

THE
WORKS
OF
WILLIAM JAY.

Volume VII

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OF
WILLIAM JAY,
COLLECTED AND REVISED BY HIMSELF.
VOLUME VII.
CONTAINING
SERMONS
PREACHED ON VARIOUS AND PARTICULAR OCCASIONS.
LONDON:
C. A. BARTLETT, 66, PATERNOSTER ROW. 1843.

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VI

vi

PREFACE.

THIS volume consists principally of Sermons preached at different times and on various occasions, and printed singly. They were all published by request; but the monthly reviewers, some years ago, said they could never learn who this publisher was, or where he lived: and it has been often shrewdly suspected that in these cases no great importunity was used on the side of the Petitioners, or needed on the side of the Author.

Hackneyed, however, and almost futile as such a reason for publication has now become, it is true that all these Discourses were requested to be published; nor would one of them have passed from the Pulpit to the Press but for the expressed desire of those whose number or quality rendered their application respectable and influential.

The number of those who read single[^] Sermons is frequently no more extensive than the circle of those who hear them: and, as the circumstances that call for their publication are commonly local and individual and temporary, such Discourses are nearly ephemeral; and should they be fortunate enough to survive the preacher's voice, a few weeks generally consigns them to neglect and forgetfulness among the lumber of the closet or the library.

There is an excitement produced by the delivery of a discourse, especially if the preacher's manner be favourable, which it is difficult to feel again in the

viii

perusal, even under the advantage of recent hearing and freshness of remembrance. What then can justify an author in collecting together a variety of Discourses, the produce of years gone by, and presenting them again before the public?

But to numbers of the public *now*, many of these Sermons will be entirely new, and so far will be upon a level with fresh discourses continually forthcoming. The subjects of some of them, too, are of general and perpetual importance. Some are yet left who will feel interested in the Sermons which attempt an improvement of bereaving providences, as they will be reminded by them of those mournful seasons when they heard them, and sighed, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and my acquaintance into darkness."

To which may be added, that several of the Author's brethren have written and specified some of the Discourses, which they hope will not be omitted in the collection; and basing their desire on their belief of their adaptation to particular usefulness.—Such are the Discourses which bear on the Ministry.

The Sermons are not arranged according to their dates, or any other rule of order, though some regard has been had to variety.

Bath, 1843.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
The Mutual Duties of Husbands and Wives: a Sermon, occasioned by the Marriage of R— S—, Esq., of M—	1
The Value of Life: a Sermon, delivered before the Correspondent Board in London of the Society in Scotland (incorporated by Royal Charter) for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands	35
The Scriptures: it Sermon, designed to bear on the Claims of the British and Foreign Bible Society	63
The Riches of His Goodness: it Sermon, preached in the Rev. Rowland Hill's Chapel, and printed by the Rajah Rammohun Roy	99
Friendship in Death: a Discourse, Sacred to the Memory of Samuel Hallett, Esq.	125
An Attempt to Regulate the Claims of the Christian Ministry: a Sermon, preached at the Separation of the Rev. James Stratton, to the Pastoral Office over the Church and Congregation meeting in Paddington Chapel	161
The Minister's Request: a Discourse, delivered at St. Thomas Square, Hackney, on the Settlement of the Rev. Henry Forster Burder, A.M., as Assistant Preacher to the Rev. Samuel Palmer	197
The Hand of God in Afflictions: a Sermon, occasioned by the Death of Miss Ann Whitchurch	223
Anxiety Directed: a Sermon, preached before "The Home Missionary Society"	253

	PAGE
Prayer for the Success of the Gospel: a Sermon, preached before the London Missionary Society.	289
The Saviour Glorified in his People: a Sermon, preached before the Bedford Union	317
The Jubilee: a Sermon in reference to the Completion of the Fiftieth Year of the Reign of his Majesty George III.	313
The Importance of an Evangelical Ministry: a Sermon delivered at the Settlement of the Rev. Arthur Tidman, as Pastor of the Congregation of Protestant Dissenters meeting in Endless Street Chapel, Salisbury	367
Sensibility at the Fall of Eminence: a Sermon preached in Surrey Chapel, at the Funeral of the Rev. Rowland Hill, A.M.	397

THE
MUTUAL DUTIES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES:

A SERMON,
OCCASIONED BY THE
MARRIAGE OF R— S—, ESQ.,
OF M—.
PREACHED
IN ARGYLE CHAPEL, BATH,
AUGUST 16, 1801.

“I will he have myself wisely in a perfect way; O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no evil thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside, it shall not cleave to me.”—PSALM ci. 2, 3.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT may be asked—Why is this Sermon published? The Author has never been afraid to preach on practical subjects. He despises the charge of legality, and exceedingly dislikes the exclusive application of the term evangelical to doctrinal preaching.

He has also been accustomed to seize events, and circumstances, as they arise, to enliven attention, and diversify public instruction.—His much-esteemed friend, whose name he has been compelled to suppress in the title-page, having engaged to worship in his congregation, on the Sabbath previous to his espousals with an amiable young Female, who had resided some months in the Author's family—he resolved to select a portion of Scripture suitable to the occasion. The occasion was particular, but the subject was general; he therefore enlarged, and delivered the following Discourse.

The same day he received a pressing solicitation from his friend to publish; soon after arrived a request, signed by a number of his people, in the name of the rest. The Author respects their judgment, and owes much to their kindness and esteem. The peculiar delicacy and elegance with which these applications are drawn up would induce him to expose them at length, did not their flattering relation to himself forbid.

It is hoped the Sermon will appear impartial. It was delivered without fear, and without flattery. Long as the discourse will be found, it was all spoken; the Preacher desiring the audience to exercise a little more patience than usual. He chose to address both at the same time, rather than reserve the duties of either husband or wife to another opportunity. As the Author always preaches without notes, and had written only a general sketch of the subject, some few words and phrases may differ from those delivered in the pulpit; but the sense is completely, and the language nearly the same.

Bath, August 24, 1801.

**THE
MUTUAL DUTIES OF HUSBANDS AND WIVES.**

“Likewise, ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands, that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives.

“While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

“Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel:

“But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

“For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also who trusted in God adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

“Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”—1 Pet. iii. 1-7.

THE Governor of the universe is perpetually varying, and determining our duties by the dispensation of his providence, the conditions in which he fixes us, and the connexions he leads us to form. Thus the whole Scripture is examined in succession, and every truth of the Gospel obtains an application appropriate and impressive.

4

Marriage is an institution of peculiar importance: it is of divine ordination, and almost coeval with the existence of the human race;—it is the origin of families, the source of the continuance and welfare of nations;—it distinguishes man from the brute creation, excludes the disorders of licentiousness, and cherishes the sweetest affections of the heart. There is no union, the quality of which is so intimate, the obligation of which is so binding, the consequences of which are so momentous. It even surpasses natural relation; “and for this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh; what therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder.”

Hence the opinion of those who would either banish or degrade marriage has always been held by the wise and the virtuous as a sentiment the most vile and injurious, equally destructive of morals, and social happiness. Hence, many of the philosophers and legislators, even in the heathen world, were peculiarly solicitous to establish, to sanction, to encourage, and to regulate this institution. But in this, as well as in every other instance favourable to the welfare of mankind, the “Gospel of our salvation” has the pre-eminence. It classes the prohibition of the ordinance with “the doctrine of devils,”—assures us “marriage is honourable in all”—leads us back to its commencement in paradise—renders the bond indissoluble—places it under the jurisdiction of heaven—takes from it an image to prefigure the union of Christ and his people—and often makes it the subject of particular instruction. It has given us advice, it has given us law—and where is this law

5

so beautifully and largely expressed as in the passage I hold up to view this morning?

PART I.—In the delineation of the duties resulting from marriage, our divine Instructor begins with WIVES—and to animate their attention to the rules he prescribes, he reminds them of the probability of their usefulness to their husbands in a case of all others the most interesting: “If any obey not the word, they MAY, without the word, be won.”

Religion is not always universal, even in small detached portions of society. In the same house there may be an heir of glory and a son of perdition, natural alliance and spiritual disunion, persons living together in this world between whom, in eternity, there will be “a great gulph fixed.”

The instance of infidelity and ungodliness is taken from the man; and the Apostle marks the piety of the wife rather than of the husband. Is this mentioned without design? Do not history, experience, and observation, favour the probability? Have not women in all denominations, in all ages, in all countries, in all ranks, -been more disposed to religion than men? From how many vices are females restrained by considerations which bear much less forcibly on the minds of men? Who depends so much on opinion and esteem, or feels so many motives to preserve reputation unblemished? Denied so often the liberty of divulging their emotions. Who so ready to seize the privilege of prayer, and to “pour out the heart before God?” Who so susceptible of lively impressions? Who feels so powerfully the thrilling of sympathy, or melts down so easily

into all the tendernesses of benevolence? While we think, they feel—while we deliberate, they relieve. What woman was ever destitute of commiseration? It was not a woman that unfeelingly “looked on,” or “passed by on the other side,” when the poor traveller lay wounded, bleeding, half-dead. Who so accustomed to self-denial, the first, the last lesson, in the school of Christ? Who feels such vicissitudes of health, or passes through scenes of pain and hazard so adapted to excite an entire dependence upon God, and to awaken solemn thought by bringing another world nearer the view? Less occupied in the distracting concerns of business, she has more time for solitude and reflection. Her general sphere of action is much more propitious to innocency and devotion; her joys are more immediately derived from her virtues; home is the chief place of her amusements; the tenderest cares of nature charm as well as employ her. The mother is happy to press to her lips and to her bosom the babe she has borne—to feel the stroking hand of her suckling at her breast—to sit by the cradle of her infant daughter—to view from the window the manly exploits of her boy—or

—“Delightful task, to rear the tender thought.

