us, such honour and dignity in this present time, such glory in the world to come, if we so feed the flock

as to please our Master, with what earnestness should we consider, as I proposed in the second place, how we best may do it. To do the work of an evangelist effectually, we seem to want two things, which we have not by nature. We want first, a hearty good will and resolution for the work; and, in addition to that, ability and understanding to fulfil it.

1. And first in respect to our inclination: By nature our hearts are full of evil. He that hath in earnest endeavoured to sanctify his own life, and to fashion it after the rule and doctrine of Christ, will know that this is true. He will have found that it is an irksome and hard task to cure himself. How then shall he be disposed to bear with the infirmities of all the flock, and to heal them also? The soul of man by nature "cleaveth to the dust." He is the slave of divers lusts and passions, he loves this present world. How shall we, who are all of this sort, if we know ourselves aright, how shall we turn from all worldly cares and affections, and devote ourselves with singleness of purpose to the holy work of Christ? And yet without this disposition, the duties which we have undertaken, and from which, though we may neglect them, we can never be absolved, will be grievous and burthensome. A minister depending on his own strength, may begin with some good resolutions, and from a slavish fear of punishment, or for some interested worldly motive, he may force himself to make some poor at-

tempts; but he will fail of success, and soon be discouraged. How will such a minister, who is a stranger to the true spirit of a Pastor, gain influence, and persuade his flock? He is only outwardly a shepherd, and "the sheep will not follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they know not the voice of strangers."

If we think to be labourers in the fold of Christ, we must not serve him as an austere task-master, with an unwilling heart; nor must we dare to undertake this hallowed work with base desires of worldly aggrandisement or gain. We must feed the flock, "not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind." St. Peter, who gave this direction to elders, whom he addressed in his Epistle, knew by his own experience, "being also an elder," that in the heart alone could be found the qualification for a true minister. He had been taught this lesson, not only by experience, but by the Lord himself, when he gave him his commission, "Feed my sheep." And why was that emphatic question "Simon, son of Jona, lovest thou me?" thrice repeated? This was not for Peter's sake alone, but for our's; that none might presume to think himself a true minister of Christ, whose heart would not bear him witness, that for the sake of that Lord whom he serves, he would readily give up all that is dearest to him in the world.

And why will the Lord send none to feed his flock

who do not love him? because they alone will truly love the sheep. They have a motive within them which constraineth them to unremitting cheerful diligence; a motive, of which those know not the power, who have not themselves been led to flee for life to that Saviour, who loved them and gave himself for them. But when once a man has come to the knowledge of his lost and miserable state, and hath found hope and comfort by reliance on his Redeemer, he will most gladly spend and be spent in his service. He perceives and rejoices in the love of God, in that he laid down his life for him, and now with hearty willing zeal acknowledges the obligation that he ought to lay down his life for the brethren. He is bought with a price; he is not his own, and therefore henceforth lives not to himself, but to the Lord. If we then, my brethren, desire that to us Ministers, the yoke of Christ should be easy, and his burden light, let us learn more of the burden of our own iniquities. If we can see clearly, from what a weight of wrath he hath redeemed us, we cannot reckon his commandments grievous.

2. But a willing mind is not enough. We must also learn the right way and means to do this work of saving souls, or we shall yet be useless Pastors. And here let us remember, that without Christ we can do nothing. The salvation and edification of his Church is his own work; we are but instruments in his hands. But then we are instruments ap-

pointed by him, and he has promised that to the end of the world, he will always be with us to strengthen us. The conversion of one sinner is above the reach of man's ability or wisdom. For in attempting it, we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against spirits of wickedness, who will do their worst to defeat us. But if we be Christ's, greater is he that is with us, than he which is against us. God will make us to triumph; for those things which are impossible with man, are possible with God; and they who trust in him shall never be confounded.

Since then it is by humble faith in the power and the help of God, that we shall be made superior to the great enemy of souls, and be enabled to labour successfully for their salvation, let us consider what will be the fruits of this faith, that we may judge whether it exists in our hearts.

In the first place it will make us bold and dauntless. Resting upon his everlasting arms, we shall not dread the anger and opposition of his adversaries. If need be, we shall willingly "endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ," because we know that our pains, or dangers, or afflictions, will be overruled to the furtherance of the Gospel which we love. Secondly, it will make us persevering: though for a while we may seem to lose our labours, we shall not be discouraged. We shall be patient and long-suffering, knowing that "in due time we shall

reap if we faint not." We may find that to some, the Gospel which we preach will be "a stumbling block," and they will hate its humiliating doctrines; to some it will be "foolishness," and they will deride it, yet to many it shall prove "the power of God unto salvation," and we are taught to look forward to a time when it shall universally prevail. Having a firm conviction of this upon our minds, we shall continue to preach the Word through evil report and good report; we shall still reprove with unwearied gentleness those that oppose themselves, if peradventure, after all hope seems past, "God will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth."

But as faith will make us fearless and persevering, where we ought to speak, it will also make us discreet, and humble-minded, and unobtrusive. "If a man strive for the mastery," says St. Paul to Timothy, alluding to the athletic games of Greece, "he will not be crowned, except he strive lawfully," or according to the appointed rules: so the minister who hath looked to God for strength, and knows that from him alone must come success, will not expect it, if he overstep the line which has been marked out for him. Ready as he will be to use with boldness every lawful opportunity, he will not wish nor dare to speak, except where and when the Lord permits; and considering that it is God who assigns to one or another their sphere of action as he judges

fit, he will neither intrude uncalled into the rightful provinces of others, nor disregard the rules and ordinances, to the observance of which the authorities of the Church lawfully oblige him. "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace," and order, and harmony. When we transgress our proper limits, we are not sent by him, and must not expect to prosper.

Must a minister be idle then, it will be asked, and confine his labours to a narrow sphere, when he might do more? We shall not fear being reduced to this, if we have a true conception of the power of him, to whom all things in heaven and earth do bow and obey. If we know him whom we serve, we know that he can give us opportunities, according as he sees us fit to use them. Only let us be working patiently and faithfully in our appointed place, and then in due time, the Lord will give us more ability, and enlarge the measure of the field on which we may exert it.

And as the minister who trusts in God, will fight only in that post which his Lord hath assigned to him, he will use only that weapon of attack which his Lord hath put into his hands; even "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." His Word applied to the heart by the operation of his grace, is the appointed means by which men are turned "from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Knowing, there-

fore, that this weapon is "quick and powerful," and that all others are weak, and will not stand, the faithful minister will consider it all-sufficient. His delight will be in the testimonies of God; in them will he exercise himself day and night, for by them his God makes him stronger than his enemies. To the better understanding of them, will all his other studies lead; he will contemplate the examples of God's servants recorded there, and by them he will fashion both the manner of his life and the tenour of his doctrine.

I have touched on a few points, which seem essential to the character of a worthy minister of Christ. How well, in one sentence, does St. Paul describe it. "God hath not given unto us the spirit of fear; but of power and of love and of a sound mind." My Brethren, let us daily pray for a larger measure of this Spirit. Then shall we prosper in our labours.

But lastly and chiefly, if we would wish to see our preaching crowned with success, we must shew ourselves "in all things patterns of good works." We are to live above the world, not entangled with its cares, nor allured by its pleasures. Though the high pursuits of our ministry must not be made an excuse for negligence in our worldly business, nor for disregard of the rules of courtesy in our social intercourse, yet on earthly things our hearts must not be fixed. We have solemnly vowed to

"lay aside the study of the world and the flesh;" and let us not grudge this, but exult in that God hath called us with so high and holy a vocation. We, in an especial manner, must "have our conversation in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." While present in the flesh we are absent from him on whom our souls repose, in whom "though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Let us then hasten onwards, and so lead our flock, to the coming of that day, when the Master shall return, and take account of his servants. To them who have done wisely in his family below, shall then be said the words of gladness, "Well done thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

THE END.

Printed by R. GILBERT, St. John's Square, London.

A

FUNERAL ORATION,

&c.

r S.H. 1827
5

A

FUNERAL ORATION;

OCCASIONED

BY THE

DEMISE

OF

THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS

FREDERICK,

Duke of York.

BY

THE REVEREND WILLIAM STONE, B.A.,

OF ST. PETER'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE;

AND MORNING PREACHER AT ST. PAUL'S CHURCH,

COVENT GARDEN.

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A

FUNERAL ORATION,

&c.

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2 SAMUEL III. 32.

—— "*And the King lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner—and all the people wept.*"

It is scarcely possible for the imagination of man to conceive a more affecting and solemn scene than these words describe. They bring before our eyes the darksome tenement of the dead—the habitation that receives the body when life has departed, and the spirit fled to those awful regions which it is destined to enter when the probationary term allotted on earth is finished.

Striking as the grave at all times appears, it assumes a more sombre aspect when dug for the illustrious and the mighty. We behold our fellow-creatures

not bearing the brilliant distinctions of rank and power deposited in their last home with deep sorrow. We mourn over the departed; and sigh to think, that the close of life should be so terrible and sad. For who can witness the body that he once saw replete with beauty and vigour —the abode of a thinking spirit—radiant with sweet smiles, and vocal with kind words, and graceful in every gesture and movement, become for ever motionless and still—cold and composed in death—without shedding tears of sincerest sorrow?

Death will at all times produce the piercing emotions of pity and terror; but when the great and the mighty die, we feel a deeper and more solemn sentiment. And thus in the text, when a Prince and a great man is conveyed to the tomb, a nation bewails his fall.

Abner will marshal the armies of Israel no more—He will no more lead them to victory—His name will no longer inspire hope or fear—The armour that covered him may be given to the bravest that

survives—the helmet, the shield, and the spear. Victory and defeat are alike to him—the former will not flush him with joy, nor will the latter afflict him with dismay. To earthly employments and cares he has bid an everlasting farewell! The grave has become his dwelling-place—the house he must occupy—the bed on which he must repose—till the Archangel shall blow the trumpet of the resurrection.

Abner is borne to his grave—But see what multitudes of men accompany the bier—what long files—what innumerable crowds come forward, with slow and solemn step, to the spot that is to receive the hero's ashes. How many recollections of the past must start upon the soldier's fancy, and remind him of his deceased commander's bravery, compassion, kindness; both when he shared with him the perils of battle, and divided the spoils of victory—when the very light of his eye inspired him with courage, and the words of his tongue enabled him to do wonders! But these recollec-

tions are vain—the hand is stiff, and the eye is shut, and the tongue is mute for ever.

Amidst all this array of soldiers and of people that flock round the grave of Abner, the Monarch himself appears. He comes to pay his last duty to the deceased—to shew how deeply he bewails his loss. He does not absent himself from the solemn ceremony, but with all his people celebrates the funeral obsequies of a brave man. His heart is smitten with sorrow—his emotions are too strong to be confined within his bosom, and force their way in sobbings and in tears. The people who stand round the grave are overcome by the distress they witness in their King—One general and mournful sentiment prevails—and the grief of a nation fills the air with cries of lamenting and woe.—"The King lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner—and all the people wept."

This scene, so replete with all that is affecting—so fraught with pathos and tenderness—so noble and yet so sad—

touches us less than that we are about to recall. We may indeed take up the language of the Royal Mourner at the grave of Abner, and say that "in our Israel there is fallen a prince and a great man!" —And such is the sensation excited, that a stranger, passing through the streets of this great city, would be struck with the emblems of sorrow every where displayed. The shadow of death hangs like a cloud upon the nation—the sable habiliments of woe are worn by all classes—the very walls of the temples of religion proclaim the decease of some mighty prince—and the solemn voices that are heard from our pulpits, tell out the calamity we are called to bear. The people sympathize with their afflicted Monarch, and lament the illustrious dead as one on whom they had looked as their future sovereign.

Whatever may have been the expressions that thoughtless tongues have uttered in times that are gone, we all feel *now*, that the benefits conferred can never be forgotten; and we begin to perceive

that we seldom prize the blessings we hold, till they are snatched away for ever.

How must the Royal heart be afflicted at the present moment! But a few hours have elapsed since the mortal remains of the deceased were consigned to their last resting-place on earth. In those sad hours, what piercing emotions must have agitated the breast of the Sovereign!—How vivid his grief!—increased as it must have been by innumerable recollections of the past, making the departed uppermost in all his thoughts, and dearest to all his feelings! For him, we know, our Gracious Monarch ever cherished the warmest friendship. From the cradle to the grave, the attachment of the Royal Brothers was the same. The dawn of life was passed in amusements and pursuits of which they both partook. Their happiness was mutual; and each felt the disappointment and uneasiness of the other.—Such was the reciprocal affection which they cherished in their earliest dawn.—Nor did it pass away with that innocent

and delicious period. The blossom became fruit, and the tender regard of the child ripened into the solid friendship of the man.—No coldness existed on either side. The superior glory of the Heir of England, far from being envied, was venerated and loved by the younger Prince. Pursuits and pleasures were shared in common; and, by being divided, instead of suffering diminution, received additional charms.

This fair picture of harmony between brothers of the Blood Royal is not drawn upon *every* page of history:—for we sometimes find that princes forget the affection of their infancy when they grow up to manhood, and become secret or open foes. But *here* you see nothing but what evinces an union of hearts, a mutual confidence, and unshaken repose.

The friendship and affection which had subsisted between the illustrious Brothers while their royal Father was living, manifested itself in more conspicuous lights when the Regent became King.—The majesty of the kingdom,—the personal mag-

nificence of the Monarch—lay close to the heart of the deceased;—nor could the British throne find a firmer ally, or more devoted subject. His conduct in this respect was an example which all men should follow; for more sincere homage,—more perfect devotion to a king, never could be paid than he evinced. He felt, indeed, that he was still the *brother* of Majesty; but he also felt that he was the *subject;* and although in the retirement of life he might expect, and would undoubtedly receive, all those marks of kindness and brotherly regard, to which he had been accustomed; yet, in the public character of King, he would pay his brother all those attentions and honours which his illustrious rank, and supreme authority demanded. Of this he gave the most unquestionable proofs; and at no time was his loyalty more conspicuous than at that august moment in which the crown of England first encircled the brows that it now adorns.

For reasons like these the grief of the King must at the present moment be ex-

cessive. It is not as though he had found in the departed a captious, discontented subject—one who envied his superior glory, —who endeavoured to divide his people—to oppose the advancing prosperity of his dominions,—who had been jealous of his power,—shown the evil eye,—and carped at the splendour of majesty,—one who would enter into any low bickering,—descend to any familiarity for the sake of being chief in a faction.—No—this was not *his* character. From the cradle to the tomb he had been dear to his Sovereign's bosom, —had ever gone with him in his great thoughts and views,—had ever revered, and honoured, and loved his person.

For such an one it is that the King sheds tears, and endures a sorrow as bitter as the human breast can bear.—"The King lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner—and all the people wept."

But if at the grave of Abner the people of Israel wept, we may do so with equal propriety at the tomb of the deceased Prince.

And here I cannot forbear remarking

how great a loss the Army have sustained. —Their illustrious Commander in Chief is dead; and in his death, from the Field-Marshal to the commonest soldier in the ranks, all have cause to mourn. His near relation to the Throne was such as peculiarly fitted him for this most important office; and how well his mind was adapted to form a brave and high-spirited army, let the present character of our soldiers bear witness.

Before he came to the high dignity of Commander in Chief, the British army was the most unwieldy, grotesque, disjointed thing that can be imagined. The very idea of a soldier was an absurdity. The qualifications at that time thought becoming, were the most odious and disgusting vices; while the dress and manners, capacities and acquirements, were any thing but what they should have been, and what they now are. The army was then, little, if at all, better than a school for every species of irreligion and immorality. The bad habits of swearing, and gaming, and lewdness, were thought

soldier-like; and there was scarcely one in an hundred who knew any thing of military science or history. Dissipation and profligacy rendered their heads incapable of mathematical investigations; and the art of war they could neither practice nor understand. They might perhaps boast of that fiery rashness which plunges men into disputes, and subjects them to a challenge; but of the enlightened bravery—the dauntless bearing, of a hero, they had no idea whatever.

In addition to these abuses, Interest could do any thing—Merit was often pushed aside;—and the hardy veteran, who had seen twenty years' service, was compelled to cap to a strippling who had all his life been fed upon sweet-meats, and just left the arms of his nurses.

Such was the state of the army before the lamented dead was invested with the office of Commander in Chief.—How different from its present state!—Witness the change that has taken place.

Instead of beholding in the British forces a disorderly, boorish, deep-drink-

ing, profligate race, you see a disciplined, polite, gentlemanly, well-informed, martial body of men—men who deem *character* in a soldier no less indispensable than *courage*. The splendid battles that were fought during the last war were stained by no thirst of blood—no anxiety for plunder. The officer and the soldier were both ambitious of victory, but not of cruel slaughter; and although long used to the tumult and hurry of the camp, and the perpetual change of place; yet when they came back to their native land, they manifested no signs of turbulence or discontent with the quiet and novel life they were called to lead; but displayed their excellent spirit and discipline, by a most punctual attention to civil, as well as to military duties.

Nor was His Royal Highness inattentive to the *religious* habits of the troops; rightly judging, that religion is as important in the heart of a soldier as of any other man; and believing it to form, as it most assuredly does, the best foundation and surest support of courage. Indeed, the prompt and

serious attention shown both by the officer who commands, and by the soldier in the ranks, when the solemn services of the Church are performed, whether in a military chapel, or in the open air upon a drum-head, might well put to shame the slovenly, careless, worship, sometimes offered in the temple of God by thoughtless, half-infidel citizens.

These reformations wrought in the army by the deceased Prince, will ever make his memory revered. But what renders his merit and worth more conspicuous, is that perfect and unanimous satisfaction which his official conduct gave. Promotion—Redress—Comfort—Discipline—all were perpetually revolved in his capacious mind—and all bestowed and enforced with the utmost impartiality. So that in him the army have lost, not only a fellow-soldier and a friend; but a Brother and a Father.

His loss will not only be felt by the Military Order—it will extend throughout society.

We hope indeed, and believe, that the Prince who now looks forward to the

throne, will become a great and gracious monarch, should he ever arrive at the summit of greatness. We trust, however, that our good King is destined to a long life—that Heaven will still add to his strength as his years increase—and that health and alacrity, ease and happiness, will wait on all his days.

But whatever may be the fate that hovers over futurity, we cannot help thinking, that had the deceased Prince survived, and ever ascended the throne, he would have made a kind, and merciful, and gracious monarch. That the happiness of the People would have been his chief concern we feel assured; and the security of the Christian religion, as it is taught in the national establishment, made every friend of virtue happy. Let not this declaration induce any one to suppose that protestant Christians would persecute, or deal harshly with their brethren of the papal faith—God forbid!—They do, however, conceive that the nature of their religious creed must ever exclude them from equal political privileges and grants

—for it is quite impossible that popery and protestantism should exist together upon equal terms.—One must ultimately subdue the other; and whether as a protestant nation we should ever be disposed to receive into our highest places, men who recognize in the Pontiff of Rome a prince who should receive homage from all the monarchs of the world, it requires no very great sagacity to determine.

The late illustrious Prince we know, whatever he might have done to meliorate the condition of the papal part of the community, never would have suffered the tenets of the Romish religion to prevail. The influence of that religion in past ages is frightful to our thoughts: and to try a second time, what had once proved so fatal, would be nothing less than to try, whether death, in its most terrible forms, would not promote the happiness of England.

It is therefore a most unpardonable impropriety on the part of popish demagogues to charge the deceased Prince

with prejudice or bigotry because he plainly told them (and ratified the declaration with an oath), that he would never grant what they thought fit to claim.—He acted for the benefit of the body-politic when he pledged himself to support the present Constitution, both of Church and State.

Over him, however, we are now called to mourn.—So far as he is concerned, our hopes are at an end.—But we most sincerely believe, that should the next brother of the Blood Royal survive his Majesty, he will adhere to the religious principles of his excellent Father—that he will adopt the course of his eldest Brother—that he will do as He whose loss we deplore would have done, had he worn the crown. Thus may we expect to see England prosperous—at peace—wealthy—happy.

I have already been too diffuse in my remarks: I hasten to a conclusion.

In the death of the Prince whose memory we have been recalling, you behold the end of human greatness.—No

distinction is made between the palace and the cottage—Death claims admission to both, and steps up as unceremoniously to the couch of royalty, as to the pallet of the humblest peasant—The monarch and the subject are hurried off at the same moment to eternity. The same relentless hand, strips off the splendid attire of Majesty, and the rags of the beggar—All return to the dust out of which man was at first created; but the spirit goes to answer for "the deeds done in the body."

Grave reflections arise in all minds when they look upon the face of death—on this occasion what reflections may we suppose to arise in the Royal mind?—The insecurity of life is probably felt—The freshness of youth has long since departed. God grant that vigour may attend the King to his latest hour! Yet he must sometimes look forward to the period when his senses will decay—when the tide of life will ebb—and himself become silent, and cold, and insensible as his illustrious Brother.

And these reflections cannot fail to bring in view that eternity to which the spirit goes when the body sleeps in the ground—Solemn anticipations of the world to come—of that world on which the soul of the deceased Prince has entered—and the importance of a due preparation for the final crisis, it is reasonable to think, occupy the attention of the Sovereign.

It is easy to believe, too, that under the impression of these awful thoughts, he considers himself as invested with kingly power by the great God for the benefit of his subjects, and forms the strongest resolutions to make every act of his life a record of wisdom and beneficence;—adapted to promote merit of every description, and to discountenance and shame vice and wickedness out of the world for ever;—making his dominions subject to such laws as accord with the will of the Supreme Being for whom he acts, and from whom he received the sceptre;—that when he puts off the crown he wears on earth, Jesus Christ, in whose blood he trusts for salvation, may confer,

in Heaven, a crown of unfading and immortal glory.

If such be the wise, and solemn, and religious thoughts of the King, what should be the reflections of the people? what their conduct?

Let them, too, think of their mortality, and prepare for the judgment to come. Let them evince their respect and sorrow —their profound homage and unalterable attachment to the Throne;—and while they submit to the awful providence that has bereaved the nation of a Prince, let them pray for the life of the King; let them earnestly beseech Almighty God to grant, that finally in a good old age—full of days, and riches, and honours—"clothed in the righteousness of Christ," and meet for eternal glory, he may come to his grave, "as a shock of corn that is fully ripe, cometh in, in his season."

FINIS.

PRINTED BY GUNNELL AND SHEARMAN,
SALISBURY-SQUARE.

A

SERMON,

&c.

JOSEPH SEPARATED FROM HIS KINDRED, AND FROM HIS NATIVE LAND, TO BE A RULER IN A FOREIGN NATION.

A SERMON,

PREACHED IN

THE CHAPEL

OF THE

HON. THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S COLLEGE,

HAILEYBURY,

AT THE CLOSE OF TERM.

BY THE

REV. PROFESSOR WALTER, B.D. & F.R.S.

LATE FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE;
AND CHAPLAIN TO HIS GRACE, THE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

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ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

A

SERMON,

&c.

GENESIS xliii. 27.

And he asked them of their welfare, and said, Is your father well? The old man of whom ye spake. Is he yet alive?

THE history of Joseph is read by every one, who looks into his Bible. But it is, too probably, much more often perused by way of uniting entertainment with the undeniable demands of duty, than because it *reasons* admirably with the heart *of righteousness and temperance.*

And they who read it, without bearing in mind the conduct to be expected from one who *had set God always before him,* are very apt to consider Joseph as intending to lead his brethren through scenes of perplexity and terror, by way of punishment; or of revenge, though lenient. Whereas a juster view would exhibit to them a succession of measures very sagaciously devised,

for enabling him to judge, what conduct should, finally, be pursued towards his brethren; and to ascertain, or secure, the safety of those two best loved personages of his family, Benjamin and Jacob *.

When his brethren first appeared before him, in Egypt, Benjamin was not of their number. And Joseph could not but know, that Jacob's partiality to the only remaining son of his favorite Rachel, might have provoked the brothers to the same jealousy as they had felt against himself. The day too on which he had last beheld their faces, they had seen *the anguish of his soul*, whilst *he besought them, but they would not hear* †; and the doubt whether his *own* brother, the brother he left in tender years, had not looked up with the same anguish, for pity, in vain, might well occasion, and excuse his speaking *roughly unto them*. But had he announced himself, and insisted on knowing what account they could give of his brother, he could have placed no confidence in the truth of any story they might have chosen

* In the following explanation of Joseph's behaviour to his brethren, free use has been made of Benson's Hulsean Lectures for 1822, which the reader might consult with great advantage, for a luminous and very interesting view of such parts of that patriarch's conduct as do not fall within the scope of this sermon.

† Gen. xlii. 21.

to tell him. Persons who could do what his brethren had already done, would not scruple to conceal their guilt by falsehood.

By charging them, therefore, with being spies, he led them, indirectly, to an account of their family; without giving them the same temptation to disguise the truth, as if they had supposed him interested in the welfare of any of its members.

But their account was not explicit. '*The youngest is this day with our father* *,' might mean in Canaan; might mean in the grave. Their manner of speaking of himself—*One is not* *—shewed Joseph that they could hide a foul act under ambiguous language.