To teach the young idea how to shoot,

To pour the fresh instruction o’er the mind,

To breathe th’ enlivening spirit, and to fix

The generous purpose in the glowing breast.”—

Hence, how often do we see the sister travelling a road in which her brother refuses to accompany her; and the wife, living under the power of the Gospel, while the husband neglects to hear, or hears with

7

indifference. It were indeed to be wished that real Christians would never contract affinity with the irreligious: they are required to “marry in the Lord.” The necessity of this law is more than justified by the discords and miseries in which those involve themselves who refuse to be governed by it. Therefore no countenance is here given to the practice of being “unequally yoked together with unbelievers.” But a change may be effected subsequent to marriage; the wife may become religious while the husband remains a stranger, or a foe. Now, that which should prevent marriage is not to dissolve it. The relation continues; and the wife, so far from being absolved from her obligation, is furnished with an additional motive to discharge it. “For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband?” Let it excite all thy concern. The salvation of a soul! the salvation of a husband! of one endeared by so many ties!—O lose not each other in the “valley of the shadow of death.” Let your friendship survive the desolations of time, and be renewed to infinite advantage beyond the grave. Think, O wife, of the happiness—the honour that awaits you. What is the triumph you have acquired over him by your charms compared with the victory you will obtain over him by your religion? What pleasure will attend the remainder of your days—now you are “of one heart and of one mind now you “take sweet counsel together?” The privileged language of prayer now is our Father—of every motion made “to go and seek the Lord of Hosts,” there is a ready acceptance—“I will go also.” And what will “be your joy and crown of rejoicing” in that day when, before assembled men and angels, he will say, “O

8

blessed be the Providence which attached us in yonder world, and has still more perfectly united us in this!" "The woman thou gavest to be with me " led me not to "the tree of knowledge of good and evil," but to the "tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

To encourage those who feel the painful affliction of ungodly relations, I would observe that, ultimately, we seldom see one individual only in a household called by grace. She may have the honour of being the first fruits; but more commonly follow. She may be long exercised before any favourable indications appear—but how often at last are all her prayers heard, and her endeavours crowned with success. Prejudices the most inveterate gradually give way; each is successively disposed to hear, till we see them all "going to the house of God in company." It is not possible for persons to be much together, even in the exercises of common friendship, without impression and effect: we soon imbibe each other's dispositions, and assimilate: "he that walketh with wise men shall be wise, and a companion of fools shall be destroyed." But of all the causes which form our manners none operate so powerfully as female intercourse. If confined entirely to their company we become effeminate—if constantly excluded from it we contract a roughness of temper and a negligence of person; our behaviour assumes a ruder form, our voice a harsher tone; our sensations are less delicate, our passions more brutal. Who has so many avenues to the heart as a woman?—What influence affects like hers? By means of a connexion the most attractive, an intercourse the most familiar—the persuasion of words, the eloquence

9

of tears, an example the most lovely, and always placed in view—a wife has a thousand opportunities of removing prepossessions, of fixing impressions, of engaging attention, of insinuating goodness. The Gospel was spread over a large proportion of Europe, and established in several countries where it prevails to this day, chiefly by women, who, not satisfied with gaining thrones by their charms, rendered their attractions subservient to their religion, and drew over monarchs to the Christian faith. These are public, splendid achievements, immortalized in history. How many private instances of this sanctified influence are there unknown to the world, but recorded “in the book of God’s remembrance.” And if, my sisters, your example succeeds in the conversion of a husband from irreligion, shall it not be effectual to reclaim him from inferior mistakes and improprieties? Shall it not advance godliness where it is already found? Warm it where it is chilled? Polish it where it is rough? And—Finish it where it is out-line?

And how is all this to be accomplished? Not by eccentric efforts—not by starting out of your sphere, but by exemplifying religion as you move orderly in it—not by preaching, but by living—addressing the eye rather than the ear—employing the eloquence which flows from subjection, conversation, chastity, and fear—the manner in which you adorn yourselves—the models you design to imitate.

1. Nothing will increase your influence and secure your usefulness more than “being in SUBJECTION to your own husbands.” This must, doubtless, be limited and qualified. If the demands of a husband oppose the will of God, you are pre-engaged by a law of

10

universal operation, and “ought to obey God rather than man.” In other cases, perhaps, it will not be so easy to furnish exceptions. “Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.”

There is a general rule, the spirit of which would easily settle every relative claim: “submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” But it cannot be denied, that a peculiar subjection is in the Scriptures required of the wife—not indeed the submission of slaves to their masters, or of subjects to their sovereign, or even of children to a father. It has more of equality in it—accords with the idea of a helper, companion, friend—springs originally from choice—and is acquiesced in for the sake of propriety and advantage. For none of the determinations of God are capricious: all are founded in reason, and all are designed to promote both individual and social welfare. In this regulation has God acted partially? Has he sacrificed the happiness of the woman to the dignity of the man? Has he not equally regarded the interest of the wife, the children, and the connexions? In all communities, whether more or less extensive, there can be no happiness without peace, no peace without order, no order without subordination, no subordination without subjection. Perpetual strife would originate from equality, or contested superiority. Numberless contentions would arise from diversity of views, from difference of temper, and perverse adherence to opposite plans, destroying the harmony and tranquillity of families. The only method by which these disorders can be either precluded or removed is by establishing pre-eminence and authority, and enjoining submission and acquies-

II

cence. This being indispensably necessary, the only question is. Where shall the power of decision be lodged?

From many considerations, expressive of the Divine will, the Scripture assigns this prerogative to the man. Witness the priority of his creation: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." Witness the manner in which he derived his being: "The man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man." Witness his destiny: "For the man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man." "And the Lord said, it is not good for man to be alone, I will make him a help meet for him." Witness his relation: "The man is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man." Witness the entrance of sin: "Adam was not deceived, but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression." Witness the malediction denounced upon the woman: "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." There was nothing originally like a curse in this demand. In Paradise nothing oppressive or unreasonable would have appeared in the requisition; and nothing mortifying would have attended the performance. But the fall has shed the poison—sin has rendered it irksome. The woman is disinclined to obey, while the man is often absurd in his designs, capricious in his temper, tyrannical in his claims, and degrading in his authority. But, my sisters, while you have reason, much reason to complain, remember, it is the consequence of sin, the sin of your own sex. Turn the curse into a blessing—derive real honour from seeming disgrace. You cannot dispense with this subjection without opposing the express will of God, and violating the laws of

12

marriage to which you have acceded by a voluntary engagement, and promised obedience in a manner the most solemn.

2. Much depends upon your “CONVERSATION.” By this you are to understand all your behaviour, the whole course of your lives. Little is to be done by a single action, or an individual solitary excellence, while other things in the character, so far from aiding its impressions, counteract its tendency or mar its effects. There is a connexion between duties and virtues: they enliven and enforce; they sustain and recommend each other. The strength of this moral chain to draw, depends upon the concatenation of the links; and the force of this spiritual beauty to strike and captivate results from the union, harmony, and proportion of all the lineaments. One handsome feature, all surrounded with ugliness, would excite disgust, or render the deformity the more observable.

3. Your conversation is to be always distinguished by “CHASTITY and FEAR,” and these are to be “COUPLED.” How natural, how necessary the alliance!

The Apostle deems it needless to descend to the grossness of vice, or actual infraction of the marriage covenant. He would intimate that where there are no such infamous degradations in your sex, there may be an audacity of countenance, a boldness of look, a levity of discourse, a freedom of manners, a forwardness of behaviour, a challenging, obtrusive, advancing air—very unbecoming the sacred decorum which should appear in all the female character. He therefore requires FEAR.” It intends the reverse of everything seen in too many of our modern females—diffidence, bashfulness; the blushing of reserve; the tremulous retiring of modesty; the sensation

13

which, arises from the union of innocency and danger; the carefulness which leads you to "avoid the appearance of evil;" the apprehension, that to be suspected is almost as bad as to be guilty; the prudence which keeps you far, very far from the extremities of permission; the vigilance which discerns and announces danger while yet a great way off; the caution that never suffers the outguards to be called in, or the enemy to approach even near enough to reconnoitre. This, my fair hearers, will diffuse a glory over you, which never fails to charm, and upon all the glory will be a defence.

4. Much depends on the manner in which you adorn yourselves: whether you appear the votaries of vanity; or prize your souls; improve your minds; and govern your tempers. "Whose ADORNING, let it not be that outward adorning, of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel: but let it be the hidden man of the heart in that which is not corruptible; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

The sex which rendered clothing necessary has always been too much disposed to glory in the memorial of our shame. Women have not the same mediums of address with men. They must succeed by means more silent and disguised. Discovery would often frustrate intention. They know their force lies in their beauty, and seize dress as an auxiliary: they increase natural attractions by artificial assistance. "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire."

Peter knows what is too characteristic in the sex. What he despairs to alter he labours to improve.

14

Women MUST be fine; WILL be fine—he indulges them; only turning their attention from external decoration to internal accomplishment. Not that he forbids a proper attention to the body: nothing can be so despicable and disgusting as a slattern; though it has been remarked, that a propensity to it is often found connected with a love of finery. The body is the work of God—the structure is “fearfully and wonderfully made;” it is a part of our nature—but it is the inferior part; and this should regulate the degree of attention. A woman of good sense will always possess a better standard of dress in her own taste than is to be derived from any precise rules.

She will avoid whatever would appear light and wanton. The apparel of “a woman professing godliness” should not be the attire of a woman of the world, much less “the attire of a harlot.” Females sometimes wear a label on which indecency and indelicacy are written, and then appear to be offended because observers can read. I would not always infer too much of the disposition from these outward hints—but in the name of a blush, on what principle can we explain the invention or adoption of certain modes? I describe nothing.

She will beware of exceeding her rank and her circumstances, or even of reducing her means of beneficence. Shall I here avail myself of the season? How many miserable objects are there around you! What an insult on the wretchedness of the times is the dress of many extravagant females! My fair hearers, escape this censure. Remember Dorcas; enter yonder “upper chamber”—see the “widows standing and weeping, and showing the coats and garments which she made while she was with them.”

15

What will afford you most pleasure when you come to die—the recollection of the property you employed in clothing the naked, or of that which you expended on costly folly? What satisfaction, resulting from the applause of finery, can equal the joy of benevolence a female feels, while moving among the tears, prayers, and benedictions of gratitude?—“When the ear heard me, then it blessed me—and when the eye saw me, it gave witness unto me.”

She will keep it from engrossing too much of the mind; she will not suffer it to be either her business or delight—she will not render herself responsible at the bar of God for the awful waste of hours, weeks, months—shall I add, years! detached from a life as short as it is important, and the whole of which ought to be redeemed!

The apostle speaks comparatively. He would teach women that they have souls—that they are made capable of greater beauty than the body yields—that they ought to adorn the mind—that their endeavours to decorate their persons should be infinitely surpassed by their attention to intellectual accomplishments—that they should be ambitious of moral endowments, and, above all things, pay an attention to the “HEART”—For what are talents unsanctified?—“Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.”—What are notions the most sublime, and sentiments the most admired, if the disposition be not under the bias of religion? How defective will the whole figure appear, without “the ornament of a MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT?”—What so unsightly, so odious, as a discontented, fretful, foaming, boisterous, scolding woman? “A continual dropping in a very rainy day and a contentious woman are alike.” “It

16

is better to dwell in the corner of a house-top than with a brawling woman in a wide house." "It is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and an angry woman. Whoso hideth her, hideth the wind and the ointment of his right hand, that bewrayeth itself." The Graces were female: so were the Furies too. Much depends on the cultivation of the mind; more on the regulation of the temper. The necessity of this qualification, in family connexion, is inconceivable. In managing the concerns of a household, how many things will perpetually arise to disappoint, to ruffle, to unHINGE, to vex, and to provoke!—These require the command of temper. And there are wives, and there are wives in this assembly, who in "patience possess their souls"—who can feel, but retain their composure—who can calmly remonstrate, but know not to insist—who can yield and accommodate—who are "not easily provoked"—but "easily intreated:" who are disposed rather to endure than complain—and to suffer in secret, rather than disturb others with their grief.

Suffer me then, my fair hearers, to recommend this exchange, this preference of decoration. Like "the king's daughter, be all glorious within." Let the Bible be the mirror at which you dress; and while others are weightily engaged in catching a fashion, or adjusting a curl, let the object of your cultivation be the understanding, the memory, the will, the affections, the conscience. Let no part of this internal creation be unadorned: let it sparkle with the diamonds of wisdom, of prudence, of humility, of gentleness. These ornaments alone will confer dignity, and prepare for usefulness. If destitute of these, can you imagine it possible to obtain

17

real, durable regard? Need you be told, that these skin-deep perfections, these exterior senseless appendages, imply no excellency in the wearer, and are only admired by the weak, or the worthless? Are you ignorant that men often despise a soul lodged in a form they adore, and admire nonsense, because it is poured from handsome lips? Are you designed for toys, or rational beings? the playthings of the senses, or improving companions? Would you in company keep your husbands on thorns, while they wish you to be seen, and hope you will not be heard; knowing how much more likely you are to strike by the quality and pattern of your robes, than by the insipidity and inanity of your discourse?—Adorn yourselves in the newest mode, in the richest attire, plait your hair, deck yourselves with pearls—will these render you valuable?—Will these qualify you to manage the concerns of a family, “to give a portion to your maidens,” to train up your child in wisdom and virtue, to be a help meet for your husband!—What! are you endued with reason and immortality, only to be enamoured with a piece of embroidery, or to pay your devotions to the colour of silk?—Are you sublimely resolved never, never to leave the world of fans, and enter the region of intelligence and of mind?

These decorations are “not CORRUPTIBLE.” All other ornaments “perish in the using.” All other attire gives place to the shroud. “Beauty consumes away like a moth”—the sparkling eye “is closed in darkness”—the body is “laid in the grave—death shall feed upon it.” The charmer, looking in vain for admirers, says to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm. Thou art my mother and my sister.”—

18

Prolong life. Accidents may disfigure, and diseases corrode.—How quickly time changes the countenance!—How transient the empire of colours and of tints!—How soon wrinkles and gaudy attire disagree!—Having laid in no stock of mental influence, and sober entertainment against the evil day, what becomes of these delightful creatures?—A few years reduces them to insignificance, leaving them only the humiliating claims of pity, or the uncertain returns of gratitude. But an accomplished pious woman can never be the object of neglect; she will attract notice, and confer happiness, even when descending into the vale of years. The ravages of time cannot reach the soul: death cannot strip off the habits of immortality: it will only change her “from glory to glory;” only move her from earth, unworthy of her continuance, and place her among “the innumerable company of angels.”

In adorning ourselves, the opinion of others is very influential; especially if the admirers discover taste, possess sway, or can give law to fashion. This decoration “is in the sight of GOD of great price.” “Not” she “who commendeth herself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.” What is “the honour that cometh from man?” How wavering, how vain, how debasing!—But “the honour that cometh from God only,” is purifying, satisfying, enduring. It is impossible to feel a complacency in ourselves, while conscious that we are disesteemed by a Being of infinite wisdom, excellency, and goodness. His “judgment is always according to truth.” “In his favour is life;” on his applause our happiness depends—and in vain we approach him with any of those distinctions which dazzle and deceive

19

mankind; for “the Lord taketh pleasure” only “in them that fear him, in them that hope in his mercy.”

5. Much depends on the models you choose for imitation. The apostle would have you conform, not to the flutterers of fashion, not to the triflers of a day, who live only to please, and derive all their consequence from vanity—but an illustrious company of female worthies, who drew towards them the eye of God, who served their generation according to his will—who obtained a distinguished place in the annals of inspiration—whose names have been long glorified, and will be “had in everlasting remembrance.” “A gracious woman retaineth honour.” “Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised: give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gates.”—“For after this manner in the old time, the holy women who also trusted in God adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands: even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.” The honour of this alliance awaits you—however inferior in talents—however obscure in your stations—however poor in your circumstances—here is a passage, by which you may obtain a place in this glorious assembly, and sit down by the side of a Lydia, a Mary, a Hannah, a Deborah, a Sarah, “in the kingdom of God.” For by what are these pious women distinguished?—By excellencies which fall within the reach of general imitation—by preferring the soul to the body—by meekness and gentleness—by modesty and reserve—by a ready submission to the demands of their stations.—Thus Sarah, though of the same family with her

22

I. You are to “DWELL with them ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE.” This intends nothing less than residence, opposed to absence and roving. It is absurd for those who have no prospect of cohabitation to enter this state, and those who are already in it should not be unnecessarily abroad. Circumstances of various kinds will doubtless render occasional excursions unavoidable; but let a man return as soon as the design of his absence is accomplished, and let him always travel with the words of Solomon in his mind, “As a bird that wandereth from her nest, so is a man that wandereth from his place.” Can a man while from home discharge the duties he owes to his household? Can he discipline his children? Can he maintain the worship of God in his family?—I know it is the duty of the wife to lead the devotion in the absence of the husband; and she should take it up as a cross, if not for the time as a privilege. Tew however are thus disposed, and hence one of the sanctuaries of God, for weeks and months together, is shut up.

I am sorry to say, that there are some husbands who seem fonder of any society than the company of their wives. It appears in the disposal of their leisure hours. How few of these are appropriated, to the wife! The evenings are the most domestic periods of the day. To these the wife is peculiarly entitled—she is now most free from her numerous cares, and most at liberty to enjoy reading and conversation. It is a sad reflection upon a man when he is fond of spending his evenings abroad. It implies something bad, it forebodes something worse.

But though the apostle intends nothing less than residence, he designs much more. Residence is required with a view to the performance of all the

23

duties of the state—and is used to express them. In the discharge of these obligations, the husband is to act “according to knowledge”—to “behave” himself “wisely;” to regulate all his proceedings, by a holy discretion. O ye husbands, shew that you are capable of the relation in which you are placed! If you will be the head, remember the head is not only the seat of government, but of knowledge. If you have the management of the ship, see that a fool is not placed at the helm. Shall the blind offer themselves as guides? To enable you to live as a Christian husband, in how many instances will the exercise of an enlightened prudence be found necessary? By this you are to ascertain the temper, the excellencies, the foibles of your associates. This is to teach you, how to accommodate. This is to show you, when to see as if you saw not, and to hear as if you heard not. This is to tell you how to extinguish the torch of discord; how even to prevent the kindling of strife—when to give up, when to recede from a lawful claim for the sake of a greater good. This is to teach you also when you are not to yield.—Adam, to indulge the solicitation of his wife, disobeyed the commands of heaven. By the same soft, seducing instrumentality, the heart of Solomon was turned aside from God. Their sad examples have been unhappily too often followed. But would she force upon you her antipathies—would she embroil you in all the resentments of caprice, or rivalry—would she allure you towards scenes of dissipation and gaiety—would she urge you to extravagance in appearances, dress, table, furniture—would she chill you with suspicions, and render you less generous—the importunity of woman,

24

“lovely woman” is to be in vain. “He that loveth” even “his WIFE more than me, is not worthy of me.”

2dly. You are to “give HONOUR unto the wife.”—What honour?

The honour of ESTEEM. This is to arise from a consciousness of her worth, and a knowledge of her importance in the community—in the family—and to yourselves, by polishing your character, dividing your cares, soothing your sorrows, affording you a peaceful home, a refuge from the storm, an asylum from the mortifications of an unfriendly world.

The honour of ATTACHMENT. This affection is to be peculiar, undivided, unrivalled. Nothing is to wear it away—nothing to diminish it: no length of time, no discovery of imperfection. Children are parts of yourselves, but your wives ARE yourselves. “No MAN ever yet hated his own flesh:”—but many a MONSTER has done so. I disdain to notice those miscreants, who can have recourse to blows; but those who can indulge in a churlishness of behaviour—a sharpness of language—an unkindness of looks, would do well to consider how far they are complying with the divine command—“Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.”

The honour of ATTENTION.—Nothing is so intolerable to a female as neglect; and upon what principle can a man justify indifference, omissions of observance, and heedless manners towards a WIFE? Has he not chosen her?—Has he not declared his preference?—Are not the vows of God upon him? Is she not the chief relation he possesses on earth?

The honour of CONFIDENCE. You are not to proceed without their knowledge and advice. In many

25

cases their opinion may be preferable to your own. Their judgment may be less clouded by interest; they stand back from the object, you are too near; they are cool and calm, you, by being in the scene, are ruffled, and inflamed. An eminent minister of the gospel has published to the world, "That he had never in any particular business acted contrary to the suggestions of his wife, without having reason afterwards to repent of it." I believe there are many who are restrained from similar acknowledgments only by a want of candour. Some husbands never consult their wives; or even deign to inform them: and their wives have often to learn from others, or from events, things in which perhaps they are most deeply concerned.

The honour of MAINTENANCE. You are to provide for them, and enable them to appear becoming their rank and situation of life.—What can we think of the man who squanders away his substance upon his lewd or his drunken appetites, reduces his wife to a drudge, and suffers her with her babes to struggle with the hardships of penury, unable to procure a sufficiency of food, or raiment?—"If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

The honour of BENEVOLENCE. You are to enable her to do good. Every man should devote a proportion of his property to charitable uses, and he should not by his distribution of the whole draw towards himself all the regards of the relieved and obliged. His wife should command a share of the means and of the honour.—Husbands! give your wives these proofs of regard which reason and reve-

26

lation demand for them, and we shall soon hear less of your reflections and complaints.

Observe, 2dly, the motives by which this duty is enforced. They are three.

The first is taken from the natural condition of the sex. "SHE IS THE WEAKER VESSEL." If this be mentioned as a reason to excite a becoming behaviour towards the wife, there can be nothing in the expression degrading, nothing that tends to diminish the honour we are bound to show them—nothing that is not adapted, when properly considered, to promote it. No invidious comparisons are here justified between the powers of the mind. Whether there would be any disparity, were females placed in the circumstances—indulged with the same advantages—and allowed to feel the same motives with their brethren, it would be needless to endeavour to determine. They have taken good care often to prove, that the difference is not so vast as some male-monopolists are willing to suppose.—The reference is obvious and striking. Nature is always wise. It gives more strength where it is necessary—and less, where other qualities supersede it. Milton has finely expressed the difference in the original pair:

"For contemplation he and valour form'd,
For softness she and sweet attractive grace."

Her bodily strength is inferior, her constitution less firm and vigorous, her frame more tender, her temper more yielding, her circumstances more generally depressing. A rose, a lily, allows of no rough usages. Tenderness, demands gentleness: delicacy, care: pliancy, proprs. Has a condition fewer resources, and is there much in it of the afflictive and humbling?