This would make him still less inclined to set any value on their words. And accordingly we find, that he took advantage of their defence of themselves, to build upon it a device for having his brother Benjamin brought into his presence; if yet alive †.

The device succeeded; but not till after a longer delay than Joseph could well account for ‡.

Had it proceeded from Benjamin's reluctance to traverse the solitudes of the desert in their power? Or had he been sold, like himself, and now sought back?

* Gen. xlii. 13. † Ibid. xlii. 14—20.

‡ Compare the conclusion of ch. xlii. and beginning of ch. xliii.

He determined, by another trial, to ascertain, whether they felt for Benjamin as brothers.

Or was it, that his father, as they had declared would be the case*, had been quite unable to part with him; and that Benjamin's being, at length, brought away, was the sign—that the urgency of his own command might have been the cause,—of Jacob's death?

To escape a premature detection, which would thwart his remaining plan, it was requisite that he should not appear peculiarly interested in Jacob's health. But his anxiety will now brook no delay. He takes advantage of what courtesy might account for his saying to strangers; and asks, *Is your father well? The old man of whom ye spake.* And, before he can receive an answer, the idea of his father's great age, as '*the old man*' dropped from his lips, seems to give strength to his fears; and the expression of his hopes sinks down to, *Is he yet alive?*

Who cannot imagine the palpitation of heart, which would accompany the intense, though disguised anxiety, of these brief questions!

He had been torn from the scenes and the faces of his youth, to dwell in a foreign land—employed and honored;—but separated, more than by length of seas, from all knowledge of

* Gen. xliv. 21. 23.

the welfare of his father—'*the old man.*' Yet amidst his arduous employments, and his high honors, how affectionately his thoughts recurred to past scenes of domestic tenderness, may be perceived from his melting into tears, which prudence had not the power to suppress, when the language of penitence in his brothers' mouths, the sight of his mother's son, or Judah pleading for Jacob's sorrows, gave him hopes, gradually rising in strength, that home was yet the scene of kindly affections. Distance and time, softening all remembrance of every failing which could weaken love, gave his filial and brotherly feelings double force.

In like manner, I trust, my young friends, will your affections increase in intensity towards those, whom you are about to leave with far more cheering prospects than Joseph; who *was sold for a servant, and whose feet they hurt with fetters* *.

Without passing through his previous sorrows, you may hope for a career resembling his in its happiest features. You are summoned to be the instruments of a government, which must seek for strength by deserving the approbation of its subjects; and which, therefore, expects its officers to save the weak from oppression, and like Joseph,

* Ps. cv. 17, 18.

to protect, by politic arrangements, an improvident population from famine.

And, in return, you also will find a submissive people, willing to receive you, as *lords of their houses and rulers of all their substance* *. You cannot therefore reasonably repine, if your lot on the other hand, again resembles his, in being severed from the home of your youth—from parents affectionate like his—and perhaps too, like his, declining in the vale of years. And if, in that distant land, some one in your presence, a stranger to your deep interest in the name he utters, should speak of your father, from some recent knowledge of him; and of his having been, like Joseph's, exposed to trials endangering the exhaustion of his failing strength, with what swellings of heart will you also ask, *Is my father well? The old man of whom you spake. Is he yet alive?*

Do these thoughts occasion a painful anxiety? Learn from this story how to make an absent father happy.

In the hour of temptation, like Joseph, view with abhorrence, any proposal to violate a trust which has been generously and fully reposed.

Fear, like him, the consciousness of guilt, more

* Ps. cv. 21.

than being exposed to the foulest calumnies. And if successful misrepresentation should, by some rare combination of circumstances, bring upon you disgrace and ill usage from those you had honorably served, how truly noble, how blessed would be the disposition, which should lead you, like him, to turn so faithfully to the duties of a humbler station, as there to win the confidence deserved before * !

But the liberal encouragement which awaits your services, offers (as I have already said) to your hopes a career more resembling that of Joseph in his prosperity. In such, learn, like him, to be at once provident for those entrusted to your charge, and careful for the honor and interests of those who delegate to you their power. That whilst the people gratefully exclaim *Thou hast saved our lives* †; they may also cheerfully say, *And we will be your countrymen's servants.* But remember, that even the saving their lives, will not secure their cheerful submission; unless, like the Egyptians, they be suffered to add, *Let us find grace in the sight* of our master. And that they may be convinced, they do enjoy the favor of their governors, a courteous demeanour towards them will be no less requisite than sub-

* Gen. xxxix. 21. 23. † Ibid. xlvii. 25.

stantial benefits. Like Joseph, you will be surrounded by people to whom many things, of no moment in your eyes, are *an abomination.* Learn from his example to pay due attention even to such prejudices *.

Do these things; and I know not who shall forbid your gratifying a father's heart, by saying, in Joseph's words, to some friend returning home, *Ye shall tell my father of all my glory here, and of all that ye have seen* †.

Thus shall *a wise son make a glad father.* And your praises, brought from a distant land, will be such *pleasant words,* as are *sweet to the soul, and health to the bones* ‡ of the aged.

Your reasonable expectations allow you to look forward to the happiest of all earthly rewards, for your temporary separation from your native home.

Are the parents of any endowed less plentifully, than an affectionate son could wish, with the goods of this world? It may, after a few years of befitting economy, and proper exertion in your calling, be your delight to think, that the wants, to which age and its infirmities would give a double pressure, are changed, by help from your stores, into gratifications which make a

* See Gen. xliii. 32, and xlvi. 34.

† Gen. xlv. 13. ‡ Prov. xvi. 24.

parent's heart, like Jacob's, faint with overflowing joy *.

Or, are your parents in affluence and honor? Still the world is but too disposed to change homage for slights, when the mind in old age is seen to be losing its vigor. And wealth cannot purchase back its full respect for declining influence. But if you so conduct yourselves as to return followed by the blessings of the nations amongst whom you have dwelt, and honored by the praises of your countrymen, then, as the aged Jacob was reverenced at the king of Egypt's court for Joseph's sake; so shall your father meet with increased respect for yours—provided you do but set the example by that delicate attention, which is comprehended in the son of Sirach's pathetic exhortation.

'*My son, help thy father in his age, and grieve him not as long as he liveth. And if his understanding fail, have patience with him; and despise him not when thou art in thy full strength. For the relieving of thy father shall not be forgotten; in the day of thine affliction it shall be remembered* †.'

I willingly believe that the sweetest ingredient in the cup of earthly hopes, to each, is the idea that your elevation in life, or the improvement of

* Gen. xlv. 26, 27. † Eccles. iii. 12—15.

your fortunes, will put it in your power to prove incontestably, how dear to you is a parent's happiness.

And may your feelings remain such, in all the warmth of their present youthful glow! But there is an evil which deadens all affection, with a far heavier chill than that of age. Indulgence in sensuality brings with it the barren curse of selfishness, to blight all virtuous, all generous thoughts; till the heart is so hardened under its withering influence, as to slight the calls of gratitude, and embitter the refusal with the laugh of scorn.

But whilst your hearts shudder at such a picture, whilst each would exclaim, if he were told the portrait would be his own, *Am I a dog, that I should do this* detestable *thing!* Let me beseech those, whose period of departure hence is not yet arrived, to reflect that the calls of gratitude cannot be less binding, whilst they remain under a parent's care, and eat his bread, then when they will be earning their own. That it cannot be less criminal to rack a father's bosom by neglecting his wishes, by violating his commands, by despising his entreaties, and persisting in idleness or misconduct *here*, than by the like cruel indifference to his happiness, when you are so far removed, that the disobedient answer, the unfeeling eye can no longer pierce his heart.

The wish, however, the virtuous wish, to provide means for increasing a parent's comforts—for enabling much loved relations to share your worldly advantages—might become a pretext for avarice—might degenerate into rapacity; if your filial affections had not another call.

You must remember, that you are the sons of Britain. And that peculiarly forcible expression, our *mother* country, binds up within it every ardent, every kindly affection.

However removed, however estranged from the faces of your countrymen, if the mention of intelligence from your native land, after some long interval, comes across your ears, with what warmth of heart will you not ask, after the welfare of the old country of which they spake—*If peace be* still *within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces* * ?

And this feeling should make you consider in every part of your conduct, how it will affect the character of your country? Its heart-stirring influence should make all, and every one, ready to sacrifice the most valued private objects, to earn for our nation this glorious homage; that *when the ear* of the Indian *hears* a Briton, *it shall bless him; and when the eye sees him, it shall give witness to him;* as the *deliverer of*

* Psal. cxxii. 7.

the poor that crieth—whilst he *breaks the jaws of wickedness, and plucketh the spoil out of her teeth.*

But as the domestic affections may lead to injustice, the love of our country is still more likely to hide, from the patriot's self, the guilt of ambition; unless this feeling also be chastened by the constant remembrance that there is another still, and a weightier claim for filial obedience and love—a claim which, if it was really felt, as well as confessed, would correct and sanctify every motive of action—that there is an Almighty and All-righteous Being who deigns to name Himself our Father.

They in whom pride is strong, and affection weak, are apt to look forward to their independence of an earthly parent's bounty, as removing his claim to influence their conduct. But there is no escape, for those who could wish it, from dependence on our Heavenly Father's bounty.

And revelation expressly contradicts the chilling language of the poet *, which would take

* Who sees with *equal* eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall.
Pope's Essay on Man.

Compare Matt. x. 29. 31.—Are not two sparrows sold for

from thankfulness all its warmth; by representing that bounty, as diffused alike, by an undistinguishing course of events, over man and the inferior parts of the creation.

For the peculiar love of God towards man was shewn in the face of heaven and earth; by sending *his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him**. Unable as our minds are fully to comprehend that mysterious unity of substance, thus described under terms of human relation, the only terms from which we could receive the ideas intended to be conveyed to us, so much is brought to the level of our understandings as ought to make our hearts burn within us; when we contemplate The Father as giving up His Son to suffer insults, and feel the sting of death; *that we might live through Him.* '*Herein is love*†.' If there be any thing in our hearts responsive to those affections, which He challenges by the name of

a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. *But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

And Matt. vi. 26.—Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. *Are ye not much better than they?*

* 1 John iv. 9. † Ibid. iv. 9, 10.

Father, how infinitely should this increase our love towards God!

Of him to whom it is given to appreciate these things, the Apostle says, "*He dwelleth in love**." It fills his heart.

Do your feelings on the contrary turn cold upon the mention of these things? There needs no other proof, that you in reality do not believe the Scriptures. If the kindness you see in your earthly father makes you glow with affection for him, whilst you feel no delight in fixing your thoughts on love as unmeasurable as the power of Him, you call Almighty; then is it quite undeniable, that your faith does not accept the word of God as that full and irresistible *evidence of things not seen,* which would put their influence over you on a level with that of the things that are seen. Yet nothing less than this can give his word a thorough controul over your affections, and, through them, over your conduct.

Yet you think you believe; because you feel unable to refuse your assent. And, whilst unassisted, I know not that you can go farther. But one who seems to have felt the like difficulty, has left this short prayer for your instruction; '*Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.*' † Like him you must turn to Christ for help. He

* John iv. 16. † Mark ix. 24.

alone can vanquish our unbelief. And if we sincerely ask this of Him; it will assuredly be given.

Its happy influence will first be seen in making you, like Joseph, to remember your Creator in the days of your youth; and to give Him the praise of all your success *. And when you find yourself willingly, thus *led by the Spirit of God,* then will you be enabled to call Him, from your inmost hearts, *Abba, Father.* Then shall your hearts rejoice, with joy that no man can take from you, in the consciousness, that, wheresoever your steps may be directed, you will always be under the eye of a Father, who is *mighty to save,* and whose parental tenderness far exceeds all human love. '*Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget: yet will I not forget thee* †;' saith the Lord.

How happy the thought that all things are his, who thus pathetically describes his love for them that seek him! O turn to him with all your hearts; and whether it be *the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all,* saith the Apostle, *are yours* ‡. For *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us*

* Gen. xli. 16. † Is. xlix. 15. ‡ 1 Cor. iii. 22.

all, how shall he not with Him freely give us all things *? Listen not, I beseech you, to these gracious promises as to high sounding words, with no definite meaning. But believe that they shall be fulfilled to the letter, by Him who *ascended on high,* and there *received gifts for men; yea, even for the rebellious* †, saith the Spirit. How much rather then for him, who, whilst yet a *young man cleanseth his way by ruling himself according to the word of* God ‡; and who, as he advanceth in life, *giveth diligence to make his calling and election sure* §. To such *the Lord God will give grace and glory. No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly* ‖. But *they go from strength to strength,* till *every one of them appeareth before God in* the heavenly *Zion* ¶.

To them it may, indeed, be most truly said, *The world is yours.* For in this glorious career it shall, though unwillingly, be made to do them good service. And why doth the ambitious seek to command the world? Is it not in the hope, that the flattery paid to greatness, and the homage yielded to power, may be heard or perceived whensoever he steps forth into it; and that all things may thus bring their offerings to swell

* Rom. viii. 32.
† Ps. lxviii. 18.
‡ Ps. cxix. 9.
§ 2 Pet. i. 10.
‖ Ps. lxxxiv. 11.
¶ Ps. lxxxiv. 7.

his happiness? But what is the happiness to which he aspires, compared with that which exceedeth all that it has *entered into the heart of man* to conceive—and is eternal? And whithersoever the beloved of God step forth into the world, it *shall* contribute to their attaining to such happiness. For whether it insult them, or honour them; whether it grieve, or soothe them; whether it love, or hate them—*we know that all things work together for good to them that love God* *.

The world will reject the yoke of the ambitious man; or it will give him corroding cares instead of happiness, and curses instead of applause. But it *shall* help on the righteous to victory; for He who made it, and doth rule it, hath said so.

Life also *is yours,* who are *dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ* †.

For if a full mind, and vigorous action, and elevated hopes, give reality to life; then *to be spiritually minded is life* ‡.

Then is it life, to be striving and conquering daily in that struggle against sin, of which the Lord hath said, *To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne; even as I*

* Rom. viii. 28. † Rom. vi. 11.
‡ Rom. viii. 6.

also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne *.

Does the man of powerful understanding, the grasp of whose intellect reacheth even to the stars—does he boast, that his is life, whilst the ignorant, or the sensualist only doze or dream? Let him know, that if his thoughts have no higher aim, then, though he *is not dead, but sleepeth*, it is a dull and heavy sleep, compared with the life of him whose heart and eye are ever conscious of the presence of God.

And as the world and life shall be theirs who trust in these promises, so shall death itself minister to their felicity. Yea its dreaded groans shall be heard as the cry of victory, announcing that *the good fight of faith* hath been *fought*—that a *mortal putteth on immortality* at the bidding of his heavenly Father; who, if He thus invite the young away, can wipe all tears from off each earthly parent's face; and yield them a surer and a happier support than filial love could devise.

But if he requires your longer service here on earth, may you *grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ* †. And let me entreat you to add your daily prayers to the preacher's fervent wish, that you may be

* Rev. iii. 21. † 2 Pet. iii. 18.

permitted to know of the dearest friends you leave, and they of you, that each is advancing in love and devotion to your common Father. For the consciousness of this sacred communion of feeling will sanctify, whilst it gives double warmth to every affection; this will make the heart expand and glow with thankfulness, under events in which the world finds only affliction.

May He, who has promised peculiar mercies to filial love, knit your, and your parents' hearts together in this happy, this blessed bond of union. And as He hath deigned to place a long and prosperous life amongst those promised mercies *, may He bring you back to your country in peace and honor. And may He grant you, to be welcomed home with a parent's tears of joy; to kneel by a parent's side, and pour out thanks to Him, for having given to each to see the others sure approach to *Heaven*.

* Eph. vi. 13.

THE END.

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THE CONVICTIONS AND EXPECTATION OF THE PATRIARCH JOB.

A SERMON,

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE DECEASE

OF

H. R. H. FREDERIC DUKE OF YORK,

PREACHED

AT THE ENGLISH CHAPEL, PARIS,

ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 1827.

BY THE REV. LEWIS WAY, A.M.

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A SERMON.

JOB, XIX. 25.

I know that my Redeemer liveth.

SINCE death entered into the world by sin, the last words of every mortal man, have carried with them an impression of peculiar interest, to all with whom he might be connected in the various relations of human life.

The twelve tribes of Israel, are to this hour, nationally concerned in the last blessings of their father Jacob. "Blessings of the Heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills." And where is the Christian who does not feel a personal and eternal interest in that expression,

"IT IS FINISHED;" as spoken by his Saviour Jesus, when "he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost."

It is our purpose this day, to consider in a solemn and impressive manner, the privation which our country has sustained, in the lamented decease of the first subject of the British Empire. The last words which are reported to have fallen from *his* lips, were these:—"Now, I know that I am dying." They were addressed to the friends who administered to the sufferings of his mortal body, and surrounded him at the moment of his dissolution; and being dead, he yet speaketh; speaketh, my brethren, to us; to his own brethren; to the throne, whereon he might have sat; and to the nation he might have lived to govern.

In every death there is a voice, and one of universal import, for death hath passed upon all. Where is the descendant of Adam, who may not upon any, and on every day, and in every hour and moment of his life, adopt and apply to himself the same words,—"I know that I am dying;" since "in Adam all die?" And where is the man, who may not, if he will, take up with me the words of the text, and say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," since "in Christ shall all be made alive?" And why postpone the consideration, which de-

thrones the king of terrors, disarms death of its sting, and gains a victory over the grave? which enables the believer to say, "I die daily, nevertheless I live; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

It is not a matter of moral suasion, a mental perception merely, but a personal and experimental feeling which occasions the expression and assurance, "*I know* in whom I have believed." It was not the apprehension of death, but a view of sin, the cause and origin thereof, which led to the CONVICTIONS and EXPECTATION of Job. It was not in the immediate prospect of dissolution, but in the prime and vigour of his days, that "the greatest of all the men of the east," pronounced the words "I know that my Redeemer liveth." They were addressed to the friends who witnessed the sufferings of his body, of such intensity, that he cried out, "My bone cleaveth unto my flesh, and I am escaped with the skin of my teeth;" when he craved their sympathy and commiseration, saying, "Have pity upon me, O ye my friends! for the hand of God hath touched me, know that God hath overthrown me, he hath stripped me of my glory, and *taken the crown from my head.* He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone; and mine hope

hath removed as a tree. He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me. My kinsfolk have failed, my familiar friends have forgotten me."

What a picture of human misery! What expressions of mental agony! And this not the language, as might be expected, of a notorious profligate; not the confession of an abandoned criminal; but of one of whom it is recorded, that he was, before man, "perfect and upright; one that feared God, and eschewed evil." It was the language of a man under deep convictions of sin, and of its exceeding sinfulness, as inherent in our fallen nature; who being taught of God, was also tempted of Satan, and found that in him, that is in his flesh, dwelled no good thing; that he was (as the very heavens are said to be) unclean in the sight of a holy and heart-searching God. It was the language of a man who was not only convinced of sin, but of righteousness also; and the necessity of a better, and far exceeding his own, wherein his first and false dependence had been placed. The same spiritual discernment which led him to a discovery of his real condition by nature, enabled him also to recognise that of a state of grace and acceptance by faith in his Redeemer, of which his first convictions were at once the preparation and the proof.

"The root of the matter was in him." A sense of his own original depravity, and a simple dependence on his Saviour. The dayspring from on high had already dawned on his soul; the light of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day; and therefore out of his state of suffering, he could anticipate an eventful and glorious issue; drawing consolation from affliction, salvation from sin, and life from death; he contemplated the demolition of his earthly tabernacle, with the firm assurance of its restoration; and considered the light affliction of the moment, as working out for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, at the glorious Epiphany of his Redeemer; not in the heaven above, but on the earth below; on the scene of that creation, "groaning and travailing in pain together until now, and waiting with earnest expectation for its own deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; which having the first-fruits of the Spirit, do yet groan within themselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body."

This expectation of the patriarch Job, was not a matter, be it remarked, of mere reasonable analogy, but a subject of Christian faith; not a philosophical speculation, but an object of Chris-

tian hope. Neither was it a constructive interpretation, or a cold and qualified acquiescence, but a cordial and entire assurance, and absolute *knowledge* concerning a revealed truth. "*I know* that my Redeemer liveth, and that *he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth*, and though after my skin worms destroy *this body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God. Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; although my reins be consumed within me."

Such was *the expectation of Job;* and as most assuredly it was not realized to him, at the first appearance of his Redeemer upon earth, it most assuredly will be, when not only to Job, but "unto them that look for Him, will He appear the second time without sin unto salvation:" when "He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him. Even so, Amen!"

And if, my brethren, that antediluvian patriarch, of whom it is recorded, that "he *died* not;" entertained the same expectation: if Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied concerning it, before a former world perished, saying; "Behold! the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon all:" If, in confirmation of

his testimony the apostles of our Lord Jesus have told us that there should be mockers in the last time; and especially concerning this hope; saying, "Where is the promise of His coming?" To what object should *our* attention be directed; living as we do "in the perilous times" which they have so graphically described? If "all Scripture be written for our admonition, *on whom the ends of the world are come,*" what excuse can be made for that negligent attention, or rather absolute indifference, which such considerations meet with, even from professing Christians?

And wherefore some may ask, obtrude them upon our notice on the present occasion? Because they are most suitable to it; is the answer. Because the failure of earthly expectations has a direct tendency to lead a well regulated mind to the consideration of those which are heavenly. In the year that king Uzziah died, the prophet Isaiah found a seasonable opportunity for such contemplations; and while thus occupied, he was favoured with a vision of "the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up;" and heard the seraphic voices exclaiming, "the whole earth is full of his glory;" and this glory we know from the apostle John, to be that of Christ; not as he himself discerned it under the veil of his humiliation, as "the glory of

the only begotten of the Father:" when He came unto his own, and his own (people) received him not, and believed not the report of the prophet concerning him; but when as the arm of the Lord he shall be revealed unto them in the glory of his Father, to be glorified and admired in all them that believe.

To this object therefore, *the coming of the Redeemer to establish His kingdom upon earth;* I would under the sanction of such high example, direct your immediate and close attention. Our sovereign is still spared to us, and may "the King eternal, immortal, invisible," long preserve him! But we have lost his presumptive successor, the first of our princes, the Commander-in-chief of our forces, and the legitimate heir of our empire;—and therefore let us look to Him, from whom cometh this afflictive dispensation; imploring His grace to profit by it, and lifting up our hearts to our Redeemer, who was dead, and is alive, and liveth for evermore, and hath the keys of death and of hell; who came into the world "that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly;" who "ever liveth to make intercession for us," and who, if He be now our life "when He appeareth, we shall appear with Him *in glory*." Let us remember that in Him all

fulness dwelleth; the refuge in every time of need, the remedy for every evil, the supply for every loss.

To give you a direct and appropriate turn to our meditations, I would confine them to the contemplation of our Redeemer as the first begotten from the dead, under his peculiar title—"THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH." And may the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, direct and bless our faithful endeavour to shew forth *his* glory, and our own temporal and eternal welfare as involved in this his significant title.

"The prince of the kings of the earth" was not the title or the dominion of our Redeemer as announced by Gabriel before his conception; or as designated by Pilate before his crucifixion: the name then assigned to him, expressed his office as a Saviour, and proclaimed his peculiar empire as a Sovereign. When the angel was sent to Nazareth, this was the matter of the annunciation. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus." He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; who being himself a prophet spake of the resurrection of Christ, as antecedent to his inauguration thereon. This was unwit-

tingly confirmed by the Roman Governor in the superscription of the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews." He demanded of them, "Shall I crucify your king?" and they hailed him as such in mockery; for this title read all the Jews, and reviled it, saying at the time, "We have no king but Cæsar."

And were the robe of Roman purple, and the reed in place of sceptre, and the thorny crown the only insignia of his royalty? They related to his suffering—rather than to his triumphant kingdom; to which belong the sceptre of righteousness, and the crown of Judah, and the dominion of all nations, and the inheritance of the heathen, and the possession of the uttermost parts of the earth; when He shall appear red in his apparel, and His garments like him that treadeth in the winefat, empurpled in the blood of his enemies, with many crowns upon his head, as becometh "THE KING OF KINGS;" when, as spoken by the prophet Zechariah, "His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives;" when He shall come with all his Saints, and be "King over the whole earth;" when "all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the king, the Lord of Hosts; when all kings shall fall down before him, and all nations shall do him service."

Of which dispensation, and appearance, and kingdom; the sum and scope of prophecy, we have many things to say unto you, and would not be prevented by the remark, of little meaning to those who use or hear it; that the pulpit is no place for politics.

If by politics be meant the intrigues of needy men for place, and the struggles of party men for power, and the projects of ambitious men for advancement, and all the crooked means by which the god of this present evil world carries on his purposes therein, in direct opposition to the kingdom of Christ; God forbid that the minister of the Gospel should have any concern therein; but if by politics we may understand the kingdom and "*the commonwealth* (πολιτεια) of Israel," and in connection with it, the moral government of God over the world; which though no longer in part, or as yet, wholly administered by a visible civil theocracy, is ever under the continual operation and guidance of his secret and overruling Providence. If by politics we imply that determined system of operation, by which the nations of the world, and those especially more immediately connected with our own, are now actually moulding into the very form, and assuming the very relations, and existing under the very circumstances, all predicted concerning them,

then we may assert that the Bible is the only book from which true politics can be drawn, and the pulpit the best place for teaching them. And the contrary notion, that the preacher of the Gospel has nothing to do with what is passing around him; that he should leave the current of public opinion to take its course, and popular characters their own direction; without admonition to kings and counsellors, and public authorities, drawn exclusively from the word of God; hath brought that office, of old so highly magnified, into comparative contempt; hath relaxed the hands of discipline, and strengthened the hands of violence and disorder.

"By me (saith the Lord) kings reign, and princes decree justice: By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." (Prov. viii. 15, 16.) And when they do not thus reign, and rule, and do judgment according to his will, shall the spirit of prophecy be stifled by the fear of man? And shall the ministers of his word keep silence, and be ashamed to bear testimony, even before kings? Not so, Nathan to David; not so, Isaiah to Hezekiah; nor Elijah to Ahab; nor Ezekiel to the prince of Tyrus; nor Paul to Felix and Agrippa.

To select only two instances in point—Was not

Joseph sent into Egypt expressly for this purpose, that he might admonish Pharaoh; and was he not appointed lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance, that he might *inform princes*, and *teach senators wisdom?* And was not Daniel carried into Babylon, that he might "make known to king Nebuchadnezzar what should be in the latter days;" and explain to him the import of that very vision, the interpretation whereof extendeth unto those in which we are living, and is now verily waiting its full accomplishment; insomuch, that he who said personally to the king of Babylon, "*Thou art this head of gold!*" is now virtually, and as really saying to the kings of the last empire prefigured, the mystic Babylon—Ye are those feet of iron and clay, partly strong and partly broken, whereon THE SPIRITUAL STONE, except ye fall down before Him, shall fall on you, and grind you to powder? Ye are the very kings, in whose days the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, or left to other people (as those of Assyria, Medo Persia, or Macedon), but it shall break in pieces all those kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever: and it is written, "THE DREAM IS CERTAIN, AND THE INTERPRETATION THEREOF IS SURE!"

So was it deemed in the days of our own martyr reformers, and so set forth under royal authority

by our own Edward the Sixth, of pious memory; for in the Catechism (*a*), drawn up for public instruction in the last year of his short but eventful reign, we find the true construction of a petition in daily use with us all.

Thus may some of you, my brethren, who think I have been bringing new things to your ears, perceive that I have only been teaching you the very rudiments of the doctrine of the kingdom of Christ; and thus may they (and such there are) who assert I am not orthodox in these opinions, perceive that they are heterodox who deny them; and ye, who have repeated this day the Nicene Creed (*b*), and said that you believe in the resurrection of the dead, and *the life of the world to come,* should know, that by *the world to come* is not intended, in Scripture, and cannot be according to the original sense of the words, the heavenly state; but a period of time, and a state of this habitable globe; namely, that of the first resurrection from the dead, which is the subject of the whole fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians; and not the general resurrection and judgment (as supposed), where the apostle speaks of Christ as the first-fruits; afterwards, they that are his, *at his coming,* which is the coming of his saints. Then cometh the end, or general judgment of the wicked, when He shall have delivered

up *the kingdom* to the Father, which is the kingdom appointed to Him of the Father, and appointed by Him to his disciples, of which you have heard in the lesson of the day, where Jesus saith unto his disciples, " Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory; ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt. xix. 28.) Of which ye have also heard the same Jesus, your Saviour, speaking in the Gospel, and saying, " Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; while the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness." Whereof ye have likewise heard this day, in the 105th psalm, wherein the marrow of the matter is set forth, in the promise of the land to Israel, as an everlasting inheritance; wherein the plagues on Pharaoh's kingdom are enumerated: which are but the figures of those judgments still in the course of their execution upon those countries spiritually called Egypt, even in this our day.

And ye know, moreover, or ought to know, how it happened that this primitive and *wholly orthodox* doctrine of the reign of Christ upon earth, was brought into doubt and disrepute by the malice and fraud of Satan, who set up the kingdom of anti-

christ in place thereof, the very essence of which is the assumption of the temporal power into the spiritual; for while I contend for the right and duty incumbent on the ministers of the Gospel (not meaning those who assume the office from carnal motives, but those who are appointed and anointed to it of God); while, I say, it is their duty to admonish the king on his throne, with the same simplicity they would use towards the beggar at his footstool, I do assert that the temporal power, which is supreme in civil causes and ecclesiastical, hath no judgment in spiritual doctrines; and that the spiritual powers have no necessary connection, *as such*, with temporalities. And thus let me point out the true distinction between those of old, who held these doctrines in an unscriptural manner, and those who now contend for them as a part of the faith once delivered to the saints. The former, in their ignorance, sought the possession of this earth, and the government of it, in its present fallen condition, and would reign over it without Christ. Whereas, the latter desire not such a world as this, or ought which it inheriteth. They know that it is under the curse, and desire it not till that curse be repealed. It was denounced for the sin of the first Adam, and will be cancelled for the obedience of the second, of whom he was a

type, not as he appeared in a manger, but as he will appear in the clouds of heaven. For what reference hath one in the fulness of his stature, as the type of an infant; or the possessor of the creation, to one who had not where to lay his head? No, brethren, the second Adam, the last man, is the Lord from heaven, when he shall appear in the fulness of his stature and the plenitude of his dominion; when the kingdom and dominion under the whole heaven, given to our first parent, and ever since usurped by Satan, the god of this world, shall be restored in Christ, as "the Prince of the kings of the earth."

It was the reaction of popery upon the protestant cause, which stifled this doctrine after the reformation, when our reformers, emerging from the death and darkness in which the truth had so long lain buried, came up like Lazarus from the tomb, with his grave-clothes wrapped about him; but as he sat down with Jesus at table, so may we, as children of the resurrection, sit down with Christ, and eat and drink at his table, in his kingdom; who is the Resurrection and the Life, the First begotten from the dead, and will be manifested hereafter as the Prince of the kings of the earth, when he shall take unto himself his great power, and shall reign.

Be assured, my brethren, it is no "cunningly

devised fable, "no private interpretation of prophecy, no revival of an exploded heresy, which I am thus earnestly recommending to your attention: but it is the word of eternal truth, the faith of the primitive, and the hope of the protestant church; and, therefore, speaking to you over the tomb of a prince, who, whatever might be justly advanced in commendation of his public or private character, either as a commander under whose administration the arms of England have been blessed by Providence with such signal and unexampled victory; or as a person of such excellent family affections, that he honoured his royal father whether living or dead, and loved his reigning brother above his own right of succession to the crown; it is my duty to commend him to you, to our country, and to posterity, as A PROTESTANT PRINCE, who felt and understood whereon that his right of succession rested for its basis, and who had pledged himself, in his place as a senator, to protect and maintain it in his place as a sovereign. And as he possessed much of the military talent, and more of the civil and domestic virtues of Germanicus Cæsar, I am led, by association, to adopt a sentence from the funeral oration pronounced over that imperial general, of whom it was said, as it may be of the deceased, that even "they(*c*) that were unknown to him will lament his

loss." There will be occasion for lamentation in the senate, and a call for the enactment of laws. And this is the chief office of friends—not to follow the departed with idle lamentations; but to call to recollection his desires, and faithfully to execute his commissions.

And may the words once spoken(*d*), and the resolution once expressed, by him who is now lost to the church as well as to the state, though censured by some as premature in his lifetime, be now sanctioned and sealed by death, and sound as a warning voice in the ears of those who may hereafter hold his station, or supply his place, whether in the senate or on the throne; lest they should lend their aid to a measure which might prove *the death-warrant of the constitution,* the safeguard whereof is, that its power cannot be vested in the hands of its avowed and inveterate enemies.

We have long prospered as a Protestant nation, under princes of the Protestant succession; and if, instead of fearing God, we follow after them that are given to change, and join ourselves unto those who are building up a tottering fabric, foredoomed to fall, it requires no gift of prophecy to predict our fate. Infatuation goeth before destruction: and the nations that have drunk of the cup of the indignation of the Almighty, are not repenting and

giving Him the glory; but are giving their power to the beast that goeth into perdition. And the measure of wickedness is filling up, and the mystery of God accomplishing. And "the city of confusion will come up into remembrance, and the holy city will come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride;" "And at midnight will the cry be heard, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" and the church will go forth to meet him, and he will be crowned, as Solomon in the day of his espousals, "THE PRINCE OF PEACE:" "And of the increase of his government upon the throne of David there shall be no end." For at the sounding of the seventh trump, which is the last, "The kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ," and he shall reign for ever and ever! And she that did sit as a queen upon many waters, will be cast as a stone into the sea, and be found no more at all. And the voice of a great multitude will be heard, as the voice of many waters; and may every tongue in this congregation join in the acclamation, saying, "Alleluia! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

NOTES.

(A.)

THE author of the Catechism set forth by royal authority in the last year of Edward VI. explains the petition in the Lord's Prayer thus:

"Q. How is that petition, 'Thy kingdom come,' to be understood?

"A. We ask that his kingdom may come; for as yet we see not all things subject to Christ. We see not how the stone is cut out of the mountain, without human help, which breaks into pieces and reduces to nothing the image described by Daniel; or that the only Rock, which is Christ, doth possess and obtain *the empire of the whole world,* given him of the Father. As yet antichrist is not slain; whence it is, that we desire and pray that at length it may be fulfilled, and that Christ alone may reign with his saints, and have dominion in the world, according to the decrees of the holy Gospel, and not according to the traditions and laws of men, and the wiles of the tyrants of this world. God grant, saith the reply, that this kingdom may come most speedily."

(B.)

"The Great Council of Nice, called by Constantine the Great, besides the definition of faith, and the canons eccle-

siastical, did set forth certain forms of ecclesiastical doctrines, according to which all teachers in the church were to frame their discourse, and direct their opinions. Amongst these, there is this form, for the doctrine of the state of the resurrection.

"The world was made more minute or less (*i. e.* less perfect), because of foreknowledge: for God foresaw that man would sin. Therefore we expect new heavens, and a new earth, according to the holy Scriptures; when shall shine forth the apparition, or appearance and kingdom of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. And then, as Daniel saith (c. vii. 18.), the saints of the most High shall take the kingdom; and there shall be a pure earth, holy, a land of the living, and not of the dead; which David foreseeing, by the eye of faith, cries out (Ps. xxvii. 13.), I believe to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living; a land of the meek and humble. For 'blessed (saith Christ) are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.' (Matt. v. 5.) And the prophet saith (Isa. xxvi. 6.) 'the feet of the meek and the humble shall tread upon it.'

"Judge by this (notwithstanding fifty years' opposition) how powerful the Chiliastical party yet was, at the time of this council; by some whereof if this form were not framed and composed, yet was it thus moderated, that both parties might accept it, as being delivered in the terms and language of Scripture. This, you see, was the opinion of *the whole orthodox Christian church,* in the age immediately following the death of St. John, when yet Polycarp, and many of the apostle's disciples were living, as Justin Martyr expressly affirms. A testimony absolute, without all comparison, to persuade such as rely upon authority and antiquity; even as you have seen the same opinion continued throughout the next age following that. And therefore it is

to be admired, that an opinion once so generally received in the church, should ever have been so cried down, and buried. But those times, which extinguished this, brought other alterations into the church beside this, and perhaps something in lieu of that, and relating to it; namely, that this opinion of the *first resurrection* was the real ground and mother of prayers for the dead, so anciently received in the church; which were then conceived after this manner—*That they may have their part in the first resurrection.* See Tertullian, who first mentions them. The reason was, because this having part in the first resurrection, was not to be common to all, but to be a privilege to some; namely, of martyrs and confessors equipollent to them; if God would so accept them. Moreover, the belief of this prerogative of martyrs in the first resurrection, was that which made the Christians of those times so joyously desirous of martyrdom."—(Homes's Resurrection revealed, p. 436; also, Mede's works; and Bishop Newton.)

(C.)

"Flebunt Germanicum etiam ignoti!—Erit vobis locus querendi apud senatum, invocandi leges. Non hoc præcipuum amicorum munus est, prosequi defunctum ignavo questu; sed quæ voluerit meminisse, quæ mandaverit exsequi."—(C. Cornelii Taciti. Annalium, lib. ii.)

(D.)

"I hold in my hand a petition from the Dean and Chapter of the Collegiate Church of St. George, Windsor, praying that no further concessions may be made to the Roman Catholics.

"I am sure that any representation from so learned and respectable a body will be received with the attention it deserves: and, therefore, I should not have troubled your Lordships with any observations in support of it, if I did not feel that this was an occasion on which any man may well be permitted to address your Lordships. I do this more readily on the present occasion, because, feeling that I have not the habit of taking part in your discussions, I will not interrupt the progress of the debate on the Bill to which the petitioners refer, if it should come into this House. It is now twenty-five years since this measure was first brought into discussion. I cannot forget with what events that discussion was at that time connected. It was connected with the most serious illness of one now no more. It was connected also with the temporary removal of one of the ablest, wisest, and most honest ministers that this country ever had. From that time, when I first gave my vote on this question, to the present, I have never seen any reason to regret or to change the line which I then took. I have every year seen more reason to be satisfied with my decision. When the Question comes regularly before your Lordships, it will be discussed much more fully and ably than I can do it: but there are two or three subjects on which I am anxious to touch; one is, that you place the Church of England in a situation in which no other church in the world is placed. The Roman Catholic will not allow the Church of England to interfere with his church; and yet he requires you to allow him to interfere with your church, and to legislate for it. There is another subject, still more delicate, on which I cannot help saying a few words. I speak, (I beg to be understood,) only as an individual: I desire not to be understood as speaking for any body else; but consider my Lords, the

situation in which you place the Sovereign. By the Coronation Oath the Sovereign is bound to maintain the church established, in her doctrine, discipline, and right inviolate. An act of parliament may release future Sovereigns and other men from this oath, or from any other oath to be taken, but can it release an individual who has already taken it? I speak, I repeat it again as an individual, but I entreat the House to consider the situation in which the Sovereign is thus placed. I feel very strongly on this whole subject, I cannot forget the deep interest which was taken upon it by one now no more: and the long and unhappy illness in which . . . . (Here his Royal Highness was sensibly affected.) I have been brought up from my early years in these principles, and from the time when I begun to reason for myself, I have entertained them from conviction; and in every situation in which I may be placed, I will maintain them—So help me God!"

Speech of His Royal Highness the Duke of York in the House of Lords, April 25th, 1825.

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8

The Rev. Dr. WILLIAMS'S

SERMON,

PREACHED IN

THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF WINCHESTER,

ON TUESDAY, JULY 3, 1827.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN

THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF WINCHESTER,

ON TUESDAY, JULY 3, 1827,

AT

THE SIXTEENTH ANNUAL MEETING OF

THE HAMPSHIRE SOCIETY

FOR THE

EDUCATION OF THE INFANT POOR IN THE PRINCIPLES OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH,

BY THE

REV. D. WILLIAMS, LL.D.

HEAD MASTER OF WINCHESTER COLLEGE.

LONDON:

MESSRS. RIVINGTONS, AND HATCHARD AND SON:
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AND ROBBINS AND WHEELER, WINCHESTER.

1827.

SERMON.

MATTHEW, CHAP. VII. VER. xvi.

Ye shall know them by their fruits.

THE criterion here proposed for trying the characters of men, though not absolutely certain, is suited to the imperfection of our nature, and is sanctioned alike by reason, and by the Word of God. The judgments of the Almighty, being founded on his omniscience, are universally and infallibly true. He reads the hearts and minds of men, and to his view every motive and spring of action is open. But the judgments of mankind are the results of imperfect knowledge, and therefore are often erroneous. It is not given to men to search the secret thoughts of their fellow-creatures, and they can judge of each other's characters only by the test of their outward actions. And this may be applied not only to individual character, according to the direction of our Sa-

viour in the text, but also to those systems of moral discipline which undertake to improve and exalt the human mind. By their effects we must finally decide their fitness or unfitness to promote the end designed.

To this test the holy Gospel of our blessed Saviour does not refuse to submit. Armed as it is with the evidence of prophecy, and of miracles, to substantiate its claim to be received as the genuine word of God, it does not reject, as unreasonable, the expectations of those enquirers into truth, who, before they fix their steadfast faith on the future accomplishment of its glorious promises, require some proof of its having wrought that reformation in the hearts and lives of its professors, which it was expressly intended to effect.

But here a due precaution must be observed, that more be not expected on the one hand, or undertaken for on the other, than a just view of the divine counsels will warrant. The Heathen, when he sees around him the licentious lives of so many who are called Christians, will naturally hesitate to ascribe to a divine Author a law apparently of so little efficacy. But it is obvious that his objection arises from a want of due knowledge of the purpose of God in his dealings with man, and consequently of the means of judging how far his law is adapted to that purpose. A fuller acquaintance with the Gospel

would shew him, that as the Almighty has left man free to follow or oppose the dictates of the natural law engraven on his heart, so in propounding to him a special revelation, he has given him an instrument powerful enough, if employed with his good will, to effect its object, but not adapted to compel him to be virtuous against his will.

When we are asked, then, to account for the lamentable corruption which still exists amongst the disciples of Christ, we refer to the undeniable principles of man's freedom of will, and propensity to evil: and if we are farther asked, where then is the efficacy of your boasted law? we point to those sincere Christians whose lives exhibit the fairest specimens of the beauty of holiness; and by their shining examples we prove the tendency and power of the Gospel to purify, exalt, and ennoble our nature. With regard then to the fruits of the religion of Christ, in every individual instance where it is honestly embraced and faithfully observed, we triumphantly appeal to them as the solid and incontrovertible evidence of its heavenly origin. And with regard to the same fruits as discernible in the general conduct of Christian communities, though we presume not to fix the limit beyond which corruption could not be permitted to extend without impeachment of the justice and goodness of God, yet we must allow that it would greatly strengthen the cause

of the unbeliever, if he could shew that in the aggregate no improvement in morals had followed the introduction of Christianity.

But, blessed be God, on this point we freely join issue with our adversaries. It cannot be denied, that wherever the Christian religion has been introduced, much as its beneficial influence haa been checked and retarded by the unruly passions and obstinate pride of man, it has nevertheless diminished the sum of vice, and promoted the growth of virtue, in so conspicuous a manner, as strongly to confirm the belief that it has come from God. To prove this were an easy task, were it now required; but it is sufficient to refer to the state of morals in Christian countries, as compared with Heathenism either in ancient or modern times. Let that comparison be but fairly made, and the result is inevitable and decisive.

The rule of judging of an Institution by its fruits, may with equal justice be applied, under similar limitations, to the system of National Education for the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, which we are on this day assembled to promote. On this subject, as on others, there may be many that say, "Who will shew us any good?" It is asked, whether the beneficial effects of the discipline which we recommend, have been discerned, and are still discernible in the manners of the rising generation?

It will be my object on the present occasion to shew, that the question thus proposed may receive a satisfactory answer, and that the expectation of such enquirers, if formed with a candid allowance for the imperfection of every thing human, will not be disappointed. This I shall attempt to do, by first shewing that sufficient means are here provided for accomplishing the ends of education, and secondly by laying before you some observations which may tend to confirm the belief of their practical efficacy.

The objects of such education as befits a Christian, and of that only I now speak, are twofold—to communicate a due knowledge of God, and of his will; and to promote that holiness of life which leads to temporal and eternal happiness: in other words, to teach children their duty, and to train them to the performance of it. The former of these objects, to impart the knowledge of duty, is the necessary introduction, and indeed the only sure foundation of the latter—a course of virtuous action.

The first thing, then, to be asked, by those who canvass the merits of our Schools, should be, are the children fully instructed in all that it imports them to know for their soul's health? This is a matter which we are enabled at once to bring to the test of positive experience. Our Schools are ever open, and opportunity is daily afforded to prove the acquirements of the pupils. Go thither, and examine the boy who has gone

through any considerable part of the course of instruction there conveyed. Ask him of the God who made him, of the Saviour who redeemed him, and of the Holy Ghost who sanctifieth him. Ask him how man forfeited the happiness to which he was created, and what has been the consequence of his departure from innocence: bid him say by what dispensation of mercy the fatal effects of sin have been remedied, and satisfaction made to an offended God. Let him then explain the terms on which pardon has been offered to man, and shew what glorious promises are holden forth in the Gospel, and how they are to be obtained. Ask him, farther, whether faith and obedience can be adequately rendered by man's unassisted strength, and to what quarter he must look for that support which the weakness of his nature requires. Call upon him then to say, where he shall find the will of God explained, and learn the means of grace; and when, by the help of the divine spirit hallowing his endeavours, he shall have completed a sincere though imperfect obedience, on whose merits he must finally rely for acceptance and salvation

If, as I firmly believe, the answers given to questions such as these, shall prove that the scholars who have made due advancement under our direction, are possessed of all the information necessary to guide them in the path of duty, and that not superficially, but so thoroughly as to justify the expectation that the acquirement

will be durable, have we not all the security for their future conduct which accurate elementary knowledge, and the instilment of correct principles, can provide? And who shall undervalue this security, or deem it a slight thing to have imparted that early culture to the understanding, and to have given that right direction to the motives of action, which, if there be any thing certain in moral or religious science, will seldom fail to exercise a salutary influence in the progress of life.?

If we have succeeded thus far, we have done much: for whatever may be thought of the dangers arising from misdirected secular knowledge, dangers which no wise man will overlook or disregard, it cannot be doubted that solid instruction in religious truth, though it be not all that is essential to education, must be upon the whole conducive to moral improvement. In many instances the seed will fall upon good ground; and in many more, where the soil is shallower, and weeds for a long time smother it, it will still lie concealed, and when the renewed labour of the husbandman shall have cleared the ground, will ultimately perhaps grow and flourish, until it bring forth a plenteous harvest. That such must be the general result it is impossible to doubt; unless we are prepared to deny that goodness and virtue are the offspring of light, and wickedness and vice the children of darkness.

But in the education of children, instruction in religious knowledge is not enough; there must be also the practical enforcement of conduct consistent with it. A sense of responsibility to Almighty God must lie at the foundation of all moral rectitude; but we know too well how apt our wayward spirits are to forget the unseen Power that watches all our proceedings: It is good then that the young and heedless should have a salutary awe of an earthly master to check their indiscretion. It is chiefly by the maintenance of discipline subsidiary to the inculcation of religious principles, by the effective controul exercised over the whole behaviour of the scholars, that the Schools established for the higher classes in this country produce whatever of good they may be allowed to effect in forming the characters of our Youth. But the system of our National Schools, which necessarily permits the attendance of the children only at stated hours, and then dismisses them to their several homes, does not afford the same facilities for regulating the whole tenor of their conduct, as if they were committed entirely to our care. Much, however, is done by teaching them habits of regularity during the hours of school; the good effects of which will often be felt under the roof of their parents, and gradually display themselves in the character of the man. And though they be frequently withdrawn from the eye of authority, yet are they

not altogether exempt from its influence, or safe from its corrective hand, when flagrant misconduct attracts public notice, or gives rise to private complaint.

Nor let it be forgotten that the care of the zealous guardians of our Institution extends beyond the period of the child's education, and keeps a parental watch over his behaviour for three years after his entrance upon the active duties of life. I appeal to those who have witnessed the eagerness with which the young probationers claim the rewards of duty steadily fulfilled, and the general testimony borne to their merits, to say whether they have not herein a convincing proof of the solid and durable effect of the National System of Education on the minds and morals of the poor. I doubt not that the result would be proportionably favourable, if we had the means of pursuing our inquiries still farther; but I will not refer to that which it is not immediately practicable to ascertain.

Enough perhaps has been said to prove the tendency of our discipline to improve the morals of the people. But here we may be met by the question: "Is such improvement actually discernible?" To answer such a question fairly and accurately is no easy task. It requires faculties of diligent observation and discernment, and a capacity of assigning effects to their true causes, and of estimating the comparative weight of conflicting circumstan-

ces, which fall to the lot of few. Supposing, however, it be true that the improvement in the moral habits of the poor has not kept pace with their advancement in knowledge. Does it follow that education has been mischievous or useless? By no means. In order to form an equitable judgment on this point, we should be enabled to compare the state of things, as it actually exists, with what it might have been without the aid of education.

Look upon the face of society, and mark the operation of those mighty agents that are everywhere conspiring to produce a general corruption and degeneracy of manners; the mad desire of gain leading, on the one hand, to the exorbitancy of commercial wealth, and the growth of overwhelming and enfeebling luxury; on the other, to sudden and wide-spreading distress; financial embarrassments public and private; a crowded and excessive population, and the frequent vicissitudes befalling large bodies of men, at one time revelling in affluence, at another reduced to the extremity of want and destitution. Amidst the mass of physical and moral evil generated by these causes, see political discontent and irreligion labouring to circulate their baneful venom. But a short time since, when the minds of a large portion of our countrymen were irritated and galled by the pressure of poverty, we all remember how that restless spirit of destruction which has long

been abroad in the world, seeking to loosen the bonds that hold mankind in unity together, seized the fit opportunity to assail with open violence the fabric of social and religious order. The audacious assault was repelled, but the malice that instigated it does not sleep. Nor does there yet want a lurking band of scorners and infidels, to try the faithfulness and courage of the youth whom we send forth armed for their Christian warfare.