27

The more does it need succour, and the more necessary is every assistance to maintain and increase the consequence of it, especially where so much depends upon the respectability of the character who fills it—Where is the man who is not alive to this consideration?—Where is the husband, who reflecting on her peculiar circumstances, would not be disposed by every possible means to promote the dignity and the satisfaction of a wife?—What is the language of these circumstances?—“Honour us; deal kindly with us. From many of the opportunities, and means by which you procure favourable notice, we are excluded. Doomed to the shades, few of the high places of the earth are open to us. Alternately we are adored, and oppressed. From our slaves, you become our tyrants. You feel our beauty, and avail yourselves of our weakness. You complain of our inferiority, but none of your behaviour bids us rise. Sensibility has given us a thousand feelings, which nature has kindly denied you. Always under restraints, we have little liberty of choice. Providence seems to have been more attentive to enable us to confer happiness, than to enjoy it. Every condition has for us fresh mortifications; every relation new sorrows. We enter social bonds; it is a system of perpetual sacrifice. We cannot give life to others, without hazarding our own. We have sufferings which you do not share, cannot share. If spared, years, and decays invade our charms, and much of the ardour produced by attraction departs with it. We may die. The grave covers us, and we are soon forgotten: soon are the days of your mourning ended, soon is our loss repaired: dismissed even from your speech, our name is to be heard no more—a successor may dis-

28

like it—Our children, after having a mother by nature, may fall under the controul of a mother by affinity, and be mortified by distinctions made between them and her *own* offspring. Though the duties which we have discharged invariably, be the most important and necessary, they do not shine: they are too common to strike: they procure no celebrity: the wife, the mother fills no historic page. Our privations, our confinements, our wearisome days, our interrupted, our sleepless nights, the hours we have hung in anxious watchings over your sick and dying offspring”—

Behold a second motive. It is derived from the dignity of the wife as a mutual partaker of the privileges of the gospel.—No inequality reigns here. It is a “common salvation.” Are you, O man, an “HEIR of the GRACE of LIFE?” So are they—heirs TOGETHER WITH YOU—in the same degree—having the same claims—the same hopes—the same rever-sions. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”—Can a woman be an infidel?—What self-degradation! Need she be told HER obligations to Christianity? What has raised her so high in the scale of importance? What system has done such justice to her claims? In what country have the provisions of legislation lost sight of the distinction of male and female; looked at both with the same aspect, rendered the one as personally responsible as the other, and entitled them equally to the same rights and privileges?—When a woman steps on this sacred ground, she becomes free—she is her own; she is a party, she treats for herself. Here, my sisters, your reproach is rolled away. We

29

see one of your sex bringing forth "IMMANUEL, God with us." We see the angels of heaven bringing you messages, and performing for you miracles. We see you last at the cross, and first at the tomb of our common Lord. We see Jehovah listening to your supplications, and maintaining your cause. We see you "the DAUGHTERS of the LORD ALMIGHTY." We see you redeemed with an infinite price—destined to possess a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," and hastening to partake of a resurrection in which they "neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven."

A third reason is drawn from those devotional exercises which cannot be properly performed where relative duty is not observed—"That your PRAYERS be not hindered." It is impossible for a Christian to live without prayer. He prays alone, and he prays with others. The field, the temple, the closet, the family, are all with him places "where prayer is wont to be made."

How necessary is prayer in the marriage state! How does social devotion sweeten social life! It obtains strength for its duties, and succour for its trials. It gives a direction to the mind, by which we escape numberless snares; an elevation, by which we rise above a thousand vexations. How it sanctifies our comforts! How it prepares the soul for disappointment or success! How it calls down the blessing of heaven to "attend the labour of our hand! "How it attracts the divine presence, and places Him within our reach "who is nigh unto all them that call upon him; to all that call upon him in truth"—Of a prayerful habitation it may be said, How glorious is this place! "This is none other than the house of

30

God, and this is the gate of heaven!" "The voice of rejoicing and of salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous." O happy mansion! where all the members of the family "dwell together in unity"—living with each other here, as those who expect to be associates for ever; maintaining a friendship the centre of which is religion, the duration of which is eternity, the bonds of which are "faith and love which are in Christ Jesus."

Guard, therefore, against every thing injurious to the service of God in your families. Let nothing hinder its exercise. Let nothing prevent its fervor. Let nothing destroy its freedom. Let nothing frustrate its efficacy. Let nothing limit, or even delay its success. Let your whole conversation be consistent with devotion, or preparatory to it. Avoid whatever renders an introduction into the divine presence less easy, or less delightful. Keep open a passage wide enough to advance together to the throne of grace. Go hand in hand into his presence: "Agree, touching the things you shall ask, and it shall be done for you of our heavenly Father."

In reviewing the subject, I would beseech you, my dear hearers, to remember—That those who make light of moral and relative duties contemn the will of God. "He knows what is in man," and what is necessary to him. Every condition lies open to his view. He sees how things blend, and how they issue; how they oppose, or how they aid each other. Though invisible to us, he sees the worm that lies at the root of our social happiness: we wonder at the effect, he sees the cause, and would remove it. He has condescended to speak: we have his judgment relative to every station, and relation in life. He speaks as

31

a sovereign who has authority to command, and he speaks as a friend who consults your welfare, and “takes pleasure in the prosperity of his servants.”

Again. We have reason to lament, that there is such a general deficiency among professors of religion, with regard to those duties which they owe to each other. Many, to shew their love to the gospel, testify their indifference to the law. Numbers are too orthodox, or too devotional, to be moral. Morality is below their faith, or their raptures. Various things their system has taught them; but one thing it has not taught them, one thing it does not require them to learn—“to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world.” Shall ministers, by their silence, be accessory to this corruption of manners, this awful perversion of religion?—Let them “affirm constantly that they which have believed in God must be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”

Let those who stand already in the marriage relation, be willing to know, and to practise the duties which spring from it.—Enter, my brethren and sisters, the temple of revelation—bow before the divine oracle—say, “Lord, what wilt thou have ME to do?” “Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.” Extract from the Scripture the mind of God concerning yourselves individually. Take home the words I have been explaining. Lead. Compare. Resolve. Reform. Let not husbands take away the duties of the wife, nor wives the duties of the husband; but let both take respectively their own, and say, “O that my feet were directed to keep thy statutes.” “I have chosen the way of truth, thy judgments have

32

I laid before me." "Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way." "I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments."

Let the young think of this, and let it influence their choice. Let those think of it, who are approaching this holy state. By many it is totally overlooked; and they contract marriages on considerations purely accidental, or worldly—as if they wished to marry, not to be happy; to gain each other, not to enjoy. Who forms this alliance as a Christian? Who enters it with those views and motives the gospel supplies? Who consults God in the undertaking? Who has the banns published in heaven to ascertain what impediments are pleaded there? Thus persons are often unsuitably bound together by an engagement, which can only be dissolved by death, that comes to release them from one prison, and conduct them into another.—

But may I not congratulate others?—MY BELOVED FRIENDS, in this important concern you have done nothing without asking counsel of the Lord. By faith and prayer, I am persuaded you have engaged that Saviour who was present at the marriage of Cana in Galilee, to honour your approaching nuptials; and under the influence of his gracious Spirit, your mutual affections shall increase with time, and shine bright to all eternity.—I look forward and see you blessing and blessed. I see you "walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." I see your "children like olive-plants around your table." I see you endeavouring to form them into characters, and to "train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." I see you

33

resigning each other with the feelings and hopes of Christians.—”For this I say, the time is short: It remaineth, therefore, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of the world passeth away,” and you are hastening from the altar to the tomb.

THE VALUE OF LIFE:

A SERMON

DELIVERED MAY 8, 1803,

BEFORE

THE CORRESPONDENT BOARD IN LONDON

OF

THE SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND,

(incorporated by royal charter,)

FOR THE PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE

IN

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS.

Dum vivimus vivamus.

“Live while you live,” the epicure would say,

“And seize the pleasures of the present day.”

“Live while you live,” the sacred preacher cries,

“And give to God each moment as it flies.”

Lord, in my views let both united be;

I live in *pleasure* when I live to *Thee*.

DODDRIDGE.

36

London, May 18, 1803.

AT the Annual General Meeting of the Corresponding Board in London, of the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge in the Highlands and Islands; His Grace the Duke of Atholl in the Chair;

Resolved Unanimously,

That the thanks of this Board be given to the Rev. WILLIAM JAY, for his Sermon preached before them, on the 8th Instant, at Surrey Chapel; and that he be requested to permit the same to be printed for the use of the Society.

THOMAS RUTLEDGE, Secretary *pro tem.*

THE VALUE OF LIFE.

"Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life."—Job ii. 4.

— **A**ND what is Life? "A vapour that appeareth for a little time., and then vanisheth away"—"a flower of the field"—"a flood"—"a sleep"—"a dream"—"a tale"—"nothing"—"surely every man at his best estate is altogether vanity."

What is Life? Toil and care—perplexity and embarrassment—a succession of sighs and tears, of regrets and disgusts—a theatre of tragedies—a hospital of diseases—a wilderness of thorns and briers—"a dry and thirsty land where no water is." Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days and full of trouble." Such is the estimate of Human Life! It is equally distinguished by brevity and calamity. But, my Brethren, the one serves to qualify and relieve the other; and since our days are so evil, it is well they are so few—

—"They'll waft us sooner o'er
This life's tempestuous sea;
Soon shall we reach the peaceful shore
Of blest eternity.

"Wherefore is light given to a man that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul? Who long for death, and it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treasure? who rejoice exceedingly and are glad when they can find the grave? There the wicked cease

38

from troubling, and there the weary are at rest. There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressors; the small and great are there, and the servant is free from his master." What man is he who would immortalize evil, and extend a life, wisely and kindly reduced to a span, to ages—

“—To ages in a world of pain,
 To ages where he goes,
 Gall'd by affliction's heavy chain,
 And hopeless of repose.

Whence has this world its magic pow'r?
 Why deem we death a foe?
 Recoil from weary life's best hour,
 And court a longer woe? ”

Nevertheless life has always been considered the most valuable treasure, the most enviable prize. The love of it is unquestionably the most vigorous principle in our nature. It is interwoven with our very frame. We feel it before we can appreciate the worth of the possession, or estimate the evil of the loss. As we grow up, to this supreme passion every other inclination pays homage. Age does not diminish it: misery does not extinguish it: no sacrifice is too dear to purchase the continuance of it. Esther thinks nothing of the horrors of slavery compared with death: “Let my life be given me at my petition, and my people's at my request; for we are sold, I and my people, to be slain and to perish; but if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue.” No sooner had Samuel said, “To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me,” than Saul “fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore

39

afraid, and there was no strength in him." The king of Syria sends messengers to the king of Israel, with ropes on their necks; and this is their supplication—"Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee let me live." To preserve life, Esau sells his birth-right.—"Skin for skin, yea all that a man hath will he give for his life."

My Brethren, this adherence to life we have undertaken to justify; and we are going to prove, that there is nothing in it unworthy of the philosopher or the Christian, the man of reason or the man of faith.

But in order to this, it will be necessary to give you proper views of life, that we may purify and enoble the principle of your attachment, and lead you in future to love life not from a blind animal impulse, but from rational and religious conviction. Our plan will consist of two parts. In the first we shall endeavour to establish THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN LIFE. In the second, we shall explain THE USE TO WHICH THE BELIEF OF IT SHOULD BE APPLIED.

These reflections are completely in unison with the call of Providence which has assembled us together; and will, we hope, fully prepare your minds for an attention to a case which we shall humbly but earnestly recommend to your well-known liberality.

I. In proof of the IMPORTANCE of human life, let us first appeal to AUTHORITY. Hear Solomon. "To him that is joined to all the living there is hope, for even a living dog is better than a dead lion." What says David? "Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee. O spare me a little that I may recover strength before I go hence and be no more. Return, O Lord,

40

deliver my soul: O save me for thy mercies' sake. For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" How does God threaten Eli? "There shall not be an old man in his house." How does He encourage Baruch? "Behold I will bring evil upon all flesh; but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest." He speaks of it as a peculiar privilege, and proposes it as a motive to obedience: "For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased." Lest we should suppose that no regard is paid to this consideration under the Gospel, the apostle Paul values a duty because of this recommendation: "Honour thy father and thy mother—which is the first commandment with promise—that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth." To which we may add, that the apostle Peter makes no scruple to borrow similar language from the Psalms: "What man is he that desireth life and loveth many days, that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth."

Let us, secondly, contemplate human life as THE WORK OF GOD. Why do you value that picture? It is Raphael's. Why deplore the destruction of that building? The nobleness of the structure, the years consumed in the progress, the hands employed in the execution. Why preserve that instrument? It is

41

singular and curious in the contrivance; it is capable of diversified application and use; it is irreparable when destroyed. "Marvellous are thy works, Lord God almighty!" But in this lower world the chief is thy creature Man. "Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet." And all is under the influence of his power or his skill. See the animal tribes. He checks them, subdues them to his own purposes, converts them to his own advantage. See the material world. This is under his control, and asks the culture of his hand. Where he never treads nature is barren and waste and wild; but when he comes, meadows are well-watered, the little hills rejoice on every side, the valleys also are covered over with corn, the wilderness and the solitary place are made glad for him, and the desert rejoices and blossoms as the rose.

Every thing justifies the supremacy he possesses. His very form is peculiar. What majesty is there in his countenance! What expression in his features! What penetration, what eloquence in his looks! Material bodies are governed by the laws of mechanism, and animal by those of instinct—but he, possessed of greater liberty, takes a more extensive range, and is capable of a thousand varieties of operation. Beasts and birds are no wiser now than they were before the flood. In a few weeks or months they reach all the perfection of which they are susceptible—but we never know what man may be; his possibility of improvement is endless. He steps forth from nothing and develops successively new powers as he proceeds:

42

when he ceases to increase in stature he continues to grow in wisdom, and never seems to approach the manhood of mind. He is wearied; he reclines his head on the lap of insensibility, and sleep seals up all his senses: you touch him, and he springs up, and crosses the boundless ocean—numbers the stars—calculates to a second the position and appearances of the heavenly bodies—looks backward, and sees what was done six thousand years ago—plunges into futurity, and views the sun turned into darkness and the moon into blood—surveys himself, and finds an infinity of observations in his memory, and of ideas in his imagination, and of purposes in his mind—an intellectual kingdom all his own.

And whence is all this? He is fearfully and wonderfully made. There is a Spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding. In his mysterious composition intelligence is blended with clay: he is in alliance with worms, and a partaker of the divine nature. He is capable of knowing and serving and enjoying his Creator; he has reason and conscience; he is susceptible of vice and virtue, of morality and religion. This gives him his peculiarity and pre-eminence; this raises him above the beasts that perish; this is the foundation of the sacred fence which guards our life: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man."

This brings us to a third view of the importance of human life—It has an intimate, unavoidable, inseparable CONNEXION WITH ANOTHER WORLD, AND AFFORDS US THE ONLY OPPORTUNITY OF ACQUIRING GOOD. If we confine all our attention to the present momen-

43

tary state of man, he will appear a perplexing trifle. He is referred to no end equal to his character; no result vindicates the expense of the materials employed; he has powers and capacities far above his situation; he has wants and wishes, which nothing within his reach can relieve and satisfy. If he possess great privileges, the more pitiable is his condition; the more has he to lose; the more lamentable is his fall—he falls like a king, and we feel the more even for the grandeur of which he is despoiled. He is great in vain. He assumes consequence, raises expectation, and rots!—and as we hide his shame among putrefaction and corruption, we look up and say, “Lord, wherefore hast thou made all men in vain?”

But as soon as he is seen in connexion with another state of being, he is rescued at once from perplexity and insignificance. As soon as we seize this point of vision, all is intelligible, his faculties and his desires are explained, nothing is disproportionate, nothing is useless, nothing is mean. As soon as we perceive that the present is only introductory to the future, and draws after it endless consequences, all is momentous; all is tremendously grand! Here you may feel great without danger of pride. Here you are called upon to reverence yourselves. Immortality, what a prerogative! Eternity, what a destiny! A preparation for it, what a calling! What resolution should it inspire! What energy should it infuse! What caution, what vigilance should it produce!

The importance of a thing is not to be judged of by the magnitude of its appearance, or the shortness of its continuance—but by the grandeur and variety and permanency of its effects. Why is a foundation

44

so important? It is low and hidden—but it sustains the whole fabric, and its weakness or strength determines the danger or solidity of the building. Why is spring so important? Its loveliness is transitory and fading—but the glory of summer, the plenty of autumn, the resources of winter depend upon it. Why is youth so important? The season is soon over—but its influences are durable, and give a character to our remaining years. A single day has opened a source of joy or of sorrow, which has continued its streams through life. In one hour a man has incurred a disgrace, which time could never wipe off.

But nothing can equal the importance of the present life as a state of probation, according to which our future and unchangeable happiness or misery will be decided. For, upon this principle, none of your actions can be indifferent. They are filling the books which will be opened to judge you. They are regulating the sentence, by which you are to be absolved or condemned. You are living as saints or sinners for a million of ages hence. And can you be too attentive, too accurate when you are thinking, speaking, enjoying, suffering, living—for eternity? In other cases you look forward and weigh the result of things. You are determined to shun or pursue them, not by their present aspects, but by their future effects; you inquire what influence they will have upon your property, your health, your reputation, your family. But these consequences are always temporal, and sometimes reversible—while here they are everlasting and unalterable.

I beseech you, my dear Hearers, to reflect upon this, and to consider that as is your way, such will be

45

your end. Never forget the language of the apostle, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." Observe this image. It shows you that your present conduct and your future state have the same relation to each other, as seed-time and harvest. In nature, no man sows one kind of grain, and looks for another; he knows that every seed rises with its own body. But, alas! how many are there chargeable with this folly in religion! For what are your pursuits in this world, that you should suppose them likely to be crowned with glory, honour, and immortality in another? What resemblance, what suitableness, what relation is there between them? A Christian hopes to enjoy God hereafter, and he is seeking him here. The song which he wishes to sing in heaven, he is learning upon earth. He is advancing to a state of unmixed friendship—and he is dwelling in love: to a state of union and harmony among good men of every name—and he is rising above these differences, and calling them brethren: to a state where distinctions which are now necessary will be done away—and he is valuing men, not according to their wealth, but their character. Now here we see earnestness, tendencies, beginnings—This is the dawn breaking into day, the child bespeaking the man, the grain containing the principles and pledges of the whole crop.

The importance of an opportunity is to be determined by the greatness of the prize which is to be secured or lost. If there be a season for obtaining the salvation of the soul, it will be as superior to every other opportunity, as the salvation of the soul

46

surpasses every secular claim. Such is life. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." The Gospel is a sovereign remedy; it reveals and offers blessings answerable to all our wants—but they are attainable only in life. Are you guilty? There is forgiveness and reconciliation—But "agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him: lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison: verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing." Are you needy? The Saviour of sinners has enough and to spare—but "seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near."—"Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many I say unto you will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house hath risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you axe."—"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still."

Let us take a fourth view of the importance of human life, by considering it in RELATION TO OUR FELLOW-CREATURES, AND AS AFFORDING US THE ONLY OPPORTUNITY OF DOING GOOD. The means of the temporal and spiritual welfare of mankind are not poured down immediately from heaven: God divides the honour with us. He gives and we convey: he is the source, and we are the medium. It is by

47

human instrumentality that he maintains the cause of the Gospel, speaks comfort to the afflicted, gives bread to the hungry and knowledge to the ignorant. This renders our situation highly interesting.

Some are indeed of more importance in society than others. How much is bound up in the lives of some individuals! Remove that husband, and two tender relations commence; the widow descends from the seat of ease to the toil of labour; the FATHERLESS lose the caresses of the neighbourhood—feel the language of austerity—are dispersed abroad—oppressed by injustice—seduced by error and vice. Remove that minister, and the congregation vanishes, the church is dissolved. When Josiah died, a nation mourned. Individual influence is wonderful. But no one is wholly useless; at least, no one ought to be so. The man condemned in the parable was the possessor of one talent only. There is wisdom in the selection of this circumstance. Had the man with two or with five talents been punished, some of you would have escaped—"Well, I never filled such an office, I never owned such abilities, I never commanded such property." But since the example is taken from common life, who can be safe if found unprofitable? Who can be excused for not doing a little, because he is incapable of doing much? You need not be an extraordinary character in order to be useful. There are opportunities of doing good in every calling of life: there is no condition in which a human being can be placed, which allows him no scope for moral agency: goodness is infinitely diversified in its exercise. We are always in view of some witnesses: some dependents always lean upon us. Some when they die are missed

48

more than others; but who is not missed at all?—“Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into an upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them.” You may contribute materially to the comfort of a fellow-creature; be the means of his thanksgivings to God; gain his prayers while you are living, and his tears when you are dead; and draw down many a blessing upon your memory and your offspring—by a small pittance of weekly aid. You may give a child understanding, improve his condition through life, and lay open to his view the unsearchable riches of the Scripture—by teaching him to read. By impressing a person with religion, you are profitable unto all things, helping him to the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come—And this may be done by seasonable admonition, or by the silent eloquence of a holy example.

But remember that all your usefulness attaches only to life. Here alone you can serve your generation according to the will of God, by promoting the wisdom, the virtue, and the happiness of your fellow-creatures. This is the unspeakable advantage of your present state—this is a privilege which heaven does not afford. Yes, my Brethren, there are various kinds of influence and of honour, which you must now acquire, or you will never possess.

Would you exercise patience? This is your only opportunity. In heaven there are no trials. There you cannot be seen composed under affliction; there you cannot be heard saying, “It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.”

Would you exercise self-denial? This is your

49

only opportunity. In heaven there are no temptations to resist, no corrupt inclinations to mortify, no sensual appetites to control.

Would you exercise Christian courage? This is your only opportunity. Here alone can you be a good soldier of Jesus Christ; profess truth in the face of opposition; and suffer persecution rather than sacrifice conscience.

Would you exercise Christian candour and forbearance? This is your only opportunity. Here alone you can prove whether you can love those who differ from you in opinion; whether you can bear with the mistakes and infirmities of your brethren; whether you can pass by a transgression; whether you can do good to them that hate you.

Would you exercise beneficence—that beneficence which gives you such a resemblance to the Saviour, and which the Judge will so honourably mention in the great day? This is your only opportunity. The poor will not be always with you. Here alone you can relieve the needy, sympathize with the miserable, refresh the bowels of the saints, visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction. Here alone you can become Howards and Thorntons. There are no almoners to employ, no prisons to explore in the world above. Had these illustrious names passed through life like too many even among Christians, they could never have obtained the renown which will now follow them through eternity.

Would you discover zeal in the cause of your Lord and Master? This is your only opportunity. Here alone you can recommend a Saviour, and tell of his love to sinners; here alone you can “teach trans-

50

gressors his ways,” and “save a soul from death.” If therefore you wish to do good, begin—employ this influence; secure this hour—suffer this opportunity to elapse, and regret is vain; your loss is irrecoverable.

II. Such is the importance of human life—if we appeal to the testimony of Scripture—if we consider it as the workmanship of God—if we view it in relation to eternity and—in connexion with our fellow-creatures, as the only season of getting good and doing good. And is this a curious speculation? Nothing is more instructive and edifying. Let us specify some of those useful inferences which flow from the belief of it.