If, then, such powerful instruments of corruption are at work around us, is it not much, that we are able by God's grace to resist them, and to stem the torrent that threatens to overwhelm us? It may fairly be attributed, in great measure, to the pains bestowed upon Christian education, as one of the means sanctified by the Holy Spirit for the edification of his Church, that the manners of the people do not grow rapidly worse. The symptoms of a nation's decline are generally visible in its literature; and if we judge by that criterion, shall we err in affirming that we have passed our meridian? But are our morals sunk as low, as in the nations of old, at similar periods of their history? Let us thank the Giver of all goodness, that we are not reduced to that shocking degradation. What, then, under Providence, has preserved us? Where is the salt that has checked the pestilential progress of corruption? Where, but in that Christian doctrine, of which

the Church of England is the faithful dispenser, and the Schools conducted on the principles of that Church, the ready and efficacious instruments in the hands of her Ministry, for imbuing the tender minds of our Children with the wholesome preservative. We have here the means of staying the plague of licentiousness; but the struggle is arduous, and the great enemy of mankind has a powerful ally in the corrupt propensity of our nature. Let us remember the strength of this natural depravity, when we lament that it too often overpowers our efforts to subdue it, and redouble our diligence in proportion to the might of the adversary we have to encounter. That adversary is a strong man armed, but a stronger than he is on our side, even CHRIST JESUS.

Why, then, should we be appalled, though we see within the bosom of our country the operation of evils that in former ages have wrought the downfal of nations? If we were left to the aid of human strength alone, we might indeed, as in the empires of the Heathen, find the progres of corruption too mighty to be controuled. But we have a sure remedy, a defence that will not fail us, if we resolutely employ it. By the light of the Christian Religion we may successfully combat all the powers of darkness, but woe be to us, if, by our wilful negligence, we suffer that light to be extinguished in our land.

If there be any truth in what has been said, I trust it will furnish a sufficient answer to such persons as require proof of the practical utility of the National Schools to be shewn in the improved morals of the people. Nor are there wanting such outward indications of the beneficial influence of education, in the conduct of the majority of our youth, and in the increased attendance and devotion visible in our churches, as may justify us in believing that the blessing of the Lord has been upon our work, and encourage us to hope that he will prosper it yet farther in our hands. But to those who dwell with doubt and apprehension upon the formidable strength of evil arrayed against us, I have already anticipated the conclusion which I would enforce. If the obstacles that oppose us are manifold and powerful, let it animate with fresh vigour our endeavours to surmount them: if the encroaching tide of corruption flow in upon us with increasing fury, let us strengthen the barrier that shall rebuke and repress it. The goodness of God has delivered to us an effectual instrument for promoting his service: let no adversaries wrest it from us, no groundless misgivings deter us from wielding it, no unworthy slackness render it feeble and unavailing in our hands.

If there be any amongst this congregation who have not yet lent their aid to the objects of the Society in this county, I call upon them now, as

they desire the temporal and eternal welfare of their poorer neighbours, and as they value all that is correct in morals, and pure in religion,—by the love which they bear to their country, by their zeal for the honour of God, and by that account which they must one day give of the talents committed to their care, — no longer to withhold it. Nor will the tried and steady friends to this work of charity deem the voice of the Christian Mnister either presumptuous or unnecessary, who shall exhort them not to abate their zeal, or slacken their exertions. They well know and daily lament the infirmity of our nature, the consequence of man's fatal corruption, whence it arises that our bad passions are ever restless and active, our better impulses too often languid and uncertain. They are conscious that their alacrity in this labour of love would gradually become faint and droop, did they not from time to time represent to themselves the exalted and irresistable motives that urge them to the performance of a sacred duty; and they will never turn aside with indifference or scorn from the admonition of the humblest servant of God, who bids them, in his holy words, " not to be weary in well-doing," and assures them, on the same authority, that " in due time they shall reap, if they faint not." Even those who wish well to an useful Institution, are too apt to forget that the same active services which they freely bestowed upon its infancy, are

not less requisite to advance it to maturity, and to maintain it in its vigour. Steadfast and unabated zeal is indeed a rare virtue: and highly favoured of God may that Society esteem itself, which has numbered and yet numbers amongst its promoters and directors, so many bright examples of that inestimable quality.

In speaking on this subject, the mind naturally reverts to the distinguishing excellence of one,* whose labours will ever live in the remembrance of those, who either experienced the benefit of his instruction, or followed with unequal steps in his useful career. Such persons, while they contemplate with melancholy satisfaction the monument erected within these walls to the memory of the first Secretary of the Society on this day assembled here, will readily admit how truly it has been said in the just and faithful record inscribed thereon, that "his peculiar characteristick was an ardent and incessant zeal, exactly tempered by the soundest judgment." It is this main feature in the character of that excellent man, this earnest devotion to Christian duty, which I would press upon your attention on the present occasion. To this, as it was exhibited in his indefatigable exertions, must we chiefly ascribe the successful establishment and judicious direction

* The Rev. Frederic Iremonger, Prebendary of Winchester.

of our Schools: To this, as it has actuated the kindred spirit of his successors, we owe their farther extension and improvement; and on the continuance of the same unremitting ardour, under the blessing of God, must we build our hopes, that they will endure and flourish to distant generations.

Let me beseech you then, Brethren, to cooperate heartily and effectually in the work of Christian Education. To copy closely that pattern of zeal which has been set before you, can only be the privilege of few; but all in their various degrees may partake of the same spirit; and all can render services, which, however different in worldly estimation, if they bear a due proportion to the means of each, shall be equal in the sight of God. The benevolent assistant and guide, who devotes his personal attention to the conduct and improvement of the School, and the parent, who is careful to confirm by his example, his precepts, and his authority at home, those moral and religious habits which the teacher has instilled into his child, are fellow-labourers in the vineyard of Christ, and at the final account of the great householder, "whatever is right, that shall they receive." And the liberal contribution of the wealthy, the moderate but chearful offering of him who gives of his little, and the humble mite of the poor and needy, if tendered for the Lord's sake, shall be graciously

received by him as lent unto himself, and "be laid up for each as a treasure in the heavens, that faileth not."

And you, Children, for whose benefit the charitable aid of your friends and neighbours is now earnestly implored, when you have concluded the holy services of this day with thanksgiving to Almighty God, for the blessing of useful and religious instruction bestowed upon you, remember what our blessed Lord said to his disciples: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." From this you learn, that it will be of no advantage to you to know your duty, unless you steadily practice it: on the contrary, your sin will be the greater, if when you have been taught what is right, you wilfully do wrong. Hear then the word with an honest and good heart; and having heard it, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. Let your present behaviour, and your future lives, adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Thus, whilst you are pursuing the only sure path that leads to happiness in this world, and in the life to come, you will best fulfil the wishes of your Christian friends and benefactors, in whose name, and in the affectionate words of St. Paul, I desire to offer to the throne of grace the earnest, but humble prayer, "that your love may abound yet

more and more, in knowledge and in all judgment; that you may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God."

THE END.

Robbins and Wheeler, Printers, Winchester.

The Christian the best Subject of Civil Government:

A SERMON

PREACHED AT

ST. MARY'S,

ON THURSDAY, JULY 26, 1827,

BEFORE

THE HON. SIR JOSEPH LITTLEDALE,
ONE OF THE JUSTICES OF THE COURT OF KING'S BENCH,

AND

THE HON. JOHN VAUGHAN,
ONE OF THE BARONS OF THE COURT OF EXCHEQUER,

AT THE

SUMMER ASSIZES
FOR THE COUNTY OF OXFORD.

BY DANIEL WILSON, A.M.
VICAR OF ISLINGTON.

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1827.

TO

THE HON. SIR JOSEPH LITTLEDALE,

ONE OF THE JUSTICES OF THE COURT OF KING'S BENCH,

AND

THE HON. JOHN VAUGHAN,

ONE OF THE BARONS OF THE COURT OF EXCHEQUER,

JUDGES OF THE ASSIZE;

TO

THE REV. RICHARD JENKYNS, D.D.

MASTER OF BALLIOL COLLEGE,

AND VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY;

AND TO

JOSEPH WILSON, ESQ.

HIGH SHERIFF,

AND THE GRAND JURY OF THE COUNTY
OF OXFORD,

THE FOLLOWING SERMON

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR.

1 TIMOTHY ii. 1, 2, 3.

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.

THERE is something peculiarly solemn in the recurrence of occasions like the present. However familiar such scenes may be to many, the thoughtful Christian regards them as a part of the moral government of the Almighty. He sees in these preparations for the detection and punishment of crime, the eternal distinctions of right and wrong, so far as man's justice can extend, traced out and recognised; the passions and selfishness of our nature restrained, the blessings of social order and private tranquillity secured; whilst religion sanctions and supports these acts of a Christian legislation, by commencing the administration of law with the offices of devotion, and by

holding out the unerring decisions of the last tribunal of God, to confirm the decrees and supply the manifold imperfections of human judgments.

Such reflections as these naturally arise in the mind from the general spirit which Christianity diffuses, and the duties which it expressly enjoins with regard to civil government. This is the topic which it is now proposed to consider from the directions of the apostle in the text, in which three particulars will be found, comprising the chief parts of the Christian character with reference to this important subject.

The DUTY of the Christian, as he stands related to his civil governors, is to *pray for kings and for all that are in authority.*

The great OBJECT AND END, as resulting from this duty, is, *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

The MOTIVE assigned to animate us to such a spirit of devotion and such a course of conduct, is, that it is *good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.*

The first branch of the character of a

Christian, as a good subject, is to pray fervently for his rulers. *I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority.*

The persons for whom we are to pray are generally ALL MEN; not the men of our own nation merely, of our own language, of our own religion, as the Jews too often interpreted the divine command, but for all mankind, agreeably to the universal character of the Christian dispensation; because all men are brethren by the ties of a common nature, all are redeemed by the same Saviour, all are in want of similar blessings, and none are excluded from the care of that heavenly Father, *who*, to adopt the words immediately following the text, *will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.*

The apostle, by beginning with this direction, seems to aim at sapping the prejudices of some of his converts, and enlarging the benevolence of all, that they might be better disposed to unite with one heart in

those prayers for their rulers, which is his principal object in the whole exhortation, and to which he next proceeds.

For we are to intercede particularly for KINGS, AND FOR ALL WHO ARE IN AUTHORITY. Indeed we cannot more effectually discharge the offices of charity towards all men, than by praying for those whose spirit and conduct so widely influence the general happiness. When we offer our prayers for persons in authority, we pray in fact for all those individuals who live under their government, and are affected by the laws which they enact and administer; who may be blessed by their pious, or be injured by their vicious and irregular example.

Nor shall we be backward to pray with real sympathy and fervour for all who bear rule in the state, when we consider that it is for our good and not for their own that their offices are appointed—for that to themselves these exalted dignities are chiefly known by the envy they inspire, by the perplexing duties they create, by the cares they multiply, the temptations they strengthen, the flattery they diffuse around, and the responsi-

bility to Almighty God which they impose, not only for themselves, but for all who are intrusted to their government.

For these public personages, therefore, as the common parents of the community, we are to make our prayers, adapting our devotions to their several exigencies; whether we deprecate by solemn SUPPLICATIONS threatening evils; or implore by PRAYERS particular blessings; or by INTERCESSIONS plead with God for their present and future happiness; or render THANKSGIVINGS for the benefits which a gracious Providence has vouchsafed to them, and, through them, to the people whom they govern. For such is the variety of terms employed by the apostle; which not only teaches us that every species of prayer is to be offered, but seems tacitly to condemn the backwardness of the human heart, which requires to be urged and stimulated, by repeated inculcations, to the discharge of the important duty.

How imperative this duty is in every age, will appear, if we recollect that the apostle is addressing in the text, not a se-

parate church, but his son Timothy, whom he had left in charge as his bishop at Ephesus, (as he had Titus in Crete,) *to set in order the things that were wanting, and to ordain elders in every city.* The command, therefore, is an ecclesiastical canon for the guidance of Timothy in the regulation of the public worship of God amongst his new converts; an inspired rule of universal application in the discipline of the church. It has accordingly given rise to those various liturgical offices in which the Christian communities have, from the very days of the apostles to our own, addressed public prayers to God for their kings and governors[a].

[a] Very remarkable are the words of Tertullian, in his noble apology for the Christians, addressed to the governors of Proconsular Africa, at the close of the second, or very early in the third century*.

"We pray always for all the emperors, that God may "grant them long life, a secure government, a prosper-"ous family, vigorous troops, a faithful senate, an obe-"dient people; that the whole world may be at peace, "and that God may grant to Cæsar whatever he would "wish for himself, both in his public and private capa-"city."

He afterwards adds, what I the rather quote, as it di-

* The birth of Tertullian is placed about A.D. 145 or 150, and his death about A.D. 220.

But we have to observe further, that this apostolical command was issued when the throne of the Roman world was filled by that monster of wickedness Nero; when his subordinate kings, proconsuls, and procura-

rectly proves the sentiments of the early church on the import of the apostle's directions in the text: "Thou "who thinkest that we are indifferent to the safety of the "Cæsars, look into the words of God, into our books, "which we ourselves do not conceal, and which continual "accidents bring under the notice of those who are "strangers to our faith. Know from these books, that "we are commanded to pray for our enemies; and not "only so, but that the apostle says by name and mani-"festly, 'Pray for kings and for princes, and powers, that "all things may be tranquil.'" Apol. adversus Gentes, c. 30, 31, 32. Paris 1635.

Accordingly, in our Liturgy, we pray generally, "That "it would please God to have mercy upon all men," in obedience to the first part of the apostolical canon; and then for the "king" more particularly, in conformity with the second. We likewise pray for the royal family, for the clergy, and for all the various classes of persons in authority in our country, in the church, and amongst mankind, in much detail, and with a spirituality and copiousness of petition which nothing can exceed.

How strongly the whole injunction of the apostle suggests the expediency of prescribed Liturgies, I need not say. Indeed it is difficult to conceive how Timothy could have carried into effect the inspired direction in the several churches of his jurisdiction, without *a form of sound words* delivered to them.

tors were but too faithful imitators of his vices, his cruelty, and his hatred of the Christian name; and when, for these reasons, some of the Jewish converts, after the example of their countrymen, were beginning to be indisposed to pray for heathen princes. For Josephus informs us, that the Jews were, about the time when this Epistle was written, just entering on their rebellion against the Roman government, by discontinuing those prayers and sacrifices for their rulers which they had offered from the period of the Babylonish captivity[b]. The apostle therefore, in delivering

[b] So the Jews prayed and offered sacrifices for the Persian kings and the welfare of their government, according to the decree of Darius, recorded Ezra vi. 10. *That they may offer sacrifices of sweet savours unto the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king, and of his sons.* Thus Jeremiah sent to them in their captivity, to *pray for the peace of the city whither God had caused them to be carried captive.* Jer. xxix. 7. When they came under the government of the kings of Egypt, Eleazar, their high priest, writes to Ptolemy thus: "We continually offer sacrifice for thee, thy sister, thy "children, and friends; and the people pray for thy "happy success in all things, and for the peaceable state "of thy kingdom[a]." And so when they were under the

[a] Joseph. Antiq. l. xii. c. 2. p. 392. Ibid. c. 17.

the precept before us, is not merely establishing a canon for the public worship of God, but is meeting an evil which was rising in the church. Accordingly his language is peremptory, *I exhort therefore, that first of all*, as a matter of primary moment, and which nothing should induce them to omit. For the same reason, he comprehends, with the wisdom perpetual in the inspired writings, under the expression, *all that are in authority*, or, *in eminent place*, as the margin reads[c], every form of civil polity, in every part of the world, in all succeeding ages, and under all varieties as to personal character or religious profession. The apostolical canon therefore has

Seleucidæ. And lastly, when they came under the Roman government, this was their constant practice*, till they begun that rebellion, under which their city, country, religion, and nation, were destroyed. "This being," saith Josephus, "the cause of the war, that the seditious "rejected the sacrifice offered for Cæsar, though the "priests and nobles earnestly entreated them not to de-"sert the custom concerning their rulers which had al-"ways obtained among them." Whitby in loc.

[c] Πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ ὄντων.

* Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. ii. c. 17. et 30. per totum.

been acquiring additional force, just in proportion as Christianity has diffused its benevolent spirit amongst the monarchs and governments of the earth.

What the criminality of neglecting prayer for kings, and all in authority, must be under circumstances like our own, I need not stop to notice. Every national privilege augments the guilt of violating this duty. We live, not under a tyrannical and odious heathen government, where all the institutions and usages are in hostility with the Christian religion, but under a prince, himself the worshipper of the same God and Saviour as ourselves, and who is present, by his learned and venerable Judges, to administer in our courts of judicature, laws framed on the principles, and designed to uphold the precepts and doctrines, of Christianity[d].

[d] I may here observe, that at the time when the eloquent apologist for the Christian church expressed himself in the manner we have just seen, the Christians were so numerous throughout the Roman empire, that they were not actuated by the fear of punishment in their professions of loyalty to their sovereign, but by the commands of the gospel. The successors of Nero, until the reign of Constantine the Great, that is, for nearly 300

Such is the first part of the character of a Christian as a good subject. This presents him to us as one interested for the happiness of all men, but especially for those in authority over him; as a man who is so far from being wanting in the principle of the love of his country, as has been sometimes insinuated, that he is animated by the most fervent and exalted patriotism. His duties as a citizen are entwined around his heart, and connected with his most sacred religious associations. He who is daily adapt-

years, continued heathens, and were enemies to God, and in general persecutors of his church; yet the primitive Christians had so thoroughly imbibed the spirit of the apostolical injunctions, that they considered the existing powers as *ordained of God*, and made it their constant practice to offer up supplications on their behalf. "Were "we disposed," says Tertullian, "to return evil for evil, "it were easy for us to revenge the injuries we sustain. "But God forbid that his people should vindicate them-"selves by human fire, or be reluctant to endure that "by which their sincerity is evinced."—"It is true we "are but of yesterday, and yet we have filled all your "places, cities, islands, castles, towns, councils, camps, "courts, palaces, senate, forum. We leave you only "your temples."—"Were we to make a general seces-"sion from your dominions, you would be astonished at "your solitude." Apol. c. 36.

ing his supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks to the course of public events, cannot but be a patriot in the highest sense of the term, cannot but be in the best disposition of mind for reverencing the institutions of his native land, the dignity of her judges and magistrates, the sovereignty of her princes, and the majesty of her laws. The spirit of devotion strongly tends to all this. It does far more. It not only obliges us to these duties by the authority of the divine command, but opens the source of all the benevolent affections as to the manner of discharging them. Prayer encircles our rulers with that affection and regard which the divine appointment warrants and excites. The same holy Spirit that aids the Christian in prayer generally, does not withhold his grace in these supplications for all in authority over him. Prayer extinguishes pride and discontent, which are the seeds of disaffection and disloyalty; prayer purifies the heart, and disposes it to *submit to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake;* prayer kindles love and sympathy in our breast towards the persons of those, who,

however exalted in station for the purpose of preserving social order and the institutions of religion, yet are heirs of the same mortality and sorrow, and need the same succours of grace, as ourselves; prayer interposes the authority of conscience and the sanction of the divine law, when human motives fail; prayer unites our civil with our religious duties. And thus the chain which binds us to our country and our king, is suspended from the throne of God.

And this leads us to notice,

The GREAT OBJECT AND END, as resulting from the duty thus considered, *That we may lead*, says the apostle, *a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty;* or, in the language of our church, "That the course "of this world may be so peaceably ordered "by thy governance, that thy church may "joyfully serve thee in all godly quietness[e]."

Tranquillity, godliness, honesty, are then the objects of our prayers.

The pious Christian is one who seeks tranquillity and peace. The tendency of

[e] Collect for fifth Sunday after Trinity.

Christianity is to elevate his view above the turbulent passions of this lower world, and to purify his affections from the debasing elements of mere human attachments. He has discovered the vast objects of eternity. He has his eye fixed on future glory. He follows the footsteps of a meek and suffering Saviour. He is deeply persuaded of the insufficiency of all earthly pursuits to bestow happiness. He shares indeed in the interests of a common nature; he joys and sorrows with others. But his desire and prayer is, that, exempted from persecution and injury, he may be allowed to glide down the stream of life, as little agitated as may be by the contentions, and noise, and confusion of the world. His object is to *follow peace with all men*, and promote the order and security, first of his own country, and then, so far as his influence may extend, of the world at large.

To tranquillity he adds a supreme care for the honour of God, without which a quiet and peaceable temper is soon betrayed into indifference and irreligion. Godliness is therefore the next part of this strik-

ing description of the object of his prayers for rulers—a supreme regard to the ever blessed God as revealed in Jesus Christ, the public worship of his name, a sense of his infinite right over us, a dread of his displeasure, a desire to please him in all things, a view to him as governing the world and as about to judge it, a sense of gratitude for redemption, a constant aim at advancing his glory, and a conscience placed under the direction of his law.

Honesty completes the picture, including not only the discharge of the ordinary rules of justice between man and man, but public gravity, as the word more properly means, decorum in habit and manners[f], that sort of barrier which is raised by general feelings of propriety against public offences—the holy sabbath reverenced—the fundamental rules of morals recognised and honoured—the universal condemnation, by sentiment as well as by the letter of the law, of those abominations which corrupt the public mind, break down the safeguards

[f] Σεμνότης; and so the word is rendered 1 Tim. iii. 4. and Titus ii. 7.

of decency and natural shame, disgrace a land, and cause it, if they are excused and defended, to bring an indelible scandal upon the holy name by which it is called—*Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.*

The very end of civil government coincides with the objects of the Christian's prayers—to maintain the public tranquillity, godliness, honesty. To attempt more is to pass into the confines of religion and private conscience; to be content with less is to desert the province assigned to human governments by the supreme Legislator.

How far the infliction of capital punishments, except in cases of murder, can be vindicated on these grounds, it is not for the minister of religion hastily to pronounce. I will only observe, that to mitigate the severity of our criminal code, to abridge the classes of crimes involving the dreadful sentence of death, to inflict with undeviating uniformity the punishments actually threatened by the law, to cut off all calculations of escape from the minds of the vicious and unprincipled, and to connect in-

dissolubly the penalty with the offence, are certainly amongst the points which a Christian legislature should most anxiously keep in view[g].

The prayers of the devout Christian for these ends of lawful government cannot fail of producing a powerful effect, whether we consider Almighty God as answering his prayers, or reflect on the tendency of his whole conduct to promote tranquillity and peace.

For God condescends to grant an answer to prayer. "His never-failing pro-"vidence ordereth all things in heaven and "earth." By him kings reign. He bestows peace and prosperity on the nation that serves him. Every plan which is in defiance of his authority and laws, however

g The steps lately taken in this course are such as become an enlightened and generous nation; and, as connected with the name of one of their representatives, cannot but be doubly interesting to the University of Oxford.

The care extended to the regulation of prison discipline is also of the highest importance. It is the obvious duty of the legislature to render the period of imprisonment, not a season for ripening men in vice, but, so far as is possible, the means of solitary reflection, amendment, and reformation.

plausible, will prove essentially defective, and, if persisted in, ruinous. It was in answer to the intercession of Abraham that the guilty cities of the plain would have been spared, if only ten righteous could have been found in them. It was by the prayer of Moses, who *stood before the Lord in the gap*, that his *wrathful indignation was turned* from Israel, *lest he should destroy them*. And the last sentence of condemnation appears to be pronounced, when God says of a nation, as he did to the prophet Jeremiah concerning Israel, *Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee*[h].

But, further, the meekness and quietness of the Christian's spirit has a tendency, in the moral order of events, to produce the very blessings which he prays for. He promotes the quietness of his country by his own behaviour. He conciliates the regard of his rulers. He diffuses peace amongst his family and neighbourhood. He composes the divisions of the church. *The*

[h] Jerem. vii. 16.

meek shall inherit the earth. The kings and governors of the world, when they behold the steady loyalty of their Christian subjects, their punctual payment of custom and tribute[i], their ready submission to the laws, their wise and moderate use of civil privileges, their cautious abstinence from a turbulent and seditious temper, are most likely to protect the great interests of religion.

A contrary spirit has always fomented disorder and distrust. Whenever the peaceful principles of Christianity have been mingled with human animosities—whenever the calm tide of religious feeling has been turned aside into noisy and turbulent political channels, and been made to swell the deep torrent of party ambition and selfishness—as soon as religious and conscientious emotions, which should ever be directed to a quiet and honest life, have been employed

[i] Tertullian particularly notices the promptitude with which the primitive Christians paid the taxes to government, in opposition to the spirit of fraud and deceit with which the heathens acted—and with which, I lament to say, nominal Christians too often still continue to act. C. 42. ut supra.

to propel the designs of men who are never quiet, never peaceable, and who are neither godly nor honest, the mischiefs which have followed need not to be stated. They darken the sad page of all past history.