First. If life be so valuable we should DEPLORE THE DESTRUCTION OF IT. When an earthquake swallows up a city; when a vessel sinks and buries eight hundred souls in one watery grave; when a house is destroyed and several individuals are consumed in the flames; when an individual is murdered in our neighbourhood, we are impressed with the relation—but we think less of the ravages of war, and therefore do not grieve as we ought over the unhappy tendencies there are in nations to wage it. But what makes such desolations in the earth as this? We pass by the ruins of buildings, and gardens, and fields—we overlook the sufferings of the brute creation, especially of the generous horse—and think only of men—of the numbers who are dismembered and made useless—of the numbers killed immediately in action—of the numbers which perish of their

51

wounds, and by exposure, disease, privations, hardships. War has sometimes occasioned famine, and a famine has been followed with pestilence. There is no way to affect the mind properly with this subject but by thinking of the value of Human Life. But is it possible to estimate a single life, to consider the difficulty and expense of rearing it, to think how variously it is connected with others, to how many it is either dear or needful; to remember what it is to the individual himself, his only hour—and not enter into the feelings of the prophet, “My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart: my heart maketh a noise in me, I cannot hold my peace because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.” Who does not tremble, who does not weep—who does not pray for the period “when he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.” “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the seas.” For the prevailing influence of Christianity can alone accomplish this desirable purpose—not visionary schemes of philosophy, or new theories and modifications of civil policy, under which the depraved passions of human nature remain the same, and from which come wars and fightings among us.

Secondly. If human life be so precious you should not EXPOSE IT TO INJURY AND HAZARD. I know that there is no cure for mortality—but a physician, of

52

no common reputation, has told us that not one in a thousand dies a natural death; and a higher authority has declared that the wicked shall not live out half their days. In many ways persons may be chargeable with suicide besides swallowing poison, acting the madman in a duel, or playing the fool in a balloon. Life may be taken away slowly as well as suddenly, by negligence as well as by violence. What think you of the man who indulges himself in the excesses of intemperance, which breed and nourish all manner of diseases? What think you of the man who harbours evil passions, and suffers anger to consume him, envy to gnaw him, anxiety to corrode him? What think you of the man who by pursuing too much business oppresses nature, injures his faculties, deprives himself of rest and relaxation and ease? He forgets that "the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment." What think you of those who, to amass money, will deny themselves the conveniences and necessities of life? What think you of those martyrs of vanity, who, to appear in the fashion, will avail themselves of modes of apparel, I will not say incompatible with decency, but hazardous to health? What think you of those who carelessly or presumptuously disregard the beginnings of disorder, and suffer that which might be easily checked at first to become inveterate and fatal? "A little cold," says an original writer, "is a little death; a little more chills us to clay, and fits us for the damps of the grave." What think you of those who lie long and late in bed; relaxing the fibres, unstringing the nerves, evaporating the animal spirits till they start from their own shadow? We would not have you finical and delicate—but a proper regard to health

53

is a duty enforced, by the most awful considerations.

Thirdly. If life be so worthy of our regard we should be THANKFUL FOR THE CONTINUANCE OF IT. And where is the person who is not called to adore the Preserver of men? To how many accidents are we exposed! How many seeds of corruption are lodged in our bodies, which ripened by a change in the air may prove malignant, and bring forth fruit unto death! How delicate is the human frame! We are crushed before the moth. How exquisitely fine, and how easily destroyed is the system of the brain, upon which the exercise of reason depends! How soon may the eye be injured, through which so much of our pleasure passes!

“Our life contains a thousand springs.

And dies if one be gone:

Strange that a harp of thousand strings
Should keep in tune so long!”

And has thine? Have thy limbs, thy senses, thy faculties been secured? Have you seen many who were younger and stronger and more likely to live than yourselves cut off? Have some of you, when led down to the mouth of the grave yourselves, been recalled? Say, Lord! for what purpose am I spared? Shall it be to fill up the measure of my iniquities; or by patient continuance in well-doing to seek for glory, honour, and immortality? “The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.”

Fourthly. If life be of so much consequence, Christians, however well assured of heaven, SHOULD

54

NOT BE IMPATIENT FOR DEATH. Elijah and Jonah prayed to have their lives taken from them; supposing it was better for them to die than to live—but they were both blamed for it. “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself: for whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord’s.” “All the days of” our “appointed time we must wait till” our “change comes.” We are enlisted into the service of divine Providence, and if we attempt to withdraw before we are honourably discharged we are no better than deserters. The best frame you can be in is to be ready to go, but willing to stay if the Lord has any work for you to do, any trials for you to bear. And instead of complaining, you should acquiesce in the will of God, who knows what is best for you, and be even thankful that by prolonging your continuance here he gives additional opportunities to exercise your grace, to extend your usefulness, and to add fresh jewels to your crown.

Fifthly. If life be so momentous, WE MAY CONGRATULATE THE PIOUS YOUTH. He loses little of this blessing; he early begins to use the talent: while others sleep he is awake, and has the advantage, in the way everlasting, of time and vigour to advance from strength to strength and from glory to glory. Should he die early he will not have lived in vain; for the estimate of life is to be taken from action and not from years. Should his days be prolonged his hoary head will be a crown of glory, because it will be found in the way of righteousness; and he will come to the grave like a shock of corn

55

fully ripe in his season. But, O! how dismal is the state of an old sinner! He looks back and sees only barrenness or crimes; he is going to resign into the hands of his Creator and his Judge a life, every part of which he has neglected or abused. Instead of laying up treasure in heaven, he hath been treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath; instead of doing good he hath been doing evil; instead of being a blessing he has proved a curse to mankind; and instead of being received into everlasting habitations by those he hath made his friends, he will enter hell among the execrations of those whose minds he poisoned, and whose manners he depraved.

Finally. If life be so important LET IT NOT BE A PRICE IN THE HAND OF FOOLS—Learn to improve it. And here, my brethren, suffer the word of exhortation. Perhaps you may be surprised to hear me dissuade you—from living a DIABOLICAL life. But what does the devil? He “sinneth from the beginning.” By sowing the seeds of error, by spreading-snares for the heedless, by laying stumbling-blocks for the blind, by introducing misery into families and communities—you resemble him, and are workers together with the enemy of God and man.

Do not live a mere ANIMAL life. If you suppose that life was given you only to make provision for the flesh, only to pursue whatever flatters the senses and appetites; if you suppose that your Creator had no higher aim in making you what you are than the sublime purposes of sleep and digestion—associate with your brethren in the field, and say as you join them, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.”

56

Do not live a **WORLDLY** life, or think that the design of God in placing you here is answered by a succession of trifles, ceremonies, and dissipations; by gaining a ribbon, by amassing a fortune, or acquiring an estate.

Do not live an **IDLE** life. House up all thy powers, call forth all thy diligence. Let life be a school of wisdom, a field of action, a career of usefulness and glory. "Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience now inherit the promises." Imitate above all the example of Him who lived in every action,—who went about doing good. And remember that he came not only that we might have life, but that we might have it more abundantly. From him are to be derived principles and motives and assistances the most influential—His doctrines, his commands, his promises are all enlivening: while the spirit he gives frees us from every low sentiment, elevates the mind, expands the affections, invigorates every power, and raising the soul above everything visible and earthly, recruits it with eternal life. Of thy precious time prostitute **NONE**, waste **NONE**. Some who would not think of throwing away life at once, make no scruple to do it piecemeal: they can sacrifice the smaller portions of time without remorse. But never live a **WEEK** in vain; have something in the close of it for the reviewing eye to fix upon something for God, for your fellow-creatures, for yourselves. Prize every **DAY**. Value every **HOUR**; mark it with something worthy of reflection: if you cannot stop your **MOMENTS**, send them off laden with all the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. Live by rule; fix your end derived in the presence of God from the grand

57

purposes of life; render everything conducive to it. Thus you will live like men, thus you will live like Christians, thus you will live like the heirs of immortality, thus you will live "the life of God."

But it becomes you to live thus immediately. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest." Your season elapsed can never be recalled. When a few years are come you will go the way whence you shall not return—No, you will not return to hear calls of repentance and offers of mercy; no, you will not return to employ means, and to improve opportunities of usefulness. Your friend sleeps, and you go and awake him; he dies, and you call him in vain. You go and produce verdure on his grave, but all within is rottenness. The tree despoiled of its honours by winter, spring will re-adorn. "There is hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease; though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground, yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant: but man dieth and wasteth away, yea man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down and riseth not till the heavens be no more; they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep."

And this season is rapidly hastening to a close: you are perpetually reminded of it. Every day you see man going to his long home, and the mourners going about the streets. Your connexions die. "The fathers, where are they?" and the

58

prophets, do they live for ever?" Even this Institution, since the annual assembly, has been deprived of the distinguished Secretary of the Corresponding Board*—and I mention this the more freely as dying in our neighbourhood, I saw him a few days only before his departure; and the last subject of our conversation was the business in which we are now engaged. Nothing lay nearer his heart than the prosperity of this establishment, and his talents have been often employed in recommending it—and who could recommend like him? But the voice which made you thrill; the imagination which was equally capable of beauty and grandeur; those powers of combination and expansion; those faculties which could so justly discriminate, so distinctly delineate, so richly embellish, so deeply impress—are all silent in the grave! And we are following—"Perhaps this is the last year, the last month, the last week in which I can glorify my Redeemer, and be serviceable to those around me. What then have I done? What am I doing? What can I do? Does my family claim my attention? Do children depend upon me for instruction? Do neighbours require kind offices of relief? Does my country demand my exertions? Can I aid in establishing seminaries, in maintaining the worship of God, in spreading the Gospel?—Hinder me not. I must work the work of Him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh wherein no man can work."

If this be your sentiment and language I need not be afraid to bring forward a case which in general terms I have already announced, but of which it will be necessary to give you more particular information.

* Rev. Henry Hunter, D.D.

59

It can hardly be expected, however, that in the close of a sermon we should furnish you with a minute statement of things appertaining to a Charity so long established, so comprehensive in its plan, and so successful in its efforts. This is the less needful, as an account is always annexed to the annual sermon.*

THE SOCIETY IN SCOTLAND FOR THE PROPAGATION OF CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE has struck its influence across the Atlantic, and North America has been blessed with its missionaries, of which the celebrated Brainerd was one. But the principal sphere of its activity are parts of its own country. No situation could have required it more. In the lower parts of Scotland the poor are generally superior to the peasantry in any other country both as to education and morality. But it was far otherwise with the more northern districts—the Highlands and Islands. There the inhabitants were found in a state of total ignorance, barbarism, and superstition. Their situation was remote—and not easily approached for mountains, rivers, arms of the sea, a stormy ocean. They had no books—and few of them could read. Their language† was unintelligible to the rest of their countrymen. The feudal dominion under which they lived was unfavourable to the increase of knowledge. They were indeed divided into parishes; but some of these were forty and even sixty miles in extent, with only one church and one school. From these the majority of the inhabitants could derive no advantage. The fewness of the Protestant Clergy and the scarcity of Protestant instruction could not expel the mischief of Popery; Popery therefore prevailed.

* This is here omitted.

† A dialect of the ancient Celtic.