And this serves to answer an objection which infidelity or semi-infidelity raises against the gentle and meek spirit of Christianity. We are told, that such a temper leaves a man defenceless amongst his enemies, that it partakes of what is mean and debasing, that it stunts the growth of the mind, stops the march of intellect, checks the spirit of free inquiry, palliates the vices and oppression of rulers, and is inconsistent with the advancement of a great and free country[k]. A charge this which Christianity

[h] "In the first age," our objector goes on to say, "when "Christians were the subjects of despotic governments, "such a placid and feeble temper might be necessary; but "now, in the days of intellectual light, the spirit of wake-"ful jealousy and intrepid investigation is far more con-"ducive to the ends of human happiness."

The plain design of all this is to elevate the operations of the understanding above the charities of the heart, to put a hardiness of mind and a love of science in the place of morals and religion, to confound knowledge with virtue, and to place the highest ends of education and of

spurns from her with just indignation. She is the friend of inquiry, the friend of human happiness, the friend of man, the friend of the development of the human faculties, and of every improvement, whether in civil or private life. But Christianity does this, not by exciting the turbulent passions, not by casting abroad the firebrands of discord, not by confining herself to the cultivation of the intellect; much less by nourishing

civil government, not in maintaining the doctrine and spirit of Christianity, and erecting upon this foundation the edifice of practical obedience, but in pushing the researches of science and merely intellectual attainments to their utmost limits.

"Men receive their religious belief," pursues our objector, "by tradition and custom; for their faith and "opinions they are not accountable; the great desidera-"tum is to diffuse the spirit of bold inquiry, to create "doubts, to loosen the bands of ancient creeds, and eman-"cipate the human mind from the shackles which preju-"dice, and superstition, and kings have imposed."

But what is all this language but the jargon of infidelity under a thin disguise! What is all this exclusive cultivation of the understanding, but the pride and inflation of the fallen heart of man against the revelation of God! And what is its tendency, but to nourish arrogance in our schools of education, disorder in our civil government, heresies in our church, and impiety in our religion!

pride and self-sufficiency, and a disregard of all authority, human and divine—this would be to aggravate the diseases which she professes to cure—but she does it by renewing the heart, by implanting humility and self-knowledge, by diffusing a gracious and humble temper, by connecting man with God and with eternity. She meddles not, as a religion, with human politics. Wherever she makes her entrance, she teaches submission to *the powers that be.* She disturbs nothing but our sins. She lays the foundations deep of personal and national prosperity, by discovering to man the fall and depravity of his nature, by proposing an effectual remedy in the death and passion of Christ, and the purifying influences of his Spirit, by curbing that selfishness which is the principle of his moral disorders, and bridling those furious passions by which selfishness operates. Christianity thus restores man to himself. She heals all the powers of his mind, and in this way becomes the spring of order and happiness, the source of improvement, the seed of enterprise, the friend of science and discovery, the parent

of morals and civilization, of peace and prosperity.

Even the heathen philosophers admitted the greater importance of the milder virtues. But it was left for Christianity to disclose the fountain of humility, and make it the perennial spring of solid virtue and abiding tranquillity. She imposes just those salutary checks which the knowledge of *what was in man* dictated to a divine religion. The great mass of mankind she elevates from debasement and oppression; the rulers and guides of nations she inspires with a sense of justice and equity. As her peaceful triumphs have spread, knowledge, and liberty, and morals, and benevolence, and a milder legislation, and the useful arts, and general happiness, have followed in her train. As she has been corrupted or overthrown, all the real improvement of mankind has been suspended.

Here Christianity takes her stand. She glories in the cross of her Saviour, and in the meekness of spirit which the doctrine of that cross inspires. She is at issue with infidelity on this point. And she appeals

to the voice of history, to the obvious state and wants of mankind, to the admission of the greatest philosophers, to the dictates of conscience, the declarations of holy scripture, the nature of such a being as man,—the very laws of providence, as proving that no real progress can be made in knowledge or felicity, except as it is reared on the basis of religion, and surrounded with the guardian graces of meekness, piety, and quietness of spirit[1].

[1] With respect to the specific question of the preservation of civil rights, Christianity is so far from forbidding it, that it plainly sanctions the just and temperate assertion of those rights. It interferes directly with no form of government, and neither adds to, nor diminishes, the civil rights of mankind. St. Paul thought it not inconsistent with his own precepts occasionally to resist violence and injustice, to plead his privileges as a Roman citizen, and at length "to appeal unto Cæsar." In a similar manner the Christian in every age and country, is not only authorized, but enjoined by the spirit of the gospel, to maintain, and by all just and moderate endeavours to improve, the temporal blessings which the providence of God has bestowed upon him, that he may transmit them unimpaired, and if possible increased, to posterity. In securing however these great objects, much depends upon the spirit and manner in which he proceeds. The Christian, while he will feel it to be his duty to preserve his just rights and privileges as a citizen, will be

But this will more clearly appear whilst we proceed to consider,

The MOTIVE by which the Christian is governed in his prayers, and in the quietness of his spirit in civil society. *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.*

This touches on the mysteries of redemption.

The apostle had been speaking, in the preceding chapter, *of the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.* He had been extolling *the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which had been committed to his trust.* He had been stating, that *for this cause he had obtained mercy, that in him first Jesus Christ might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting*[m].

reasonable and temperate in his expectations and demands; will not only be anxious to avoid all that is violent and illegal, but will cautiously abstain from all reproach, misrepresentation, and abuse of those who are in great and eminent stations. He will, indeed, *speak evil of no man*, and much less of *the rulers of his people.*

[m] Chap. i. 1. 11. 6.

It is to all these particulars that he may refer, when he assigns the motive before us.

But he has probably a more direct view to the verses which follow the text, and would enforce the duties of prayer and a quiet life, by the connexion they have with the actual salvation of mankind. For to the words, *this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour*, he immediately adds, as if explaining his meaning, *who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.* And then he closes his canon of public prayer by a summary, in which he tacitly condemns what would subvert his directions, *I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting*[n].

Nothing opposes our including both considerations in this ennobling motive to our civil duties—the desire generally to please our God and Saviour, and the aim in particular at advancing the salvation of all men.

[n] Chap. ii. 4—8.

It is thus that religion and morals are inseparable. It is thus that every Christian duty springs from the love of our divine Lord. It is thus that the highest mysteries of Christianity are connected with the every-day business of life, and the habitual spirit which is to animate us as citizens and as men.

It is this religious spirit which distinguishes the sincere believer in the gospel. He derives his motives from the great doctrine of redemption, from the overwhelming proof of his Saviour's condescension, his *giving himself a ransom for all;* from the exuberant consolations of his promised Spirit; in a word, from all his unutterable benefits which are so well calculated to inspire gratitude and love.

Many outward actions, it is true, are common to the devout Christian with other men. Words of prayer for their civil governors may undoubtedly be uttered by persons who have no claim to the love of Christ. A tranquil and quiet life may, in some separate acts of it, appear in those who prove their indifference and irreligion by their

general conduct. When Christianity has been long established, education and habit will attach men to a national creed, and induce them, from various motives, to be peaceable subjects. But he only is the true Christian who acts from principle, and not from custom or external inducements. He only can claim the title of a believer in Christ, who offers prayers for all men, and for kings, and all in authority, from the abundance of the heart, and because they are commanded by his God and Saviour. He only rises to the distinguishing character of a servant of God, who leads a quiet and peaceable life in godliness as well as honesty, and because it is good and acceptable in the sight of God his Saviour. *Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*, is the apostolic direction. To an all-seeing God, the motive characterizes the action[o].

[o] These remarks extend to all outward duties. And therefore in our Liturgy, our prayers for our king and rulers seem to have an especial regard to the state of the heart and motives: "that they may be replenished with "the grace of God's holy Spirit, nourished with heavenly "grace, and have the continual dew of God's blessing."

It is this direct view to the mercy of his Saviour which guards the Christian from the conceit of his own righteousness, and the presumption of attempting to merit heaven by the prayers which he offers, and the quiet and godly life which he leads. This would be to rob his blessed Lord of his brightest crown. This would be so far from good and acceptable in his sight, that it would go to dig up the very foundations of his Gospel. The motive by which the humble penitent is animated, springs from that grace of Christ which excludes every ground of merit except the one sacrifice and propitiation offered by his Lord and Saviour upon the cross. But that motive is not the less powerful incentive to obedience, because, disclaiming all pretence to worthiness in man, it rests on the principle of love, sways the heart by the impulses of gratitude, and forms the fruit and evidence of that faith which justifies.

This motive accordingly effectually influences fallen man. No other can. No other connects the sinner with the grace of redemption, and places him under the

guidance of the Holy Ghost. No other lifts him above mere nature, and reason, and philosophy, and human wisdom. The misfortune is, that men professedly Christian too often misunderstand or undervalue this Christian motive. They soon lose sight of the peculiarities of divine revelation. Statesmen, and legislators, and the disputers of this world, even in a protestant country, are too much occupied with the external relations of man to man. Multitudes of worldly persons, as they grow in years, become more and more callous to religious feelings, forget the first principles of their Christian education, and the simplicity of their early days. Thus too many come to regard religion chiefly as an engine of state. They seem to think they confer a boon on Christianity, if they adopt its moral precepts, and use it for the government and restraint of the lower orders of citizens. The mysteries of redemption are forgotten. They would seize the fair fruit which loads its branches, whilst they neglect the tree which produces it.

It is important, therefore, to insist per-

petually on the Christian motive. It is important to show, that religion is the bond of civil society, and the foundation of human laws. It is important to prove, that in proportion as the knowledge of the blessings of Christianity is diffused, so will all the duties of personal piety, and all the functions of civil life, and all the devotion which intercedes for kings and those in authority, and all the meekness which forms the useful and inoffensive citizen, be produced. If these observations are correct, it cannot but be a duty most of all incumbent on the minister of religion not to lose sight of this Christian motive on such a solemn occasion as the present. It cannot but be incumbent on him, after having shown that the character of a Christian, as a good subject, begins in the spirit of prayer, flows out into an habitual quietness of behaviour, and is sustained and nourished by a desire to please his Saviour in all things, to urge every part of that high and beneficial character upon all the various classes of persons now assembled.

To those venerable and distinguished individuals who represent the person of our sovereign, in the administration of the law, it cannot fail to occur, that the more they, in common with the several exalted personages in this Christian country, are practically governed by the principles we have been considering, the more wholesome will be the public and private example which they exhibit to others. To them it cannot fail to occur, that if supplications and prayers are made on their behalf by a whole nation, they should in return offer the most devout prayers for themselves and for the people intrusted to their government, that it may please God so to bless their decisions, that the administration of justice may effectually secure the tranquillity, the godliness, the honesty of all classes of the community. Nor will they fail to recollect, that to do what is *good and acceptable in the sight of God their Saviour*, from a lively principle of faith and love, is indispensable to their own salvation, and can alone enable them to support a truly Christian character in the wide sphere of

influence to which their example extends.

To those who are about to be WITNESSES in causes, whether civil or criminal, and especially to such as shall sustain the solemn duty of JURORS, it is important to observe, that daily prayer to God for themselves, and for their king and country, and a desire to promote the quietness of their fellow subjects, both supported by a humble aim at the honour of God their Saviour, are the best, and indeed only means of really preparing for the due discharge of their duties, of raising themselves above prevarication, concealment, subterfuge, fear, anger, petty prejudices, family interests, party feelings and projects; and of enabling them to bear their testimony, and bring in their verdict, with uniform and unbending dignity, uprightness, and impartiality, as in the immediate presence of an all-seeing eye, and under the solemn obligation of an appeal by oath to the power and vindictive justice of the Almighty.

The injunctions of the text are equally applicable to that numerous and most ho-

nourable class in a great and free country, THE VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE PROFESSION OF THE LAW. How elevated is the character of the legal advocate and adviser, when, to all his other high qualifications, he adds a devout spirit, a steady aim at what will promote the quiet and peaceable life of men, and a desire to please in every thing his God and Saviour! The knowledge of law, adorned with true religion, renders a man a blessing to his country. It guards him against the temptations arising from intellectual endowments, it mingles humility and self-knowledge with his attainments, it infuses into all his efforts and aims the Christian spirit. In the private transactions which precede the appearance in public court, as well as in the management of causes themselves, it erects within his breast the dread tribunal of conscience; whilst in the tone and manner of examining witnesses, religion inculcates that regard to fairness and truth which is equally removed from an overbearing violence which outrages, and a mistaken candour which betrays, the first duties of an advocate.

But it is to THE CONTENDING PARTIES that the spirit of Christianity would dictate the most important lessons. If men about to plunge into endless litigation, would recollect the duty of praying for all men, of living a quiet and peaceable life, and of doing what is good and acceptable in the sight of God their Saviour, how many quarrels would be composed, how many claims adjusted, how many murmurs silenced, how many exaggerated and irritated feelings calmed! The true character of the Christian in civil life would go far to extinguish those latent embers of discord, which pride and self-will blow up into a flame; and would leave men to pursue in peace their several lawful callings, and to provide above all for the concerns of their own salvation.

And this leads me to observe, if any before me should, from their age or connexions, require such advice, that the Christian character would effectually PREVENT THE FORMING OF THOSE HABITS AND ASSOCIATIONS WHICH LEAD TO THE COMMISSION OF CRIMES AND INJURIES. If men would but pray to God, and be content to lead a

quiet and peaceable life, and to love their Saviour, they would resist at once the temptations to those scenes and those companies where vice is first contracted, where it next hardens the heart, and lastly propels its victims to the lawless invasion of the good name or possessions of others. If Christian principles prevailed amongst our population, our calendars would be less heavy, and the discharge of the solemn duties of these occasions less painful to the best sympathies of the distinguished persons who administer the laws. If Christianity were allowed to become our effective teacher, the fraudulent would leave off deceit. The libeller would cease from his defamation. The oppressor would desist from violence. The covetous would let go his unlawful gains. The murderer would stay his hand. The robber would plunder no more. The transgressors of every class would repent and amend. Christianity would do more than this. It would change the heart of the most obdurate, and go far to render them ornaments of the society of which they were the terror and scourge. Men would not only

cease to do evil; they would learn to do well. Instead of *hating and devouring one another*, they would begin to *love their neighbours as themselves*, and would employ those talents and that ingenuity which are now perverted to the most fatal purposes, for advancing the happiness of all around. To use the beautiful instance of the apostle, *He that stole would steal no more; but rather would* LABOUR, WORKING WITH HIS HANDS THE THING THAT IS GOOD, THAT HE MIGHT HAVE TO GIVE TO HIM THAT NEEDETH.

Christian education, let me add, followed by Christian instruction, is the grand remedy for our evils. Christian principles, early implanted and diligently nurtured, would, by the grace of God, transform the character of the next age. Thus our increasing population would no longer be the prey of that ignorance, and passion, and vice, and early profligacy, which so soon extinguish conscience, and defy all the restraints of human legislation, and which augment, and must and will augment, in an accelerated proportion to the numbers of our people, so long as adequate means of national religious

instruction are withheld, the evils which already too obviously threaten our peace and prosperity as a nation; nay the very existence of social order and general religious conduct amongst us.

But I must not enlarge. The subject before us applies to every class of the community. The Christian character, as to our duties in civil society, is only a branch of that general spirit of prayer, of meekness, and of love to our God and Saviour, which are the substantial parts of practical religion, and to which we are invited by every motive which can awaken our fears or arouse our diligence. This is no indifferent matter. We must give an account at last whether we have been governed by the Christian spirit or not. To *repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance;* to trust in the death and passion of our Saviour Christ with a holy and affectionate faith; to be led by the blessed Spirit of God; to produce the lively fruits of a Christian belief, both in our relation to the state and in every other, is the paramount duty of every human being under a dispensation of mercy,

on the neglect or right discharge of which our eternal destiny is suspended.

For there is ANOTHER AND A GREATER ASSIZE WHICH AWAITS US ALL. There is another and far more awful tribunal before which we shall be summoned. There is another day which will inconceivably surpass, in all its preparations and consequences, the solemnities of the present.

We shall then stand, not before the bar of an earthly judge, but before *God the judge of all.* We shall then be summoned, not by the command of man, but by *the voice of the archangel and the trump of God.* The trial will then proceed, not on the imperfect laws of human enactment, but on the pure and absolute law of the Almighty. We shall then have to answer, not for one or two separate actions, but for the whole of our past lives. We shall then be judged, not with respect to our outward conduct merely, but to the secrets of our hearts. The arraignment will then regard, not only what we have done to our fellow-creatures, but what we have done to the eternal and ever-blessed Maker, Governor, and Re-

deemer of mankind, our duties to whom will then assume their paramount and true importance. Every thing will then be exposed to the full blaze of day—all the passions of our hearts, all the motives of every action, all our objects and pursuits, all our omissions of duty, all our violations of conscience, all our abuse of our talents, all our neglect of opportunities of knowledge and instruction, all our disregard of the means of grace, of sabbaths and Bibles and sacraments, of the calls to repentance, the motions of the Spirit, the remonstrances of truth, the voice of Providence, the counsel of friends, the admonitions of affliction and sorrow—and every charge will be established in its true and exact force, and with all its aggravations, not by the depositions of fallible witnesses, but by the eye of an omniscient Judge, and the testimony of an aroused conscience.

No friend, no helper will then appear on our behalf. Those who were our tempters will then accuse. No advocate will then be found to undertake our cause. Each individual will stand destitute and alone. The

juror must then be judged; the witness must be witnessed against; the counsel must answer for himself. The dignity of our legislators, the venerable insignia of our jurisprudence, the wealth and power of our gentry, the pomp of our nobles, the majesty of our princes, will all be lost and overwhelmed in the last indiscriminating necessity, and each one will be hurried on in the common throng to the assembled judgment. Yes, the *dead, small and great, shall stand before God; and the books shall be opened, and the sea shall give up the dead which were in it; and death and hell shall deliver up the dead which were in them, and they shall be judged according to those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

I said that no friend, no advocate will then be found. But I retract the expression. There is AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER, who will then appear for all that have duly fled to him for succour. There is one, THE COUNSELLOR, THE PRINCE OF PEACE, as the prophet sublimely calls him, to whom we may now intrust our eternal

interests. He has undertaken the cause of fallen man. He descended from his throne of glory, that he might suffer the penalty of the law in the place of the criminal. *He endured the cross, despising the shame,* that he might expiate, by a stupendous propitiation, the guilt of our sins. The same Saviour, who will be seated on *the throne of judgment, and from whose face the earth and the heaven will flee away, and no place be found for them,* has first visited the vale of Gethsemane, and offered himself a sacrifice on the summit of Calvary. He has satisfied all the claims of law and justice for those who truly believe in him. He has honoured the authority and sanction of the divine law and government by his own meritorious death. He has accomplished salvation. He has been *made a curse for us.* God can now *be just, and yet the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.*

To this mighty Intercessor let us flee. His death let us interpose between the wrath of God and our guilty souls. Let us admit the accusations of conscience, and sue for pardon and grace. Let us renounce

all dependance upon ourselves, and appear before the bar of God clothed, surrounded, hidden in the merits and righteousness of our Lord; and then let us be diligent to produce those fruits of obedience which must be adduced as the evidences of our faith at the last day.

So shall we look forward, with trembling humility indeed, but not with terror, to that fearful hour of which the present solemnities remind us; and after having exhibited, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, in this brief existence the Christian character, shall hear at last from the lips of that Judge, whom we shall have first known and trusted in as a Saviour, those gracious words—to which no others will succeed, and the full import of which eternity can alone develop—*Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*

THE END.

On the perversion of the Gospel of Christ, and on the duties of the Christian Minister.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN

THE PARISH CHURCH OF NEWPORT,

On Thursday September 13th, 1827,

AT THE VISITATION OF THE

HON. AND REVEREND A. G. LEGGE, A. M.

Chancellor of the Diocese of Winchester.

BY THE

REV. C. WORSLEY. A. M.

RECTOR OF LESNEUTH, IN THE COUNTY OF CORNWALL, AND CURATE OF THE PARISHES OF BRIXTON AND KINGSTON, ISLE OF WIGHT.

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TO

THE HONOURABLE AND REVEREND

A. G. LEGGE, A. M.

Chancellor of the Diocese of Winchester,

AND TO THE

CLERGY OF THE DEANERY OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT,

THE FOLLOWING SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THEM, AND NOW

PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY THEIR FAITHFUL AND OBEDIENT SERVANT,

C. WORSLEY.

SERMON, &c.

ACTS XX. 29, 30.

"*For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your ownselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*"

THERE is some diversity of opinion concerning the persons, to whom as "Elders of the Church," the discourse of St. Paul from which my text is taken was addressed. But with respect to the text itself, as foretelling events disastrous to the church, there can be none. It is a plain prediction of hostile attacks from those that are *without*, and of groundless divisions among those that are *within* its pale. And whether we consider it as the immediate dictate of the Holy Spirit to the apostle, or as the result of his own mature judgment and observation; whether we apply it more or less extensively, to the first or to succeeding ages of the Church, to the people of Ephesus or to the whole Christian world, never, surely, was prediction more amply fulfilled.

It would be a subject of delightful reflection to the Christian, could he perceive, in every place where the light of the Gospel has shone, the high pretensions of human reason and the licentious systems of the imagination, submitting with one consent to its overpowering splendour; could he behold "the weapons of our warfare" every where "mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;" and, at the same time, those who "use curious arts," magnanimously "bringing their books together, and burning them before all men." But there are daring and "presumptuous men, self-willed," who are "not afraid to *speak evil* of dignities;" "sporting themselves with their own deceivings;" who "*deny* the Lord that bought them;"—"clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."

It would be a blissful scene to the Christian, such as angels may be supposed to "desire to look into," could he perceive in the *professors* of a religion, whose ensigns are "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards

men," *a consent of persuasion* among themselves; could he discover in those who are "called in *one* hope of their calling," who acknowledge that "there is *one* Lord, *one* faith, *one* baptism, *one* God and Father of all," a disposition to be "all of *one mind*," to "speak *all the same* thing," to have "*no divisions* among them," to "be perfectly joined together in the *same mind* and in *the same judgment*." But how widely different from this is the actual state of religion around us! From the sublimest doctrine of Christianity even to the simplest appendage of external worship, not an article has been suffered to remain unmolested by debate. With equal pertinacity have been disputed, the divinity of the Saviour, and the expediency of the sign and the mode in baptism, of the ring, and of the surplice.

Assembled as we now are for a ministerial purpose, fellow-labourers in the same cause, can we contemplate these things without emotion? Is there any Christian that can regard them unmoved? To us, indeed, of the ministry, they are subjects of more than common solicitude and interest, perhaps of personal crimination, certainly of serious and solemn inquiry. For we are the *pastors* to "go before the sheep," to "call" them, and to "lead them out;" to "feed the flock like a shepherd, who gathers the lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young;"—we are

the *stewards*," required to be found faithful ;"—the *ambassadors*, to press men " in Christ's stead," to " be reconciled with God ;"—the *watchmen*, set to " warn the wicked from his evil way ;"—the *builders*, deputed to " build up" their people " on their most holy faith ;"—" *labourers* together with God ;"—" *soldiers* of Jesus Christ," called to " endure hardness," to " war a good warfare," and " to fight the good fight of faith."

I have already assigned two objects to the prediction in my text ;—the one, to foretel the danger with which the Church was threatened, from the *infidel speculations and tenets* of persons as opposite in their views, their principles, and their manners to the religion of the Gospel, as the ferocious wolf to the harmless sheep ; the other, to forewarn these elders of the injuries which their hallowed cause would sustain, from the *perversions* and *seductions* of false and factious teachers among themselves.

It is to the latter part of the prediction that I would now direct our thoughts, Among the professors of the Gospel, among those " who name the name of Christ," even among his ministers, the apostle declares, shall be found persons influenced by motives of ambition, or other selfish passion, who will *pervert* " the truth as it is in Jesus," which they have religiously pledged themselves to maintain, and have been solemnly commissioned to proclaim. " Also of *your own-*

selves shall men arise, speaking *perverse things*, to *draw away* disciples after them." The prediction is alarming. But may it not be limited to the elders of Ephesus? May it not be restricted to the period immediately succeeding the apostle's "departing?" Can it apply to other ages? Can it be true of our own?

These are questions which can only be answered by an examination of the Apostle's discourse; a discourse, in which the great outlines at least of the ministerial office are distinctly laid down; and from which some insight may probably be obtained into the perversion intended. For, on what account did he send for these "elders of the church?" It was to remind them of the manner in which he had discharged his ministry; to lay open to them the painful forebodings of his own mind; to warn them of the approaching evils; to exculpate himself from any participation in the causes that should produce them; and to give them directions for their own conduct in the sacred duties which they had been commissioned to perform. The principles which he lays down, therefore, are the principles of the ministry, and should be the criterion, by which to examine our own conformity to so admirable a pattern.