60

The Society, formed originally for the reformation of manners, soon turned their eye towards these dreary regions, and determined to employ their influence to teach the ignorant, to civilize the rude, to evangelize the heathen, and to emancipate the superstitious—among those who were not only connected with them as partakers of human nature, but as fellow-citizens and members of the same empire. The way by which they wished to penetrate was—by establishing and endowing schools—by employing catechists and missionaries—and by distributing the Holy Scriptures. The effect has been answerable to the excellency of the design. Compare now the inhabitants with the Irish, derived from the same stock, originally speaking the same language, distinguished by the same manners and arms. We have lately seen in the latter the dreadful effects of ignorant and cruel bigotry—while the former have appeared peaceful citizens, loyal subjects, able defenders of their country. Compare their present condition and character with their former habits and circumstances. They were bands of robbers, following the war-whoop of any chieftain, often invading their southern neighbours—and it is not a century ago since by their irruption they spread alarm even to the very metropolis. Now, good order, decency, industry, comfortable subsistence, and “the influence of a mild and enlightened religion” are everywhere visible; and through any of these parts a person may travel unarmed, and in the night, with perfect safety. Now, it is not pretended that this happy amelioration has been solely accomplished by this institution—but this has from the beginning been the aim, and in no common degree the effect of its operations. The

61

number of those who from the origin of it have been blessed by this noble Charity, both in their temporal and spiritual circumstances, would appear incredible. It has now above three hundred teachers, and nearly sixty thousand persons are daily deriving instruction from it. Though the resources of the institution be great, and everything be managed with singular economy, the expenditure equals the receipts. The Society is even compelled to limit its efforts, and sometimes obliged to refuse petitions. I have an additional circumstance to mention. The Society has undertaken to publish a new edition of the Old Testament in Gaelic. The object is of desirable importance—this language is spoken by more than three hundred thousand of your fellow-subjects—and who would not wish them to have the word of God in their native tongue—who would not lament that any should be willing to read the Scriptures, and not have the Scriptures to read? At length this great work is completed, and the translation of the whole Bible is furnished to the inhabitants. The expense has been above three thousand pounds. Hence the Society requires EXTRAORDINARY aid, and looks forward this year with higher expectations than usual to the London Collection; and shall they be disappointed?

My Brethren, It is a small sacrifice we demand of you. You are not called to wearisome journeys, laborious exertions, self-denying services—the trying part of the work is disinterestedly executed by others. And with regard to you, we only crave a little of your abundance. I know you have it in the power of your hand. If you say. Claims of this kind are perpetually renewed—remember how much you owe to religion; how much it has saved you in cutting

62

off expensive vices and amusements—and in making you industrious and frugal and liberal—for giving is the way to thriving. Besides, your property was given you for this very purpose, and a time is hastening on when the design and the application of your wealth will be compared together—may you be enabled to give up your account with joy, and not with grief.

But you will not be backward to do good and to communicate. I have a full confidence of success, derived not from the abilities of the speaker, but the dispositions of the hearers. I know many in this large assembly; and I know that they cannot be unmoved at the prospect of usefulness; they cannot be indifferent to the welfare of the rising generation; they cannot be unconcerned for the safety and prosperity of their beloved country; they cannot be insensible to the progress of that Kingdom, which is righteousness in peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. They have tasted that the Lord is gracious themselves, and wish others to partake of the same blessedness. They have been called out of darkness into marvelous light, and are now determined to shew forth the praises of their Deliverer. “His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed. And blessed be his glorious name for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; AMEN and AMEN.”

THE SCRIPTURES:

A SERMON,

DESIGNED TO BEAR ON THE CLAIMS OF THE

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY,

DELIVERED IN

ARGYLE CHAPEL, BATH,

ON SUNDAY MORNING, MARCH 11, 1832.

ADVERTISEMENT.

WHATEVER reluctance the Author might have felt to publish the present Discourse, he was not able to refuse for a moment so soon as his importunate friends expressed their belief that it would subserve the cause of the British and Foreign Bible Society. In this view he fears they have over-estimated the Address. Every man, however, has not only his own circle of connexions, but some degree of influence, especially when for a length of years, and with some little consistency and success, he has endeavoured to serve his generation by the will of God. If this be in any measure applicable to the Author, let it accompany the declaration—That he has known this Society from the commencement—that he has with no small attention watched its spirit, its operations, and usefulness—that he has perused nearly all that, both earlier and later, has been urged against it—and that he has found nothing that has, in his conviction, the weight of a feather *compared* with its pre-eminent excellence;—and that he considers it upon the whole, and *while it adheres to its original and fundamental laws and rides*, as the noblest Institution since the apostolic era.*

* The Society at this time was enduring much opposition and misrepresentation in this locality.

65

Though, therefore, the Author preached *con amore*, yet he spake from his judgment as fully as from his heart. But it must be remembered that in a part of a Sermon he had a very small space for a very comprehensive topic. There, too, he could only speak in the strain of a popular address; and aim at a *general* impression, leaving the answer to particular objections, and the rescue of perverted and misapplied texts of Scripture, to such advocates as HUGHES, and FLETCHER, and SIMEON, and Poynder, and SCOTT, and KING, and ELLIOT, and BACON, and MILNER, and DAULTRY, and a number more, who have written what some would be tempted to think it were impossible to gainsay or resist, unless there be, physically or judicially, an incapacity to weigh evidence, or an indisposition to receive it.

Percy Place, Bath,

March 19, 1832.

67

“Then took Jeremiah another roll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire; and there were added besides unto them many like words.”—JER. xxxvi. 32.

“SURELY, O Lord,” says David, “the wrath of man Shah, praise thee.” This is indeed by no means the real design, or the natural tendency of the thing. In this respect “the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.” But his wisdom and power are infinite; and by the overruling agency of his providence he causes the effusions of human rage to conduce to the display of his glory; and thus turns the curse into a blessing.

The Bible abounds with instances of this truth. A very striking exemplification comes before us this morning. In the fourth year of Jehoiakim, “Take thee,” said God to Jeremiah, “a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.” He did so, employing Baruch as his amanuensis. Baruch

68

not only inscribed, the roll, but read it on the fast-day from a balcony in the court of the temple, the people standing underneath. Micaiah heard it, and went and related the substance of it to the princes who were assembled together in the scribe's chamber of the king's house. They therefore sent for Baruch to read it to them. They heard it with fear and trembling, and agreed to tell the king. The king instantly ordered Jehudi to go and fetch the roll. "Now the king sat in the winter-house in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before them. And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the pen-knife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth." He also commanded some of his officers "to take Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet. But the Lord hid them." Vain too was his rage against the roll. It could not prevent the accomplishment of the threatenings it contained;—yea, it did not hinder even the publication of them. "Take thee another roll," says God to Jeremiah, "and write in it all the former words that were in the first roll, which Jehoialdm the king of Judah hath burned." Nor was this all—The writing was even enlarged and improved. "*Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah; who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoialdm king of Judah had burned in the fire: AND THERE WERE ADDED BESIDES UNTO THEM MANY LIKE WORDS.*"

Let us rise from hence into some general reflections. First. Let us observe the importance of having

69

the word of God committed to writing. Secondly. Let us take some views of the men who would destroy the Scriptures. Thirdly. Let us shew how many things which seemed likely to injure revelation have subserved its advantage.

Many of you will remember that, a year ago, the Preacher who is now addressing you pledged himself to discourse on the Scriptures with a view to display the claims of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the Sabbath immediately previous to the Annual Meeting of the Auxiliary Institution in Bath. That Sabbath is now arrived; and therefore by Divine permission and assistance he will endeavour this morning to redeem the pledge. No one, unless by a peculiar perverseness of mind, can construe the attempt into an act of contention or controversy, when it is only the fulfilling of an engagement publicly made, before he had any apprehension of a schism from, much more of an active opposition to an establishment which he considers, with millions more at home and abroad (and he need not be ashamed of his company), as the glory of our land.

The first part of our subject does not require us to bring forward the evidences of the Divine authority of this book. It is taken for granted that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and "that holy men of old *spake* as they were moved of the Holy Ghost." But

The prophet's *pen* succeeds his *breath*,
To save the holy words from death—"

And we have now to do with the importance of having the mind and will of God committed to tenting. It was important for two reasons.

70

First, because it was necessary that the knowledge of them should be perpetuated and extended. Without this they could not be felt or acted upon; they could not become the rule of our conduct, or the source of our hope. Hence the question, "How can they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" Hence says God, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." Hence the prayer of the Church, "Let thy way be known on earth; thy saving health among all nations."

Secondly, because there was no way of preserving and extending the knowledge of them to be compared with this. It is easy to see how much more perfectly this medium conveys the knowledge, both as to extensiveness and certainty, than oral tradition. How is a thing altered, in the common affairs of life, by repeated relation! Some announcers never regard accuracy; others seem incapable of it. One from a lack of memory drops, another from a fervidness of feeling always adds, circumstances. Few are masters of the shades of difference there are in words; yet it is well known how often a simple term will imply too much or too little to define and express the just meaning. And hence it is proverbially said, that there is no believing one half of what we hear.

Without written documents what could we have known of the earlier history of our country? A number of events and transactions might have come down to our own times, and how would they have been mutilated in the lapse of ages! The greater part therefore of the accounts of all nations before they had written records has been always deemed little better than falsehood or fable.

But let me adduce an illustration that comes nearer

71

to our purpose. All mankind once had a Divine revelation. The family of Noah, saved from the ark, was the original of the present nations of the globe. But this family was possessed of Divine communications; and as the members of it spread abroad they carried the discoveries along with them. Hence, long after their division and dispersion, we find in various countries some knowledge of the true God, as in the case of Balaam, who came from Mesopotamia. Hence, too, all Pagan nations have been found to betray some rude notions of religion. For not only to remark their apprehension of some power above them, and some forebodings of a state after death, how universal is the usage of sacrifice, the most unaccountable practice imaginable unless derived from a Divine appointment! The same may also be said of the reckoning of time by sevens. An observation of the moon would lead to the distinction of months, and the diurnal and annual course of the sun to that of days and years, but what conceivable cause could septenary divisions have had but the original existence and observance of a Sabbath? These, and other things, are not therefore, as some pretend, the result of accident, or the effects of reason, but the remains of revelation; the lingering rays of a descended sun; and which are always found stronger and clearer the nearer you approximate the time of its going down. What was derived from one common and Divine source, where left *unrecorded*, unavoidably became more and more indistinct and even corrupt. And this was the case as to all other people; but in the family of Abraham, and in the nation of the Jews, the revelation was committed to

72

writing. Thus it became fixed and invariable. Thus there was always a standard to which appeals could be made, and by which mistakes could be corrected. The original was deposited in the ark; from this every king, when he ascended the throne, was obliged to write out a copy himself for his own use; also at every festival the whole book was read publicly in the audience of all the people; while, we may be sure, the curious and the pious would soon obtain transcriptions for themselves, and lend or recite them to their friends and neighbours.

You perceive we have not inquired after the origin of alphabetical character. This seems plain and easy enough to those who use it without reflection; but nothing has appeared more difficult and wonderful to those who think, and are anxious to account for effects. Hence Gilbert Wakefield, a scholar not likely to err on the side of enthusiasm, has attempted to prove that it must have been at first a communication from God himself.