Now I would not detain you longer with the apostle's discourse, than is absolutely necessary for my purpose: it is *doctrine* only that I am considering. The apostle is looking forward to

a period, when " men would arise, *speaking* perverse things:" to doctrine, therefore, many of his observations refer. He says, " I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you." " I have taught you publicly, and from house to house." " I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." All this is large and comprehensive, but not sufficiently explicit. As to the duty, on the part of a Christian minister, of propounding the *whole* doctrine of the Gospel, these sentences indeed are conclusive. But the apostle does not stop at these general declarations; he descends to particulars; he exhibits in *outline* what that whole doctrine is; he represents himself as having " testified both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, *repentance* toward God, and *faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ." I feel warranted in resting much upon this fact. It is the only specific mention of the doctrine which he had preached throughout his whole speech. He tells us what the leading topics of his ministry had been; that they had been *repentance and faith.* These were the doctrines which he himself had delivered and taught; and these he had taken care to inculcate and enforce upon all descriptions and denominations of men whatsoever. It was in the view of these articles, and under the recollection and consciousness of having *distinctly and uniformly* explained them, and pressed them upon

his hearers, that he made to them this manly and confident appeal, " wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men."

As to these points the discourse is decisive. And I think we are justified in concluding, from the declared purpose of the meeting, the importance of the occasion, the coherence of the argument, the whole texture of the apostle's discourse, that in the " perverse things" mentioned in the text must be included at least, if it was not principally designed by them, *some erroneous teaching* with respect to these TWO great specific articles. But be that as it may: we have the express words of St. Paul, that " the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus," he had carefully exercised in testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, " *repentance toward God,* and *faith toward our Lord* Jesus Christ." And what he laid down as his own *rule* for " rightly dividing the word of truth," and exhibited to his hearers as the *pattern* for their discharge of the ministerial functions, it must be incumbent upon us to observe; it would be a dereliction of our duty to neglect.

We have before us, you will observe, St. Paul's review of his own conduct; his defence against any charges of unskilfulness or negligence, which, in order to account for the disasters coming upon the Church, might possibly by his adversaries be alleged against him. Here is the doctrine which

he had uniformly preached and maintained: and it is obvious that he intended his hearers to understand, that had he not *distinctly* inculcated both *repentance and faith* "their blood would have been upon his head," of him it would have been required. We know, therefore, from a circumstance that actually occurred, when the *integrity* of the ministry was the very object of discussion, when the *doctrine* of an apostle was by himself submitted to investigation, we know that if we do not declare to our congregations "the *whole counsel* of God," in other words, "testify" unto them "*repentance* toward God, and *faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ," we do *not* "take heed to our flocks"—we do *not* "feed the Church of God"—and consequently, we are *not* "pure from the blood of all men." *Repentance and faith* therefore, are the *necessary principles* of a Christian minister's preaching. More than these is not particularized by the apostle; more he might have thought it unseasonable to deliver. In his apprehension, these might have been the topics which the present situation of his hearers rendered it most important to enforce. He might have foreseen, that upon these depended, in proportion as they should be duly understood and adequately represented, the future welfare of the Church. Or he might have considered these, as their nature and comprehensiveness will justify, as amply sufficient for his purpose, as comprising all that was requisite, since he was addressing

himself to persons, who would need only to be reminded of the first principles of the doctrine of Christ.

It is to be observed, that I have been treating, not of the several duties of a Christian Minister, but only of those *first principles* of our religion, on which they are all founded. I have given no definition either of repentance or of faith. I have only contended that *both are prescribed;* that they are *not to be confounded, or left to be inferred* the one from the other; but are entitled, *both separately and conjointly*, to the constant attention and regard of "the stewards of the mysteries of God." They are evidently the *two cardinal* doctrines of the Christian Church, and are so represented by St. Paul. I will only add that I understand them in their fullest and most comprehensive meaning: "*faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ," as briefly denoting the *profession of Christ's* religion *and belief of all its articles;* "*repentance toward God,*" as comprehending *unfeigned sorrow* for past transgressions, and withal that most important and necessary part of it, *amendment and reformation of life.* In other words, they betoken *belief in the revelation* of Jesus Christ, and *obedience to the moral law; faith and works* emphatically so called; the *meritorious righteousness* of Christ, and a *personal righteousness* of our own; in the words of the same Apostle, "as without *faith* it is impossible to please God," so "without *holiness* no man shall see the Lord."

I have established then an obvious sense, in which the "*perverse things*" mentioned in the text, may be understood.

We have, in the next place, to inquire, whether a system of preaching withholding these, or either of these essential principles, *either repentance or faith*, be discoverable at the present period in the Christian world. If it be, the question as to the *extent* of the Apostle's prediction is answered. It is *not* limited to the elders assembled at Miletus. It is *not* restricted to the period immediately succeeding the Apostle's "departing." It is *applicable to our own times.* Upon this part of my subject, however, it must be needless to insist. For what is it that has produced so much of that dissent from our Established Church, which we now witness around us? What is it, that has created that apparent separation of interests between the ministers of this very establishment; that has brought the articles of our Church, her constitutional symbols, under so much irritating and opposite trial of construction? It is *this very perversion* of which I now speak. It is the *omission* of one of these principles; an *enforcing* of the one to the *exclusion* of the other; or a *drawing of comparison* between them which we are not authorized to make; *an assumption* that the one is either superseded by the other, or else, in some mysterious manner, comprehended and included in it. I might justify these obser-

vations, by laying before my hearers extracts from the publications that are perpetually obtruded upon us. But their recollection will supply them in sufficient variety and number; and I have no inclination for a task, which could be attended only with pain and disgust.

There is a remark, however, which my own feelings of infirmity, as well as my sense of duty, prompt me to make in this place. The apostle has declared, "also of your ownselves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to *draw away* disciples after them." Here I will not hazard an opinion. "I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." St. Paul was gifted with inspiration. The Holy Spirit who opened to his view this melancholy picture of the Christian Church, in all probability, distinctly informed him of the objects and purposes of the principal characters in it; from me they are hidden. He could safely declare, that they were instigated by avarice, by ambition, or by any other corrupt and selfish passion, which the Spirit of Truth suggested to his mind. It is not for any man to usurp the prerogative of God, or the privilege of those whom he has supernaturally endowed. Let us rather hope and believe, that, although we are compelled to think such persons in error, their intentions are undoubtedly good.

The subject to which I have invited your attention, will naturally suggest to our minds many and grave reflections. That the Gospel has not produced universally those desirable fruits, which

its divine origin would certainly entitle us to expect, cannot be denied. There are men, yet unenlightened, yet unreclaimed from their prejudices and prepossessions, "wise in their own conceits," still "in bondage under the elements of the world," "gainsayers," in the very centre of this Christian country: there "be some that trouble" us, "and would pervert the Gospel of Christ," manifested as it is in our true apostolical Church, with a perspicuity and purity no where surpassed in the Christian world. To ministers of the Gospel these are momentous and appalling facts. That no efforts of theirs, however wisely directed and zealously exerted, will *ensure success*, we know from the experience of the best ministers in the best ages of the Church. The splendid endowments of St. Paul were no security against infidelity, schism, or lukewarmness. Even our blessed Saviour himself is introduced by the prophet, as exclaiming in a sort of despondency, "who hath believed our report?" And again, "all day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people." In his history we read the fulfilment of these predictions. And those heroic messengers of his "glad tidings," pervaded with his own divine spirit, men of heavenly conversation and almost spotless lives, experienced the same opposition with himself. May not *we* be reminded, that in our unsuccessfulness we do but participate with them? Their endowments may be our apology,

their experience our consolation. It would be well, if those who are so ready to attribute the present defection from the established Church to the remissness of the Clergy, would account for these facts. I mention this, not with a view to extenuate imputation where it may be deserved, but to put them in mind of a truth which ought not to be overlooked. From our brethren in the faith we claim this concession as of right. But "if thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it!" "Enter not into judgment with thy servant O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified."

But, my reverend brethren, if in these distressing circumstances of our ministry, we may humbly presume to indulge the mournful consolation, that our situation is not singular; we cannot but perceive that the opposition with which we are assailed, admonishes us forcibly and loudly. If St. Paul thought it necessary to submit himself to the test of a severe scrutiny, and to review his three years ministry among the Ephesians, when looking forward to the disasters that were coming upon the Church, with what colourable shew of reason can it be denied, that the preservation of our religion, under a watchful and assisting Providence, is principally in the hands of its ministers? How can it be dissembled, that the issue of this portentous contest, in which we are engaged, must depend mainly upon us; upon the lives which we lead, and the doctrines which we

disseminate? We are surrounded by intelligent, active, persevering adversaries. Our first care is due to the sacred deposit with which we are entrusted, and to that Church of which we are members, its legitimate and best protector. Let us never forget the vigilance, the tenderness, the fidelity, the zeal, the discretion. the devotedness, expected from us. At the same time, let us be deeply sensible of our infirmities, and with unceasing prayer to HIM who is able "to succour and to save," let us supplicate for spiritual aid to our feeble endeavours. Thus arrayed in celestial panoply, we may go forth to meet our opponents. But with the consciousness of our imperfection both as men and as ministers, let us also reflect that we belong to a church, the best perhaps that uninspired men ever formed, which does not presume to esteem herself, and would not endure to be esteemed, infallible. "The time will come," says the apostle, (and his words have been long since verified,) "when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." It is our duty, therefore, to "preach the Word; to be instant in season, out of season; to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine." But let us remember, that "if a man be overtaken in a fault," we, "who are spiritual,"

should endeavour to " restore such an one in the spirit of meekness;" that " in meekness we should instruct those that oppose themselves." We claim not to be " lords over God's heritage;" nor " to have dominion over their faith," but to be only " helpers of their joy." Conciliation, and gentleness, and forbearance will be found much more efficient supporters of our cause, than blind zeal or chilling reserve; and example will plead powerfully, where sound precept and unanswerable argument are lost. Let us, in promotion of Christian unity, concede what we can. But let us be true, inflexibly true, to the principles of our Church. Let there be no compromise of these. Far be from a minister of the Church of England, in deference to any society of Christians however large and increasing, the baneful doctrine that " we are *not under the law*, (*the moral* as well as the ritual law,) but under grace." Far be from him any ambiguity of sentiment or expression on *so vital a part* of Christianity. We have lived to hear *libertinism* dare almost to assert a fellowship with the Gospel; to see *morality* virtually decried, and *all the humble duties* of sinful man in a manner expunged from the Christian code. We have lived to hear the *vauntings* of those, who have *most* " *opposed themselves and blasphemed*," who have scarce ceased to " *breathe out threatenings and slaughter*," that they have become, *as in a moment*, the disci-

ples of "HIM who KNEW NO SIN." Even the *murderer,* at the instant of his execution, where there was but one step between eternity and him, has been heard to pronounce with unshaken assurance, that soon is he to "come to Mount Sion— the city of the living God—the heavenly Jerusalem—an innumerable company of angels—the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven—to God the Judge of all—to the spirits of just men made perfect—to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." God forbid that I should be thought to set limits to the mercy of God, or to confine the operations of divine Grace. But these, under the circumstances intimated, are mysteries enshrined in the ark of God, which we must not presume to touch. Let not the hope of mercy be extinguished, but let it be the hope of a deeply afflicted, repentant sinner, humbled to the dust.

We have, in these instances, the *true nature* of the perversion of the doctrine of Christ, on which I have been discoursing, though exhibited in *its lowest and most vulgar effects.* And they spring naturally from the same source with all those delusions, that accompany the preaching of Christian faith, unsupported by the *plain inculcation* of Christian morals.

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance

among all them that are sanctified." May he assist us with his grace. May he "illuminate us with true knowledge and understanding of his Word, so that we may both by our preaching and living set it forth, and shew it accordingly." May he defend our church against "false doctrine, heresy, and schism." Let us pray for the peace of our Jerusalem. "Peace be within thy walls!" To our Church, under the blessing of God, the great protestant world looks for the preservation of pure and uncorrupt faith, in these religiously distracted kingdoms; and from our integrity, from our unanimity and concord, under the same providential care, it expects the prosperity of that Church, the only steady support it can perceive, the apparent preservative of the faith. In the eloquent language of one of its late prelates, "Wise men have formed it, brave men have bled for it, it is our's to preserve it."

FINIS.

J. Hall, Printer, Newport.

A

CHARGE,

DELIVERED TO

THE CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF PETERBOROUGH,

IN JULY, MDCCCXXVII.

ON THE INFLUENCE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC QUESTION ON THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

BY

HERBERT,

LORD BISHOP OF PETERBOROUGH.

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TO

THE CLERGY

OF THE

DIOCESE OF PETERBOROUGH,

This Charge,

PRINTED AT THEIR REQUEST,

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

BY THEIR FAITHFUL FRIEND AND BROTHER,

HERBERT PETERBOROUGH.

Palace, Peterborough,
3d. August, 1827.

A

CHARGE,

&c. &c.

Reverend Brethren,

In the two preceding Charges, which I delivered to the Clergy of this Diocese, I considered various subjects of great importance to the welfare of the Established Church. But there is a subject of no less importance, to which I must call your attention on the present occasion, namely, the relation in which we stand, as members of the Church of England, to those of our Christian brethren, who belong to the Church of Rome. It is above all things necessary, that we should understand and duly appreciate the relation in which we stand to each other: or we shall be unable to form a right judgment on some momentous topics, which are *connected* with that relation. And without this previous knowledge, we shall be wholly unqualified to form a right judgment on that which is emphatically termed the Roman Catholic question.

If this question were a mere *political* question, or a question unconnected with the Established Church, I should think it unnecessary, and even improper, to make it the subject of an Episcopal Charge. In itself, and divested of it's consequences, it is certainly a political question: for it is a question whether the political power of the Roman Catholics shall be increased. But additional power conferred on those who belong to the Church of Rome, may affect and deeply affect the welfare of those, who belong to the Church of England. Indeed it will hereafter appear, that the long agitated question respecting the Roman Catholics is a question, which involves the nearest and the dearest interests of those, whom I am now addressing. It may well therefore be made the subject of an Episcopal Charge.

But I shall not enter into matters, which belong especially to the consideration of the Legislature. I shall constantly keep in view the Established Church and the Clergy of that Church: and my object will be to explain the various bearings of the general question on the one, as well as on the other.

In the first place let me endeavour to remove a very unjust opinion, which has been entertained of the Clergy, who have signed Petitions to the Legislature against further concessions to the Roman Catholics. They have been accused of a desire to exclude their Roman Catholic Brethren from *civil* offices merely on account of their *religion*. This false assumption has been made the

basis of a superstructure, in which many a disputant has taken his station, without suspecting the weakness of the foundation on which it rests. It has been urged, that if men are excluded from civil offices merely on account of their religion, the exclusion is founded on a false principle: that if we cannot charge them with *civil* delinquency, their *religion* must not be imputed to them as a crime. Has not every man (it is asked) a *natural* right to worship God according to his conscience, and is it not both cruel and unjust to punish men for the exercise of that right? However erroneous the doctrines of the Church of Rome may be, yet if those doctrines do no harm to the State, why should the State interfere, and impose restrictions on those, who profess such doctrines? For it is an avowed maxim in legislation, that speculative opinions, which have no tendency to disturb the welfare of the State, are not fit subjects for the interference of the State.

Let us now consider what may be said in answer to this apparently formidable attack. We *admit*, that speculative opinions, which have no tendency to disturb the welfare of the State, are unfit subjects for the interference of the State. But while the maxim itself is admitted to be true, we must remember that a true maxim may be *falsely applied*. When we argue, that a religious opinion should not be made the ground of a civil restriction, because the State has no concern with speculative opinions, we must *prove* that such opinion is merely speculative, we must *prove*

that it has no tendency to influence the actions of men, or we shall not be warranted in drawing the conclusion, that the State has no right to interfere with it. I ask then, whether it *can* be proved, that the doctrine of Transubstantiation, or the Invocation of Saints, or the Sacrifice of the Mass, have no influence on the *actions* of those who believe in those doctrines. I select these doctrines, because they are included in the Declaration required by the 30th of Charles II. as a qualification for a seat in Parliament, and an attempt was made a few years ago to repeal this Act on the ground, that speculative religious opinions are no just causes of exclusion from the Legislature.

Now those doctrines, have so far influence on the actions of those who maintain them, that, though speculative in themselves, they are *invariably* accompanied with other doctrines, which are not so. They who maintain those speculative doctrines, maintain also the *practical* doctrine of obedience to the Pope. The same Profession of faith, the Professio fidei Tridentinæ, which enjoins the belief in Transubstantiation, the Invocation of Saints, and the Sacrifice of the Mass, enjoins obedience to the Pope in the following words, Sanctam, catholicam, et apostolicam, Romanam ecclesiam, omnium ecclesiarum matrem et *magistram* agnosco, Romanoque Pontifici B. Petri apostolorum principis successori ac Jesu Christi vicario, veram obedientiam spondeo ac juro.

The Roman Catholics therefore are excluded, *not* because they believe in the doctrine of Transubstantiation, but because they who believe in that doctrine, believe *also*, that a foreign potentate hath and ought to have jurisdiction in the dominions of his Majesty King George. But if they are not excluded on account of their religious opinions, why it may be asked, should recourse be had to a religious test? The answer is this: A religious test being founded on articles of faith, is less easily evaded than a political test. It is adopted therefore as an additional security, though the real object is to guard, not against the *religious doctrine* itself, but against *practical principles* connected with that doctrine.

There is another mistake, which I am anxious to correct, because it is likewise injurious to the character of the Clergy. They, who have opposed the Roman Catholic claims, and especially they who have signed Petitions to the Legislature for that purpose, have been charged with bigotry and intolerance. Now this charge is founded on a total misunderstanding on the part of those who have made it. If it were now a question, whether any body of Christians in this country should be restrained in the exercise of their religious worship, or the propagation of their religious opinions, and the Clergy of the Established Church came forward, as the advocates of such restraints, they might be *justly* charged with intolerance. But the question now at issue is of a totally different description. The laws, by which the Ro-

man Catholics were restrained in the exercise of their religious worship, and the propagation of their religious opinions have long been repealed. The question now at issue regards, not *religious liberty*, but *political power:* and surely we may oppose an extension of political power, without incurring the charge of bigotry and intolerance. Let the right of every man to worship God according to his conscience be classed among the *natural* rights of man, and let it be granted that he should be allowed to do so, as long as he abstains from disturbing the peace of his neighbours. But if he sets up a similar claim to the exercise of political or civil *power*, he sets up a claim, that cannot be sustained. A claim to civil power must be founded on civil relations: and we cannot always judge of civil relations, without knowing the religion of the party concerned. If then after due consideration it should appear, that persons of one description are better qualified for offices of trust and power, than those of another description, there is neither injustice nor intolerance in bestowing those employments on the former, and withholding them from the latter. And if the Clergy in particular have reason to apprehend, that additional power conferred on the Roman Catholics would endanger their own Church, they are surely entitled without being branded as bigots, to petition the Legislature against measures injurious to themselves.

Here perhaps it will be objected, that the Clergy are *mistaken* in their apprehensions, that

what is termed Catholic Emancipation will be injurious to the Established Church. It behoves us therefore to inquire whether those apprehensions are well grounded, or not. It is an inquiry, which must claim the attention, not only of those who entertain those apprehensions, but of those who consider them as groundless. It has been asserted, and asserted repeatedly by the advocates of the Roman Catholic question, that they would abandon the measure, if the Established Church were really endangered by it: and no one has gone so far as to declare, that the measure ought to be carried, though the downfall of the Established Church were the certain consequence.

Let us consider, therefore, in what *manner* the admission of the Roman Catholics to the same political power, which is possessed by the members of the Established Church would *operate* on that Church. The first and necessary consequence would be a repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. If free admission to offices of trust and power be granted to the Roman Catholics, the same free admission must a fortiori be granted to the Protestant Dissenters. It would be the height of injustice, if the door were opened to those, who act under the spiritual sway of a foreign potentate, and yet shut against those, who submit to no other governors than such as are subjects of his Majesty King George. It is nugatory to defend the barrier against Protestant Dissenters, when preparations are making for an opening in the

very walls, which must admit dissentients of every description. But where, it may be asked, would be the harm of such general admission? Would not the removal of civil disabilities remove all cause of contention? Would not harmony be restored between the Church of England and other religious parties? And would not our Establishment be thereby rendered more secure?

I wish, my Reverend Brethren, that I could answer these questions in the affirmative. But I fear that this imagined harmony will produce only fresh dissensions. A *new* question will arise out of this *new* order of things, of which few of us are at present aware: and this new question may produce universal discord. When all religious parties in this country are placed on the same footing in regard to civil power, when the ascendancy of the Church of England has thus merged into equality with other religious parties, and is virtually become a sect among sects, the question will soon arise, whether the emoluments, which are set apart for the service of religion should be *exclusively* enjoyed by the ministers of *one* sect. Under such circumstances it is not only probable, that the question will be started, but, when we consider the power and the numbers of those, who in Great Britain and Ireland are no members of the Established Church, we shall find, that under such circumstances it will be impossible to evade the question. And when all religious parties have the same political power,

exclusive possession of Church emoluments cannot be urged by one party on the ground that they belong to the present Establishment; for the very question at issue will be, whether the present Establishment shall remain. "If the provision (says Dr. Paley) which the laws assign to the support of religion be extended to various sects and denominations of Christians, there exists no National Religion or Established Church." To ask therefore whether the emoluments of the Church shall be confined to one party or extended to more, is to ask whether the present Establishment shall stand or fall.

Let not this inquiry into the nature of a Church establishment be misunderstood or misapplied. Let it not be inferred, that we are concerned only about the profits of our ministry, and that we argue for an exclusive system, merely to enrich ourselves. We will not indeed affect to deny, that we should be sorry, like other men, to see ourselves and our families reduced to beggary. But we may take higher ground, than that of individual advantage. We who are the ministers of the Established Church must believe also that we are the ministers of the true Church, and therefore bound to support it for it's own sake, as well as for our own.

Here perhaps we shall be reminded that in the measures proposed for the relief of the Roman Catholics, the safety of the Established Church has been regarded as an essential part: and that in the several Bills which have been offered to

Parliament for that purpose, there have been *securities* provided for the present Establishment. Those securities may be described in a few words. The first attempt was founded on the principle, that, as the chief danger was apprehended from a foreign potentate, whom the Roman Catholics obey, as their Spiritual Chief, his authority should be circumscribed, in proportion as the power of his spiritual subjects in this country was increased. Hence arose the project of the Veto: hence arose the contemplated measure of regulating the intercourse of the Roman Catholic Clergy with the Sovereign Pontiff. Whether such checks would have afforded any *real* security it is unnecessary to examine, as they were never adopted. Indeed they were rejected by the Roman Catholics themselves. From that period the proffered securities have been gradually declining, till even the semblance of security has disappeared.

And why, it is *now* asked, should the Church of England *require* security? Emancipation from *civil* thraldom is all that is now wanted: neither Roman Catholics nor Protestant Dissenters have any *desire* to partake in the revenues of the Established Church: it is unjust therefore to argue, as if such desires existed. Now if we have recourse to history we shall be enabled to judge about the existence of such desires. When the Presbyterians, in the time of Charles I. became the ruling party, their ministers were willing to partake of the emoluments which had been en-

joyed by the ejected Clergy. Nor did even the Independents refuse in their turn to accept what was left by the Presbyterians. Whether the Roman Catholic Clergy, especially those in Ireland, have any such thing as church revenues in contemplation, it is wholly unnecessary to inquire.

I revert therefore to the question above proposed. When all religious parties in this country are placed on a footing of equality with respect to civil power, will they be satisfied to see the emoluments of the Church remain in the exclusive possession of *one* party, a party, which will then have lost it's ascendancy, and have become a sect among sects: a party which if more numerous than any *single* sect, is less so than the others united? In other words, will they be satisfied, that the present Establishment should remain? It is idle to suppose that honours and emoluments are not objects of envy and desire to one party as well as to another. Nor is it credible, that men should relinquish their desires, when they are enabled by the acquisition of political power, to enforce them. The making, and the administering of the laws will then be indiscriminately trusted to men of all religious persuasions in this country: and, however they may differ from each other, they will be all ready to join in despoiling the present Establishment.

We might hope indeed that the religion professed by the Church of England would ever be

protected by the State, because it is the *true* religion. But there are many things, which *ought* to be, yet *cannot* be. Even the abstract principle, on which the alliance between Church and State is supposed to be founded, has been a subject of grave contention. Some writers assert that the alliance is formed on the ground of *utility* to the State, though others maintain that the only legitimate object of such an alliance is the promotion of truth. The former contend, that the State allies itself to the most *powerful* religious party, in order to derive from religion the most powerful aid. The latter assert, that the State either does, or ought to ally itself, without reference to strength or numbers, with that party, which, in the opinion of the State professes the true religion. Now instead of arguing these questions in the abstract, let us have recourse to experience and the evidence of history, whence we may learn, that *true* religion, and *established* religion are different things, and rest on different grounds. In the time of Charles I. the Church of England professed the same true religion which it professes at present. Yet it's truth did not prevent it's separation from the State. Nor will it prevent a separation again, if the ascendancy should be lost which was restored to it by the Restoration of Charles II.

But whether the religion, which we profess, shall remain the religion of the State or not, I trust, my Reverend Brethren, we shall never de-

sert it. Whatever may be it's condition, with respect to temporal advantages, I trust we shall as faithfully adhere to it in it's adversity, as we have hitherto done in it's prosperity.

Lastly, let us prepare ourselves to hear the reasons, which may hereafter be alleged in vindication of those consequences, which if they should ever occur, we shall have so much reason to deplore. It will perhaps be urged that the provision, which is made for the service of *religion*, is made for the *general* good; consequently that where numerous and powerful religious parties exist beside the party now *exclusively* favoured, the general good would be promoted by a less unequal distribution. In what manner, and in what proportion the division should be made, or how the obstacles may be overcome which must perpetually obstruct the execution of such a project, I leave to be explained by those, who may approve of it. Indeed the carrying of such a plan into effect, which could only be attempted in England (for in Ireland the transfer would be entire) must be attended with difficulties of such magnitude, that it would probably end in the abolition of a religious establishment altogether. Nor are there persons wanting in this country, who think that all religious establishments are useless.

An elaborate discussion on the utility of a Church establishment would carry me beyond the limits of the present Charge: but I may be al-

lowed to conclude with a few general remarks, which may induce our adversaries, at least to doubt, whether the sacrifice of our Church Establishment is a sacrifice, which ought to be desired.

That the maintenance of the Christian religion is a matter of general importance will hardly be denied. And this religion cannot be *well* maintained without an order of persons, employed in the studying and the teaching of it. Now the office of a public teacher will be better conducted by those, who are *educated* for that purpose, and who devote their time, if not exclusively, yet *chiefly* to that purpose. Even the *ordinary* duties of a public teacher require qualifications, which are not usually found among persons, whose attention is confined to the occupations of civil life. But beside those ordinary duties, attainments of a higher order are wanted in those, who are set apart for the service of religion. Without a competent share of learning they cannot understand the original Scriptures: nor can they establish the authenticity, the credibility, and the inspiration of the Sacred Writings: nor without a competent share of learning can they prove the divine origin of the Mosaic and Christian dispensations. A Christian Ministry, therefore, without a learned education would be inadequate to the purpose for which such a ministry is wanted. But a Christian Ministry, possessed of those attainments, which are acquired by a learned edu-

cation, cannot be formed without a Religious Establishment. Those years of study, which are devoted at school and at college to the acquirement of learning, as necessary for a sound Divine, would be *otherwise* employed, if there were no Church Establishment. Men so educated and so qualified would never be content to owe their subsistence to voluntary contributions dependent on the favour or the caprice of the donors. Without an Establishment we should never have possessed such a body, as the present English Clergy; a Clergy, who may be justly termed the depositories of learning in this country; a Clergy, qualified by their education to associate with the highest orders in the land, and placed at the same time by their official duties in constant communication with the humblest of their brethren; a Clergy enabled to discharge many important duties beside those of their immediate vocation, and supplying what would otherwise be a chasm in the administration of public justice; a Clergy numerously allied to noble, and other distinguished families in the State, whence they confer on their profession additional lustre, while they personally adorn it by their individual conduct. If a Clergy so educated, and so formed, should be destined to fall, the calamity would not be confined to themselves, but would extend to the nation at large.

Here then, my Reverend Brethren, I will close my remarks on the momentous subject, which I

have selected for this Charge. I sincerely hope, that all danger to the Established Church may yet be averted. But I have thought it my duty to explain to you, both your present situation, and the situation in which, from the possible course of events, you may be placed hereafter.

THE END.

Printed by R. GILBERT, St. John's-square, London.

THE BIBLE

THE

CHIEF SOURCE

OF

RELIGIOUS REFORMATION.

12

12

THE BIBLE

THE

CHIEF SOURCE

OF

Religious Reformation.

BY

A LAY MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR C. & J. RIVINGTON,
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AND WATERLOO-PLACE, PALL-MALL.

1827.

LONDON:
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ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

THE

BIBLE

THE

CHIEF SOURCE OF RELIGIOUS REFORMATION.

Pious men have ever been sorrowfully aware of the carelessness with which religion is treated by the greatest part of mankind; and both from the pulpit, through the medium of the press, and by private exhortation, have they done their diligence to repress the tide of public vice, and to urge careless Christians to awake from their dangerous slumber, and by a judicious use of the comforts and threats contained in the Word of God to induce them to enter upon a course of practical Christianity. All this, it is true, has been done—ably done—and, blessed be God, in many cases with infinite success. But a very slight view of the present religious state of all classes of society in this kingdom, will convince us that much yet remains to be done. There is yet

too little *practical religion* amongst us to warrant either the ministers of God's holy Word, or those among the laity who have it in their power (and whose duty it undoubtedly is) to promote the growth of piety and virtue, to relax the influence they possess, that influence, of the exertion of which they will have hereafter to give a strict and solemn account.

The rapid increase of Dissenters calls upon every friend of our excellent Church, who possesses any influence, to exert that influence in the uprooting of those prejudices which have caused many of her members to conceive that salvation is to be attained by a mere outward attendance upon her forms, and that the public morals will remain *sufficiently uncorrupted* as long as the public services of the Sabbath are not neglected, and while religion maintains enough influence over the hearts of the many to deter them from any gross violation of the weightier matters of the law.

It is the fervent prayer of the author of these humble pages, that if they fall into the hands of any who imagine that the form of godliness is *alone*

sufficient to promote the religious interest of society, that they may tend to convince them, that until the Scriptures are more generally *read and felt* amongst us, every class of the community will fall far short of that Christian perfection, which ought to manifest itself in a country, towards which the Almighty has been so liberal in dispensing his blessings, and for which, as for Israel of old, his mighty arm has been so often and so signally stretched out.

It must be confessed, that of late years great changes have been effected in the religious aspect of things in this country, but it must be as freely allowed that there is much yet to be done. It may be justly said that our national character as to morality, when compared with that of other nations, stands very high. Yet considering the great and glorious advantages which we have as a nation, and as individuals, for the growth of real and sterling religion, it must surprise all who have given the matter any serious consideration, that there is so little comparatively amongst us. It shall be the business of this little work to take a view of the religious state of the higher orders, and to see how

far the mode of life pursued by the greater part of them, agrees with the precepts of the religion they profess. If these remarks should chance to find their way into the higher circles, it is hoped that the plain terms in which they are couched will not be offensive; as, though the author is well aware that to inveigh in *too violent terms* against vice and immorality, is productive of effects unserviceable to religion, yet he is equally sure, that any one professing to reprove sin, must do so in plain terms, or he is surely a very inefficient and unworthy servant of his heavenly Master.

The conduct then of the greater part of those who tread the highest walks of life, if candidly considered, will present every one who has the interest of religion closely at heart, with objects at once lamentable and surprising; lamentable, because those who enjoy the advantage of pre-eminence in society are those to whom the middle and lower orders are to look for example; surprising, because those who have had the blessing of a liberal education, are certainly the better able to understand and appreciate the necessity of living for noble and useful

purposes. If we consider the life of the greater part of the higher classes during their residence in the metropolis, what does it present to us but a series of vice and dissipation, as pernicious to the health of the body, as it is assuredly destructive to that of the soul? Hurried from one place of amusement to another, the great of this country appear to forget that they were placed in the rank of life which they hold, to shine as lights in the world, to promote the cultivation of religion and piety among all classes, and to be in themselves illustrious examples of practical morality. Lamentably true it is, that the far greater part of our nobility of both sexes spend a great portion of their lives in a manner as contrary as it is possible to the interests of religion. And these persons call themselves Christians, and would be grievously offended at any insinuation which might be thrown out against the purity of their Christian character. They will allow that the Scriptures ought to be the rule of all who profess Christianity, and yet when their lives and deportment are compared with those golden standards, who can fail to perceive the difference—the wide difference—between their profession and their practice? The Scriptures

tell them, in the first place, that "the friendship of the world is enmity with God;" nevertheless they disregard this declaration, by fondly embracing all the objects which the world presents for the gratification of their appetites and passions, and appear to be "choked" by the pleasures of this life. The same Scriptures tell them that the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost; but how do they defile this temple, and "make a mock at sin," by "serving divers lusts and pleasures," and by being "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God!" How can such persons "use this world as not abusing it?" How can those who spend their lives and fortunes in the immoderate pursuit of pleasures, and the vain enjoyments of this life, how can they, it may reasonably be asked, be "rich in good works, laying up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life?" How can they, who profess to follow that religion which enjoins its followers to "forgive men their trespasses," and "to live peaceably with all men," "to love their enemies, and to pray for them who despitefully use them," call themselves consistent, who not only countenance, but consider as a test of

real courage and honour such a practice as duelling? And how can they, who are in the habit of indulging in fornication, be followers of a religion which tells them that "no fornicator nor unclean person has any inheritance in the kingdom of heaven?" The commandments of God require a strict and holy observance of the Sabbath, yet it cannot be denied that it is *grossly violated* by the greater part of the nobility, particularly in the metropolis.

After what has been said concerning the religious state of the higher orders it is but justice to observe that, thanks to God, there are several bright and shining lights who are strenuously endeavouring to excite a spirit of vital Christianity in the country. But it cannot nevertheless be gainsaid, that what has been remarked concerning the greater part of the higher orders is strictly, is lamentably true, and being true, who that is a Christian will deny the necessity of some radical and effectual reform, lest the measure of our iniquities become speedily full, and lest the Almighty stretch out his arm to punish us, as he has other nations which have forgotten *Him* in their prosperity? Of the middle class it

has been justly observed that it is the *most moral*, yet if the religious state of the greater part of this class be inquired into, though certainly that open disregard for religion which pervades the first ranks will not be found, yet will there be discovered a grievous deficiency of *practical Christianity*. A lukewarm indifference pervades this class. Attendance to formalities is considered the chief essential of religion, the practice of *bare morality*, is looked upon as all that is necessary to form *a true Christian*. It appears to be the opinion of this class that *active religion* is not essential, but that as long as they commit no heinous sins all is well with them; they therefore lead *calm moral lives* regulated rather by habit than the influence of religion. This want of vital Christianity is most observable in country towns where the inhabitants, for the most part engaged in trade, are it may be said *wholly* occupied in the labours of their temporal callings and appear to find no time for the duties of religion. The Church is perhaps regularly attended on the Sabbath *, but

* It may not be improper here to remark that which all who respect religion cannot fail to deplore, viz. the great coldness and

during the rest of the week religion seems to be in a state of torpor. The Bible is seldom or never opened, and religious conversation too often carefully avoided. How will this lukewarmness and indifference bear comparison with the Gospel which tells us we must leave all and follow Christ, and which enjoins us to be "fervent in spirit?" How will such coldness bear the slightest comparison with the life of active piety led by Christ, and the Apostles, and by all really good men in every age of the Church? The religion of Jesus Christ is undoubtedly a rational religion, without the least savour of enthusiasm or fanaticism, but it must have a very large share in our affections before

indifference with which the public worship of the Church is generally entered upon, how seldom it is that a true and fervent spirit of piety manifests itself in our congregations. The flame of piety must be very faint in our hearts when we fail to be moved by the beauty of our service, but it is lamentably true that there are but few congregations in which we shall discover that holy fervour, and warm yet rational devotion which ought to animate fallen creatures assembled for the solemn purpose of imploring pardon for their sins, and of praising their heavenly Father for the blessings of redemption.—Surely there must be a grievous want of REAL religion amongst us!!!

it can be practised *as it ought to be*, and any one who reads the New Testament, must be convinced that coldness is as much at variance with its spirit, as the thickest darkness differs from the noon-day sun.

From the contemplation of the religious state of the higher classes we will turn to the third or lowest class, which under the Divine blessing has been greatly improved through the medium of education, which has greatly tended to promote a relish for religion wherever it has been established; and it is truly satisfactory and gratifying to observe that the moral state of this class is daily improving through this means, and particularly in those parishes blest with zealous and pious ministers, Yet there is great need of reform in this class, for while swearing and drunkenness (the prevailing vices of the lower orders) exist to the degree they at present do, it must be allowed that a truly Christian spirit cannot generally prevail amongst them, but until there is manifested a more vital interest for religion in the two higher classes, how can it be reasonably expected that the most ignorant order of society should be generally under real religious influences?

High as this nation stands as to religion when compared with others, there is yet *much, very much wanting*, to make it altogether the kingdom of God and his Christ. It cannot be denied that both national and individual prosperity is increased by real religion, and we have had a grievous instance of the effects produced by the total extinction of it in a neighbouring country. And in individuals those whose holy office obliges them to visit the bed of departing life, can testify that the want of religion creates a sad want of peace at the awful period of death, and a melancholy prospect of a judgment to come. As a nation then and as individuals it becomes us to kindle a holy zeal, to introduce a spirit of vital religion amongst us, to fan the flame of the sacred fire that it may blaze as a beacon for the guide of all the kingdoms of the earth.

That the statement which has been made is not overdrawn, any one who has meditated *at all* upon the religious state of the country cannot but confess. The sooner then the axe is laid to the root of the tree the better. The only sure and sound plan for introducing a real religious reformation is through

the medium of THE BIBLE, it is to the neglect of that holy Book that all our irreligion is to be traced. It shall be the business of the following part of this little work, humbly, yet earnestly, in the name of God, to advise a more general and effectual reading of the Sacred Volume, as the only method of introducing throughout the nation a real and lively interest in religion, and a radical reformation in the morals of all classes.

The Christian religion, of which the Bible is the substance, does in no wise flatter the vices of any order of society, it tells the rich man that so great are the obstacles which the world places in his way towards the attainment of real religion that he can hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven,—it openly reproves avarice, his prevailing passion, and assails from all quarters those lusts and appetites which his means enable him to gratify,—and it tells *all*, without distinction, that unless they practise holiness they have nothing but misery to expect from a future state. This then is the Impartial Monitor whom *all classes* should consult. We *all* profess Christianity, yet we seem fearful to make ourselves ac-

quainted with its rules and precepts, we leave the Book which contains them neglected and unopened. Yet we are sufficiently acquainted with them to know that they are at variance with our natural appetites and inclinations; and therefore as children who dread the first anger of an offended parent try all possible means to avoid the glance of his angry eye, we put from us the sacred pages which contain them. Did the religion of Jesus Christ tend to numb the finer feelings of the heart, to quench all desire for *innocent* amusements, to discourage the social affections, or did it enjoin moroseness and austerity, and deprive mankind of *all* exercise of their rational powers, we might with justice shun the volume which conveyed to us such odious and unnatural commands. But this is not the case, for while it discourages "all appearance of evil," it offers to virtue and holiness a crown of everlasting glory; far from shutting up the avenues to innocent enjoyments it opens a smooth road to real and satisfactory pleasure through the medium of a life of purity, (the sure fruit of a true faith in Jesus Christ,) and it makes conformity to its mild and holy dictates the sound and permanent foundation not merely

of happiness on earth, but of eternal blessings, such "as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."

Those who have made any progress in the study of the Holy Book will confess that nothing will so tend to raise men above their original depravity, to give them the victory over their lusts and appetites, to undermine the very foundation of Satan's strong holds, to give a real and pure relish for the innocent enjoyments of life, as a pious and diligent perusal of it. They will declare with truth, that a strict, yet rational attention to its precepts will bring men nearer to the image of their Creator, and that while it shows them how ineffectual is immoderate intercourse with the world, and indulgence in its pleasures to produce solid happiness, it points out to them "a way of pleasantness, and a path of peace," leading to real enjoyment on earth, a peaceful close of the mortal career, and gives them a foretaste of joys which will end but with eternity.

It is the study of this Holy Book, which these few humble pages would earnestly recommend *to all*

classes. They would in God's name intreat every noble parent after having prayed to the Almighty for the aid of his Holy Spirit to cause him to "mark, learn, and inwardly digest" it, to read it aloud daily to his family and domestics. They would also recommend him to make it his own private study, and to encourage each individual in his family to "do likewise," and examine their hearts by the precepts it contains. They would tell him that "God is no respecter of persons," but that he will undoubtedly reward both rich and poor according to their "works done in the body," and that he will at the last day demand an account at the hands of all, of the use of the talents he has given them, and of the means which he has afforded them of promoting his glory upon earth.

These pages would further call upon the nobility of both sexes individually to use the Sacred Volume, and to compare the precepts it contains with the series of folly and dissipation in which their mode of life involves them, and they do not hesitate to affirm that with God's assistance the current of public vice would be inconceivably stemmed, and real Christianity

would make rapid strides amongst us. If once the Bible becomes the constant companion of the higher orders (which may God of his infinite mercy grant!) it will be equally that of the middle and lower classes; and though the nature of mankind is such that it cannot but be feared that some few of all classes will yet remain in their former ill courses, yet so great an alteration will take place in the religious aspect of the nation, that our Churches will become the scenes of *real and fervent devotion*, our families generally from the highest to the lowest, the immediate abodes of the Almighty, and our whole nation the increased object of his love, and the glory of his creation.

THE END.

Printed by R. GILBERT, St. John's Square, London.

THE

CHRISTIAN'S OBLIGATION

TO

OBEY THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE,

PLAINLY STATED

IN A SERMON,

PREACHED IN A VILLAGE CHURCH,

ON THE

ANNIVERSARY OF THE MARTYRDOM OF KING CHARLES,
OF BLESSED MEMORY.

BY A PRESBYTER,
OF THE ENGLISH BRANCH OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

LONDON:
HOWELL AND STEWART,
295, HOLBORN.
1827.

JAMES BULLOCK, PRINTER, WHITEFRIARS.

THE writer of the following discourse has been induced to publish it, not as having any thing to recommend it in its composition—for it is utterly without pretension, and only adapted for a country congregation, for whom it was written—nor yet as containing any thing new; but because it sets forth, as he hopes, plainly and intelligibly, certain principles of conduct and religion, which, although they be essentially necessary to the well-being of society, and to the *Christian* character of the Catholic Church in general, and so to that of the English branch of that Church in particular, men of the present day are, nevertheless, too much inclined to forget.

E. H.
Jan. 30, 1827.

SERMON.

PROVERBS XXIV. 21.

My son, fear thou the Lord and the king; and meddle not with them that are given to change.

THE wisdom of the wisest of the sons of men, who spake by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, has pointed out to us in this advice the safest, wisest, and best line of conduct for us to adopt with regard both to our heavenly and our earthly king—"My son, fear thou the Lord, and the king; and meddle not with them that are given to change." A long experience had taught him that those restless and turbulent spirits, who are never content with things as they find them, but are always en-

deavouring to procure a change (the real motive for which is, too frequently, the hope of their own advancement), have chosen a line of conduct at once most prejudicial to the state or kingdom in which they are placed, and to all who belong to it; and also one most injurious and hurtful in reality to themselves.

This is the ground and meaning of Solomon's words in our text; and well would it have been for this country, if, in the times to which the solemn service of to-day relates, attention had been paid to his advice; and well and happy will it be for the times in which we live, and for those that shall come after, if people shall accustom themselves to obey the rules which in our text, and elsewhere in the Bible, Almighty God has given for our conduct both toward Himself, and toward the governors whom He has placed over us.

It will be well and happy for these and aftertimes, because then we may hope, through

God's blessing, to pass our lives in peace and safety under the protection of the laws, the value of which is seldom duly appreciated till they are lost; and it would have been well for this country, in the times to which the service of to-day relates, because, if Solomon's advice, and God's command, on this subject had been attended to, this country would never have been disgraced by the foul and horrible crime which on this day was committed: when the people, forgetting alike their obedience to God, and their duty to the governor whom he had appointed, barbarously and wantonly murdered their king, one of the best and kindest that ever ruled over any people—one of whom, he who knew him best has given this character —"That he was the best master, the best friend, the best husband, the best father, and the best christian, that the age in which he lived produced."[a] I repeat it, that if God's

[a] Clarendon's Hist. Rebell. B. xi.

commands, relative to the duty we owe to our governors, had been attended to, this disgraceful sin would never have been committed. But (as is expressed in the service) it was the wickedness of this nation which provoked Almighty God to suffer such an event to take place; and the benefits which we, who live in happier times, should derive from the remembrance of it are—First, to sharpen our gratitude to God that we are not born in such times, when every man was armed against his neighbour, friends against friends, and brothers against brothers. Secondly, to pay attention to those rules which God has vouchsafed to give us for our conduct to our governors, since it was through neglecting these rules that the men of those times fell into such dreadful sin. Thirdly, to give diligence to amend our lives, that God may not be provoked by our wickedness again to give up this nation to such misery.

The point to which I am anxious at this

time to call your attention, is the second of these, viz.—the attention which we should pay to those rules which God has given us for our conduct to our governors.

With regard to this, it would be no difficult matter to show, from the mere argument of our present interest and well-being, how much it behoves us to pay such attention. For it were easy to prove that they who submit with meekness and reverence to their lawful governors, and seek for peace, and an honest reputation, do go the likeliest and surest way to secure to themselves that peace, and the quiet possession of their own, and a life free from those troubles and vexations which never fail to embitter the days of discontented, covetous, and ambitious men.

But there are higher grounds and nobler motives to suggest for our obedience than the mere consideration of our present interest, and such as are more peculiarly fit to be enforced from this place. I mean those which arise

from the connexion which exists between our duties as subjects, and our duties as christians. A connexion so intimate, that the former are contained in the latter; so that no man can be said to have performed his duty as a *christian*, who has failed in his duty as a *subject*. In short, the chief and most forcible motive for our obedience to our governors, and that which I will endeavour, with God's blessing, to press upon you, is simply this—that our duty to God requires it.

So great is the care which Almighty God, the king of kings, has of us, that He not only is at pains to bring us to heaven, but also in His mercy graciously condescends to consult for our comfort and happiness, and well-being here; and therefore He has given us such rules and laws as may best serve to secure these ends; and the true reason why there is so little real happiness to be found in the world, is because men will not observe God's gracious rules for the attainment of it. Of this

His fatherly care there are many instances. As nothing can destroy happiness more than scenes of violence and bloodshed, He has made it a condition of our salvation that we keep our hands from murder and violence.[b] Again, because if no person's property were safe from robbery, there would be an end of all security and peace, He has expressly stated that no thief shall inherit the kingdom of heaven;[c] and again, because backbiting, tale-bearing, and slandering, tend more than any thing else to produce ill will, and hatred, and quarrellings, He has made it part of our duty to Himself to keep our tongues from such evil.[d]

Thus, in like manner, because if there were no laws to protect honest and peaceable men from the attacks of the violent, if there were none to punish the evil-doers, and if there were no authority to put such laws in force, the

[b] Exodus xx. 13. [c] 1 Cor. vi. 10.
[d] Exodus xx. 16. 1 Pet. ii. 1.

whole world would become a mass of confusion, every man doing what might be right in his own eyes; and all virtue and honour would be swallowed up in riot and vice: God, in His mercy to his poor creatures, has appointed kings and princes to rule over the different nations, "for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well."[e] He has moreover given to them, and to their councils, wisdom to enact such laws as may attain these ends, and has given them authority to put these laws in execution: and, because unless due reverence and obedience were paid to them, neither would kings, nor their laws, be of avail to check those disorders, and the same confusion would prevail: in short, because submission and obedience are necessary to the existence of governments, and so to the well-being of all men, Almighty God, to show still further His mercy

[e] Pet. ii. 14.

to, and care for us, has not left it to the choice and caprice of subjects, whether they will obey or not, but has expressly commanded such obedience to be paid to the governors and princes whom He has appointed; and has made it part of men's duty to Himself that they do show this obedience.

But there is another reason why God requires such obedience at our hands, to them whom He has constituted our rulers, and this is that His own honour is concerned. For as kings and governors are appointed by God, act under His authority, are His ministers, and to Him alone responsible, any insult, neglect, or disobedience shown to them, is not in truth offered to them only, but to Him also whose commission they bear, and by whose authority they are ordained.

But there is still another reason why God should express His will in this matter. This again relates to the interests of men; and this reason is, that these habits of dutiful submis-

sion and obedience are a necessary preparation for heaven. For we are sure that in heaven no discontents or murmurings, no disrespects or disobediences will be suffered to exist; and that they who would enter that blessed kingdom must present themselves free from all these. At the same time we know that no change takes place in the grave in a man's disposition, habits, and ways of thinking—but that as death leaves him, so judgment will find him. If therefore a man has indulged himself, during his life, in habits of discontent, and disrespect towards those whom God has placed over him, and so dies, these habits will be found on him at the last day; and whether they will be fit wherewith to appear before the awful tribunal of the bar of heaven, is a question which it would be well for many, many men of the present day, seriously to weigh and consider.

But whatever might be God's merciful reason for declaring His pleasure on this point,

that which principally concerns us is to obey that pleasure; which is that, out of duty to Him, and because He has commanded it (if for no other reason, yet at all events for this), we should pay dutiful obedience to them whom He has called to govern us. For it "is the Most High who ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will."[f]

I cannot but be aware that what I have here stated may probably surprise them who, from some cause, have never considered this matter in this light. For the generality of people, if we may judge by their conduct and conversation, seem to think that God has no concern with the governments of this world; that they rest solely upon human authority; and that therefore they may at all times be resisted with a safe conscience. Consequently they are always ready at the slightest pressure

[f] Daniel iv. 25.

or grievance, or fancy of such, not only to murmur and complain, but with force and violence, by any means, fair or foul, to attempt the redress of their real or fancied grievances. That all this is most contrary to the rules of our religion, to the opinions, the doctrines, and practice of the apostles and early christians, and of our blessed Lord himself, no person who has attended to what is contained in the Bible can be ignorant. To such persons, however, as I just mentioned, what has been stated in this discourse will probably be matter of surprise, and perhaps of offence. But the opinions of the people, whatever they may be, must never form the rule for the advice which the ministers of God are to give. *Their* only rule is the will of God, as contained and set forth in His word: and if in that word they find passage after passage enforcing a doctrine, and that in language too plain to be misunderstood, and find the best and holiest persons mentioned in that word, not only teaching this

doctrine, but putting it in practice also in their own persons, though to their own grievous loss, the ministers of God must, and are bound themselves to teach it, or have a better excuse to give hereafter for their neglect than can easily be imagined.

My beloved brethren, the doctrine which it has been my endeavour this day to teach and remind you of, viz.—that of submission and obedience to our governors out of duty to God, is a doctrine enforced by very many passages in the Bible, taught by the best and holiest men who are there mentioned, and put in practice by them, though it cost them much to do so. To prove this to be the case, I will first refer you to our text—" My son fear thou the Lord, and the king; and meddle not with them that are given to change," where the fear of God and of the king are mentioned together, to show how closely our duty, as subjects of the king, is connected with, and depends upon, our duty as servants of God.

We are to fear and obey the king, because we fear and obey God, "whose minister he is, and whose authority he hath." Such is Solomon's advice. Now, to show how decidedly the christian religion teaches the same doctrine, we have the words of our blessed Saviour himself, and of his apostle Peter, upon this very point. Our Saviour's words are—"Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."[g] St. Peter speaks in almost the same words which Solomon used—"Fear God, honour the king."[h] To show that kings and governors do not derive their authority from man, but from God, St. Paul says expressly—"There is no power but of God, the powers that be, are ordained of God;"[i] that we are to obey them from duty to God, and not merely because they can punish our disobedience, the same Apostle speaks—"Ye must be subject not only for wrath, but

[g] Matt. xxii. 21. [h] 1 Pet. ii. 17.
[i] Romans xiii. 1.

also for conscience sake."[k] St. Peter, in like manner—"Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake,"[l] "to the king as supreme," "for," as he adds, "so is the will of God."[m] That we may not resist them by force, even though they oppress us, St. Paul is positive—"Whosoever resisteth the power," he writes, "resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."[n] If, moreover, as St. Peter teaches us—"Servants" are to "be subject to their masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward," because, "this is thankworthy," good, and "acceptable with God,"[o] much more must this hold with regard to subjects and their kings.

The declarations, therefore, of the Bible on this matter are plain and absolute.

But I said that this doctrine was not only

[k] Romans xiii. 5. [l] 1 Pet. ii. 13. [m] Ibid. 15.
[n] Rom. xiii. 2. [o] 1 Pet. ii. 18.

taught in many places in the Bible, but was put in practice by the best and holiest men who are there mentioned, notwithstanding that they suffered by so doing. It would be easy to adduce a number of instances in proof of this assertion, but I will content myself with two—king David and our blessed Saviour. The one the man after God's own heart, the other His beloved and only begotten Son; and I choose rather to name these, because they were two who both undoubtedly had it in their power to have delivered themselves from the governors who oppressed them had they deemed it right so to do. If we read the history of David, we shall find that he was hunted down, like a wild beast, by Saul, and that twice it was in his power to have put an end to his persecution, by killing his oppressor; but when his friends urged him to do so, we find that it was the fear of God which prevented him—"The Lord forbid," said he, "that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed, for

who can lay his hand upon the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?"[p] With regard to our blessed Saviour, I need hardly dwell upon his conduct. Not to speak of the power he had of obtaining angels to destroy His enemies,[q] there were many occasions when, by ordinary means, he might have delivered himself from them, had resistance been lawful. When He fed the people in the wilderness; when He entered Jerusalem in triumph;[r] when the multitude wished to take Him by force and make Him a king;[s] at all these times there were hands and hearts ready to have assisted Him in any resistance against the government: but instead of countenancing or encouraging any such thing, He "suffered for us," leaving us (as St. Peter says with regard to this very subject) "an example that," in this point of obedience and submission, "we should follow his steps."[t]

[p] 1 Sam. xxvi. 1, 9. [q] Matt. xxvi. 53. [r] Matt. xxi. 9. [s] John vi. 15. [t] 1 Pet. ii. 21.

But it is time that I bring this discourse to a close. My beloved brethren, I trust that I have been enabled to convince you that the doctrine, to which I have called your attention, of obedience to our governors for the Lord's sake, and out of duty to God, is not a fancy of mine, but that it is taught in Scripture in the plainest and most positive manner; and not only taught, but also practised by the best and holiest men that ever lived. What it behoves us to remember is, that they who have taught us this were men who wrote at God's command "for our instruction;" that we know they have written these things, and that for the attention or neglect which we pay to them we must hereafter give account.

Let us pray that God may forgive us our sins, and continue to us the peaceable and happy government we live under; but if He should in His anger send us a grievous and oppressive one, it will be our duty to remember that it is sent as a punishment for our sins, and

that if we shall oppose forcible resistance to it, we shall be so far from benefiting ourselves, that we shall merely add the guilt of rebellion to those sins which before had displeased God, which will be little likely either to remove His anger, or to avert the effects of it. But let us trust in His mercy, that through it we shall be allowed and enabled to serve Him in peace and quietness here, and so after this life to receive that peace which will last for ever, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, all praise be ascribed henceforth and for ever. Amen.

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14

v. S.H. 1827.

AN ENDEAVOUR

TO

RECOMMEND THE EXAMPLE

OF

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY,

IN

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT A VISITATION,

1826.

BY A PRIEST

OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN ENGLAND.

LONDON:

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1827.

JAMES BULLOCK, PRINTER, WHITEFRIARS.

TO

THE MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD, HIS GRACE,

CHARLES,

BY DIVINE PROVIDENCE,

LORD ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

PRIMATE OF ALL ENGLAND, AND METROPOLITAN,

THIS SERMON

IS INSCRIBED,

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF RESPECT AND REVERENCE,

BY ONE OF HIS CLERGY.

E. H.
Feb. 1827.

SERMON.

HEBREWS VIII. 5.

See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee.

IF even in the affairs of this world, and in matters which concern us only during the few years of our earthly pilgrimage, and which, when those are over, will be left behind and be forgotten, we are anxious to profit by the wisdom of them who have trodden the path of life before us; and even in these matters, which, inasmuch as they are earthly, we might expect to be more within the compass and dominion of our own minds, we yet know our own weakness and ignorance, and therefore can sufficiently value the worth of experience, and

the opinions of the aged, and the sentences of "them of old time," and the examples of our fathers are sought after, and referred to, with reverence; and he is esteemed the safest guide, and most prudent counsellor who is most conversant with these sources of instruction, and who founds his own opinions upon them—If such is the estimation in which example is held in matters, comparatively speaking, of small moment, and easy comprehension, there can be no doubt whatever, that in a much greater degree ought this feeling to exist with regard to the unfathomable, and invaluable affairs of heaven—affairs of such moment, that our eternity of happiness or misery depends upon them; and so difficult of comprehension to our human minds, that even the most holy saints, so long as they continued in the flesh, though aided by God's Holy Spirit which "searcheth all things,"[a] have yet but seen them, "darkly"[b]

[a] 1 Cor. i. 10. [b] 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

as "through a glass;" while those who have been destitute of this aid, and who either have not known, or have not regarded "the patterns which have been shown them," have run into the strangest errors on these points: and the wildest fancies, and the most abominable practices, and the most degrading superstitions have been the results of the vain attempts of men to guide themselves in affairs so far beyond their reach.

Even our common reason might teach us that, if in earthly matters we require guides and instructors, and rules, and examples, much more must we stand in need of "patterns" in those which are spiritual. But though our reason alone might teach us this, God has thought it a point of too much importance to be left to our reason alone: and as, in His fatherly love and care for us, He hath provided for all our other spiritual wants, so neither has this want of guidance, instruction, and example, in the conduct of our souls in His service escaped His notice. He has both foreseen and

provided a remedy for it. Out of compassion to His creatures, the fallen race of men, who, if they were left to walk in their own ways, would choose such as would infallibly ruin them, He has at different times raised up men in different degrees of perfection, as examples to others, and has made different revelations of His will, and appointed ways, in which they who would please God must walk; and has told men, that their safety consisted in keeping to these paths.

To this purpose, in the words which I have chosen for my text, on the occasion of one of these revelations, He warned them, to whom He then declared His will, against departing in their service of Him, and in the conduct of their lives, from the examples and patterns which He had given them;—"See that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee." Thus, in the spirit of prescience, placing a check upon the presumptuous pride of men, and warning them beforehand against that arrogance which would lead them to refuse

to humble their souls, or submit their necks to the guidance of Him whose wisdom is infinite, but would urge them still to be setting up new schemes of worship, and new rules of conduct, and new devices to procure the favour of God, to the neglect of, and in opposition to, the rules and schemes appointed by God himself. A warning, which if necessary in regard to the observance of the rites and ceremonies, and forms of worship, and rules of conduct delivered on Mount Sinai, may with the strictest propriety be applied, and is much more necessary, in regard to the observance of those patterns of worship, and examples of order, and principles of holy life, which were shown and delivered to us at the promulgation of that far better, and more perfect covenant in which we are included. For, as St. Paul speaks in the same epistle, with reference to this very subject—" We ought to give more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, least at any time we let them slip; for, if the word

spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?"[c]

It is indeed to the full as necessary that the warning should be so applied. For, as it was by a neglect of this warning that the Jewish church was split into divisions, and that the pure righteousness which God had required and appointed, was corrupted into that mockery of righteousness, which, in the persons of the Scribes and Pharisees, our Lord so severely condemned; so, in the Christian church, it has also been owing to the failing to apply this warning—that on the one hand, in such large portions of this church, the worship of the true God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, is profaned and polluted, by being mixed with prac-

[c] Heb. ii. 1, 2, 3.

tices and rites, and articles of belief, as contradictory to pure piety and right reason, and almost as revolting and abominable as any that the records of pagan superstition can produce; and that on the other, great parts of the remainder are torn, and split into an endless variety of sects—all indeed professing to hold by the same God—but thus endeavouring to prove Him, contrary to His own declaration of Himself,[d] the God of confusion, and not of peace:—and most also calling upon the same Saviour—but thus endeavouring to show, in answer to St. Paul's question, that Christ *is* divided:[e]—all to the evident subversion and utter destruction of that unity, which it was the anxious, and almost dying wish of the blessed founder of our religion to perpetuate, when, in His affecting words, He prayed—"Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one."[f]

[d] 1 Cor. xiv. 33. [e] 1 Cor. i. 13. [f] John xvii. 11.

I say, that it has been owing to the neglect of the warning rule contained in the text—"See thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee," that the corruptions of superstition on the one hand, and the anarchy of sectarianism on the other, have together so nearly destroyed both the unity and purity of christianity. For it is in vain for the Romanist, when charged with corrupting christian purity, to ask, in the voice of scorn and triumph, where the reformed religion was before Luther? Such as christianity was in the purest ages, before one of the Romish corruptions had been promulgated, and when the whisper of any of them would have been denounced as heresy; such in form and doctrine is the religion we now profess.

Equally vain is it for the sectarian, when charged with destroying christian unity, to endeavour to cast the blame upon them who will not make the religion of God subservient to every whim and fancy of men; for, though

as their Master did, the true servants of Christ must ever dearly prize and value christian unity, and though, to promote it must be with them, as it was with Him, an object of their hearts' warmest interest, yet, that unity in the religion and worship of "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day, and for ever,"[g] is not to be sought, as some well-intentioned, but surely short-sighted men have sometimes erroneously endeavoured to seek it, by accommodating the religion to the wild imaginations of men, whose unruly spirits will not bear a rein, until the coat of Christ, instead of being, as originally, "without seam," and of one piece, becomes a mass of irregular patchwork; but as St. Paul has taught us, by "holding fast the form of sound words,"[h] and "the profession of our faith,"[i] with all strictness, and by preserving the "beauty of holiness," both outwardly and inwardly, and setting it forth in

[g] Heb. xiii. 8. [h] 2 Tim. i. 13. [i] Heb. x. 23.

such a spirit of meekness and of charity, as may entice back those, who in an evil hour have wandered from it, to return to the true sheep-fold.

For such are the directions given by St. Paul, than whom none could more anxiously desire and seek for christian unity, as appears from his frequent exhortations to his converts, "that they stand fast in one spirit with one mind;"[k] that they "be like minded, of one accord, of one mind;"[l] that they "walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing."[m] But not by altering or bending either of the doctrines or form of christianity, which had been appointed, for he reiterates his charges to them to "stand fast, and hold the traditions which they had been taught;"[n] to "continue in the things which they had learned,"[o] and "to hold fast the faithful word as they had been taught;"[p] and instead of changing and adapting it, either in form or

[k] Phil. i. 27. [l] Phil. ii. 2. [m] Phil. iii. 16.
[n] 2 Thes. ii. 15. [o] 2 Tim. iii. 14. [p] Tit. i. 9.

doctrine, to the heated fancies of presumptuous and self-willed men, he says, expressly, of such "unruly and vain talkers, and deceivers, that their mouths must be stopped;"[q] and though he says it is to be done in the spirit of meekness and of christian charity, as he writes—"Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother,"[r] yet he is very positive in bidding the Romans "mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrines which ye have learned, and avoid them;"[s] and in commanding the Thessalonians in "the name of the Lord Jesus to withdraw themselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received,"[t] and in telling them to "note such a man, and to have no company with him that he may be ashamed."[u] Thus showing of how great and infinite importance he deemed it for the sake of christianity, that the patterns of its form and doctrine, "which

[q] Tit. i. 10, 11. [r] 2 Thess. iii. 15. [s] Rom. xvi. 17.
[t] 2 Thess. iii. 6. [u] 2 Thess. iii. 14.

had been showed," should be carefully and entirely preserved and followed.

Of the correctness of the prophetic view which the holy apostle took of this subject, the history of the succeeding ages has furnished ample proof; for as we have seen that the near destruction of christian purity, through the Romish corruptions, and of christian unity, through sectarian divisions, has been caused principally, if not entirely, by a departure from this rule, of "making all things according to the pattern showed," men at one time adding to the pattern, and at another cutting away from it; so, to a strict observance of the same rule, it has chiefly, through God's grace, been owing, that even during the darkest ages a remnant of pure christianity has been preserved; to the same its increase at this day is to be attributed—and (if ever it shall please God, as we hope it may, to bring it to pass) the restoration of christianity to primitive unity and purity will depend mainly upon the same observance.

For it was by firmly adhering to this rule, and "holding fast," as the apostle taught, "the form of sound words," and "the doctrines and traditions" which the apostles had given, that the church of the Waldenses, like Noah's ark in the universal deluge, was enabled, through the hand of God, to float uninjured above the flood of dark superstition, and abominable corruption, which, issuing from Rome, in successive waves, overspread the face of christianity.

And when these corruptions had become so foul, as in some measure to work their own purification, by forcing some nations to endeavour to cleanse themselves of them—it was a strict attention to this same rule, of "making all things according to the pattern showed," that, under God's grace, preserved the church of England from the grievous mistakes into which many others, by neglecting the pattern, were drawn; who, not content with clearing away the dirt and moss with which the Romish cor-

ruption had covered the fabric of christianity, actually, in their blind zeal, destroyed and defaced the beauteous fabric itself, marring it with errors as contrary to primitive purity and order, and frequently as dangerous as those from which they had escaped.

These sad mistakes the church of England, by adhering to the pattern, through God's blessing, avoided.

When the pious restorers of God's pure word and worship had, with the blood of another army of martyrs, washed away the accumulated defilements of eight hundred years of error and corruption, their first endeavour was according to the prophet Jeremiah's directions, to "ask for the old paths, where is the good way, that they might walk therein, and find rest for their souls;"[w] and wisely deeming that the safest, truest, and most acceptable modes of worshipping and serving our God and Saviour must be

[w] Jer. vi. 16.

such which the apostles and companions of the Saviour himself, and their immediate successors had appointed, their care was according to the rule of our text, to "make all things according to the pattern" showed them in the primitive ages. This their care and endeavour, by the aid of God's Holy Spirit, prospered; and of the fruit of this care we are partaking, in enjoying the blessing—a blessing far too little considered and set by—of having a church pure, primitive, and apostolical, as happily free from the innovations of sectarianism on the one hand, as it is from the corruptions of superstition on the other. A church, whose form of government is according to the authority of inspired apostles—whose liturgies are in the frame and spirit of the primitive ages—and whose doctrines are strictly according to the pure word of God.

That the discipline of the church (the remains of which are still preserved by such visitations as this of to-day) could not also be restored to the efficiency and pattern of the primi-

tive ages, must be, as it was to the compilers of our Liturgies,[x] a matter of serious regret to every member of our church who can duly appreciate the value and utility of wholesome restraint, both to individuals and to the church itself. But with this, individual pastors, and private christians, are no otherwise concerned, except that, inasmuch as we shall be accountable for what we have, however little that may be, all, who are in any wise entrusted with it, discharge it to the utmost of their power; the ministers of Christ, by guarding the sacraments of their Lord from pollution—the churchwardens, by making, according to their oaths, true answers to the articles and questions inquired of at them: without which true and exact return they incur the guilt of wilful perjury—and that private individuals submit with humility to the advices and admonitions of those "who are over them in the Lord."[y]

But besides all these there are other points

[x] Commination Service. [y] 1 Thes. v. 12.

upon which to obey the rule of our text, and to "make all things according to the pattern showed" is the bounden duty of every individual, be his station what it may. I mean that every individual is bound to regulate and order his private conduct, whether as a member of the church, or as a member of the state, or a member of society, according to those principles, rules, and patterns which in the gospels, and in the writings of the apostles, are so amply laid down for every state and condition.

For if it is our boast, and cause of sincere thankfulness to God, that we are members of a church whose forms of worship and government, and whose doctrines are more pure and primitive, and more exactly "according to the pattern showed," than those of any other branch of the church of Christ, it becomes us, that it be the object of our prayers to God, and that we esteem it our truest honour to have our lives and practice also conformed to the same pattern of primitive purity.

Out of regard to the welfare of the christian church in general, and of our own church in particular, we are bound to do this, lest the one or the other be blasphemed, or lightly esteemed, through the unholy and careless lives of its professed members; out of charity to others we are bound to it, in order that all who are in error, when they see how much primitive purity of worship and order tends to promote the like purity of conduct, may be led to return to the bosom of the church; out of charity to ourselves, we are bound to it, for by how much more pure our church be, as we profess, than any other, by so much more severe, necessarily, must our condemnation as members of so pure a church be, if our lives be not answerable and according to it.

To this purpose the principles of conduct laid down, and the directions to be found in scripture, are so ample and extensive, that no person, in any station whatever, can be in want of rules, if he is willing to seek there for them. The

"pattern" of our duties has been sufficiently plainly "showed" if we are disposed in singleness of heart to guide ourselves "according" to it. For as members of society in general, primitive contentment, as practised by the apostles, will teach us "in whatever state"[z] we "may be, therewith to be content;" and instead of leading men to be covetously inclined, and to be always thinking how to get on in the world, and to make the greatest gains, it bids the poor "be content with such things as they have;"[a] because "they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition."[b] It teaches the great and rich to consider themselves not as owners of their riches, but merely stewards, answerable to God for their use or abuse of the wealth which, for righteous purposes, He has entrusted to them. Instead of encouraging jealousies and

[z] Phil. iv. 11. [a] Heb. xiii. 5. [b] 1 Tim. vi. 9.

envyings, primitive charity will teach us to be "kindly affectioned" to all men, "forbearing one another in love."[c] Instead of vaunting ourselves with arrogance, primitive humility tells us "with lowliness of mind each to esteem other better than himself."[d] Are any servants? the practice of primitive christianity will teach them, "not with eye service, as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ,"[e] in His sight, for His sake, and accountable to Him, to discharge their duties to their masters. Are any masters? they are taught by the same practice, out of fear of God, and knowing that they have a master in heaven,"[f] to act kindly, justly, and charitably, to those who are placed below them.

As members of the state, the governors are taught by these principles, not to make their own wishes and pleasures, but the honour of God, whose ministers they are, the chief aim of their government. While, as subjects, we

[c] Ephes. iv. 2.
[d] Phil. ii. 3.
[e] Ephes. vi. 6.
[f] Col. vi. 1.

shall learn by primitive practice, not for fear of punishment, but for conscience sake towards God, out of love to Him, and for His sake, to honour and obey the king, the minister whom He has appointed to govern us.[g]

As members of the church, if we would "be followers of that which is good,"[h] we shall "obey them that have the rule over us,"[i] and "submit ourselves" to their advice and instruction, because they are they who "watch for our souls as they that must give account;" remembering that, if we despise them or their advice, we are neglecting the very means of salvation, "despising not man but God,"[k] who "hath committed the word of reconciliation"[l] to them. Are we pastors and ministers of the church, and have we the charge of men's souls committed to us? a charge, beyond comparison, the most weighty and awful of all. To this, perhaps more particularly than to any other station, are

[g] Rom. xiii. 5. [h] 1 Pet. iii. 13. [i] Heb. xiii. 17.
[k] 1 Thess. iv. 8. [l] 2 Cor. v. 19.

the patterns to be applied—in this, more than in any other, may we profit by the examples of primitive and apostolical ages. These will show us how constantly, and unceasingly, the minister of God must keep the sacredness of his office in view, lest at any time he cause disgrace to the name or worship of his master; how fervently he must pray to, and trust in, his Master for guidance and assistance in "these things," for which no man living is of himself "sufficient." They will teach us how anxiously, as teachers of holiness, we must strive also to be "patterns of good works," and as teachers of faith, to be examples of patience and faith in the never-ceasing mercy of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, under all circumstances, whether of the highest prosperity, the greatest difficulty, or the severest affliction. They will teach us that, as our office is to win souls to Christ, we must with meekness and gentleness use that "authority" which, "for edification, and not for destruction,"[m] has

[m] 2 Cor. x. 8.

been committed to us: but still as possessing, and being accountable for it, the gentleness must be accompanied with firmness, and the meekness with courage, and the absence of all human fear; that towards our own flocks we must act as true shepherds, ever being willing to sacrifice our thoughts, our care, our time, our money, and if need be, gladly even our very lives for their sakes; that "the gainsayers," and "them that are without," and them that are in error, that have wandered from us, and "oppose themselves," we must endeavour, through God's help, to "convince," and overcome, and bring back, not by violent invective, or bitter declamation, or hostile feelings, but, as our Saviour and his apostles have taught us, firmly and unswervingly, with meekness, humility, kindness, and christian charity, "counting them not as enemies, but admonishing them as brothers," and "in meekness instructing them that oppose themselves,"[n] "endeavouring

[n] 2 Tim. ii. 25.

to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."*

Thus, for all stations and conditions, "the pattern which has been showed" affords the purest and safest rule of life and conduct, and it is *only* by strictly adhering in *practice*, as our church has done in *form* and *doctrine*, to this pattern, which no adversary will be able to gainsay, that (if ever) the unity and purity of the primitive ages can, through God's grace, be re-established throughout the christian world; and though it be accounted but a dream—yet sure a happy and delightful one—to hope that these ever will be restored on earth, yet, since "with God all things are possible," it surely is an object, if not of strict duty, yet at any rate one worthy our highest ambition, as far as in us lies to labour to promote and advance a state of things so highly to the honour and glory of Almighty God; worthy that all in their several stations should strive, "with one accord

* Ephes. iv. 3.

and one mind," to bring things to such a pass, that when our blessed Lord, the founder of our religion, shall at the last revisit the earth, or when from his throne of glory He looks down upon His servants, He may find His church, though increased in point of size, from the grain of mustard seed, to the wide-spreading and all-shadowing tree, yet in unity and purity of doctrine, form and practice, the same as when he left it, promising to be with it even to the end of the world.[p]

To Him our everlasting Saviour, and to God our Father, and to the Holy Ghost our Comforter, the One great and Holy Lord God Almighty, let us offer our humble tributes of gratitude and adoration for ever and ever. Amen.

[p] Matt. xxviii. 20.

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