But we have only noticed the use of it. Writing has answered a thousand invaluable purposes. It has been the resource of friendship. It has softened the dreariness of absence and distance. It has enlarged commerce. It has enriched the world with the spoils of history. It has increased unmeasurably the degrees of all useful knowledge. By means of it men have secured and communicated their mental acquisitions; and the discoveries and improvements of one age have laid the foundations to receive the additions of another. But the highest honour and usefulness attached to writing are, that it has identified, preserved, and brought into our possession

73

unimpaired the words of eternal life, and which shew unto us the way of salvation. And I cannot forbear repeating the language we have just been singing—

“Our nation reads the *written* word,
That book of life, that sure record;
The bright inheritance of Heaven
Is by the sweet conveyance given.”

We only add, that this blessed instrumentality was rendered complete by the invention of printing. Thus mechanism dispenses with the tediousness and expensiveness of manuscript; so that where one copy could have been obtained from the pen, a hundred, a thousand can be derived from the press; and thus millions possess the sacred treasure who must otherwise have been destitute.

But, 2dly, *what would you think of those who would destroy the Scriptures?* I see you shudder at the intimation; and you wonder how any one could be capable of the action of Jehoiakim, who cut the Divine roll in pieces, and cast it into the fire. But one hundred and seventy years before Christ, Antiochus Epiphanes caused all the copies of the Scriptures he could procure to be burnt. Three hundred and three years after Christ, Dioclesian, by an edict, ordered all the copies of the Scriptures to be consumed; and Eusebius, the historian, says he saw them flaming in heaps in the market-place. The preacher a few years ago knew a man in his own neighbourhood, even in professional life, who, offended with his pious wife for so frequently reading the Bible, one day snatched it from her hands, and thrusting it into the grate, reduced it to ashes. This, as well it may, shocks you. And yet have you never heard of Voltaire, and Paine, and Taylor, and many

74

others of the same school, who have more than betrayed the wishes of their hearts? They may be restrained in a country like this from actually tearing the sacred volume or trampling it under foot; but all bad men are really against the Bible. They make the book their enemy, and then they are enemies to the book; and hate it because it does not prophesy good concerning them, but evil. A renowned character, now living, informed the preacher that when he visited C——e in Dorchester gaol, as soon as he took out his Bible, the infidel exclaimed, "I will hear nothing from that book. I cannot endure it—How *can* I endure it, when, if it be true, I am miserable for ever?" Let us take four views of the adversaries of the Bible.

First, let us view those who would destroy it—as to their *taste*. Who can help admiring even the composition of this book itself? so that, as the witty and severe South says, "The gentleman that would not suffer his son to read the Scriptures, for fear of spoiling his style, shewed himself to be as much a blockhead as an atheist, and to have as little gust for excellency of expression as for the divinity of matter." What writing is here! What sublimity in some passages! What beauty in others! What tenderness, and simplicity, and nature in all! Who ever perused unmoved, undissolved, the narrative of Joseph? the resurrection of Lazarus? the farewell of Paul to the elders of Ephesus?

Here we are supplied with articles underivable from any other source, and are led back to periods much earlier than other writers approach. Here we mingle with the first generations of men. We stand and see how the earth rose out of chaos. We behold

75

the world deluged. We see it emerging from the Flood, and renewed and re-peopled again. How entertaining and precious are the fragments of antiquity which we find in the Book of Genesis! Who would not admire, and wish to preserve them?—But the vandalism of infidelity would banish them all; and fix our eyes upon the darkness and dreariness of more than two thousand years.

Revelation dignifies the human race, and one would naturally suppose that the descriptions it gives of a spirit within them, of their capacity for endless improvement and enjoyment, of their immortal destination, and of their being the peculiar care of Deity, would fall in with their thirst of greatness; and that if they gave up all these ennobling statements, they would do it with reluctance: that they would wish them to be true; and lament to learn that they were formed for no higher end than to suffer or sleep for a season—But such is the self-abasement and voluntary humility of the infidel, that he strips himself of his glory, and takes the crown from his head, that, the brute alone triumphant, he may go and graze by the side of his brethren in the field, and say. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.

Secondly, let us view these men with regard to their *patriotism*, or regard for the public welfare. We are authorised to say that the greatest advantages of civilization are to be ascribed to the influence of revelation. Wherever it has prevailed it has tamed the passions and the manners of the multitude far more than any merely human ordinances. Who can describe what it has done in purifying and blessing the spring-head of society, in bringing back the in-

76

stitution of marriage to one original pair, and not only excluding polygamy, but confining divorce to cases of adultery only? What has so raised the tone of morals that a wretch is now detested and driven from the very dregs of society who is only suspected of offences in which the finest characters of antiquity openly indulged? What has abolished the indecent and cruel and bloody rites of gladiatory combat, that once yielded such choice and delicious gratification, not only to thousands of males, but even females too? Even the system of war has been softened and humanized. Prisoners and captives are no longer put to death in cold blood. They are taken care of and provided for. Were a common soldier now after a battle to be maimed or sold into slavery, the earth would rise up against it.

Blessed be our land! when we look around us, *we* see asylums for every kind of distress. Here for accidents; there for disease. Here for the groping blind; there for the deaf and dumb. Here for exposed orphanism; there for helpless and wrinkled age—What beneficence was seen in the dark places of the earth, filled with the habitations of cruelty? Tell us of the infirmaries, and the hospitals, and the charity schools reared by the philosophy of Greece or Rome!

The Bible describes all the social duties, and does not leave them to the option of the performers. It enforces them upon the conscience by the most awful sanctions. It denounces the wrath of God upon the unkind husband, and the faithless wife; upon the neglectful parent, and the disobedient child; upon the grinding master, and the purloining servant. It condemns the prince that becomes a tyrant, and the

77

subject that becomes a rebel. Thus it consults the good of the whole community; and it is easy to see that if the spirit of it was imbibed and its dictates were obeyed, there would be no complainings in our streets; all would be kindness and order, and peace and harmony: and for them the wilderness and the solitary place would be made glad, and the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose. What can we think of those who would annihilate a system so conducive to the safety and happiness of a nation? Out of their own mouths, by the concessions they have often made as to the morality of the Gospel, many of them will be condemned. When Hume was asked whether it was better for the common people to believe the Scriptures or to disbelieve, he immediately answered, "to believe them."

Thirdly, let us view these enemies of the Bible as to their *charity* and *compassion*. We need not attempt to prove that our earth has become a vale of tears, or that man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards. It will also be allowed that many of the resources to which application is made for relief are miserable comforters, and physicians of no value: yea, they increase the evil, and prove not only vanity, but vexation of spirit. In the midst of all that is disappointing, distressing, dismaying, Christianity enters to comfort them that mourn; to heal the broken in heart; to bind up all their wounds. It says to the afflicted, "in the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace." It says to the vagrant bursting spirit seeking rest and finding none, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "I bring you the hope of final deliverance, and the assurance of

78

present support.” And what is worthy of attention, the scheme comes amply recommended by experience. Thousands have made the trial. Here, says one in the review of his losses and bereavements, as he lifts his eye above—

“Had not thy word been my delight
 When earthly joys were fled.
 My soul, oppress’d with sorrow’s weight.
 Had sunk among the dead.”

There a child returning from the funeral of a father now lying in the grave of his mother, opens the twenty-seventh Psalm, and reads, “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.” The husband, the parent, lying on the bed of languishing, and viewing those around him who have hitherto depended on his care, hears and feels the heavenly solace, “Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me.” “Ah, Sir,” said a good man one day, who had been long entirely deaf, (and the relater will never lose the impression,) “I have not had the pleasure of hearing a sound for more than sixteen years—but I am looking forward and upward”—and raising his hand—

“*There* shall I see, and hear, and know
 All I desir’d or wish’d below;
 And *every* power find sweet employ
 In *that* eternal world of joy”—

What can we think of the pitiless wretch who, by taking away the Bible, would dash from the parched lip the only cup of consolation, or pull down the only refuge in which the pelted sufferer can screen himself from the storm—when too he knows that he

79

has nothing to offer as a substitute—and is sure that if the reliance be a delusion, it is the most cordial relief, and the indulgence of which can be attended with no evil or hazard.

Let us then lastly view these would-be destroyers of the Scriptures in their *guilt*. This may be inferred from their punishment. *We* are not the determiners of their doom; but it has been pronounced by Him who knoweth all things, who weighs a path to his anger, and will judge the world in righteousness. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” “He that believeth not shall be damned.” Against this, the accused murmurs, and the criminal finds fault with the Judge. But “shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” —“But we are not accountable for our belief.” Then we are accountable for nothing; for all our actions are the offspring of our belief. The mind *can* search for proof, or refuse to take it in when it comes: it *can* postpone examination, or neglect it altogether. The rejecter of the Gospel wants not evidence, but disposition: his opposition is founded not in intellectual, but moral causes. We may judge of the *moral* disposition of a man from the nature of the things he opposes. In proportion as he is holy, he is averse to sin; and in the same degree in which he is sinful, he is averse to holiness. If by nothing the Bible is so distinguished as by holiness; if its commands are holy, its promises holy, and all its doctrines according

80

to godliness, no wonder that "this is the condemnation," and that "men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." He who would destroy the *principle* of all good actions is an enemy to good works themselves; yea, he is an enemy to the Author of all rectitude: he says "unto God, depart from us." He is as far as he can be a deicide; "Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us."

As nothing implies so much depravity as this enmity, so nothing tends to produce so much wickedness. Only suppose they had, as they wish, abolished the Scriptures—What would be the consequence? The passage to every kind and degree of transgression would be wide opened; and temptation, restrained by no check from the Divine authority and a day of judgment, would be everywhere successful; and deceit and violence, sensuality and misery, abound till the God of patience should again visit the earth with a curse.

And be it remembered that men will be judged according to their works, and according to their designs, though they fail of their accomplishment, and though their efforts are even made to contribute to the very cause they hate and oppose. This leads us,

3dly, to notice some things which seem likely to injure the claims of Revelation which yet have been overruled to its advantage.

In this number we may rank *the assaults of Deists on its Divine authority*. For what has been the result of all their efforts? Courage and zeal in its defence; and arguments in its favour. Investigation always befriends truth; as negligence, silence, and concealment, aid error.

In this number we rank the sufferings of its fol-

81

lowers by persecution. Here we have the express testimony of Paul, who acknowledged that though he suffered as an evil doer even unto bonds, yet the word of God was not bound. "I would," says he to the Philippians, "ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the Gospel; so that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; and many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds; But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." Poet as he was himself, Watts says, in reference to its usefulness, "I would rather have been the author of Alleine's *Alarm to the Unconverted*, than Milton's *Paradise Lost*." But this book, which has been the conversion of so many souls, was a prison production. What did the adversary gain by confining Bunyan so many years in the gaol at Bedford? There, almost inspired, he wrote those works which have been through numberless editions, and will serve to incommode the powers of darkness to the end of time. The most severe and trying periods of the Church have always been the most honourable to Christianity. They have endeared and united Christians to each other. The Spirit of glory and of God has then peculiarly rested upon them. Attention has been awakened and

82

sympathy excited by their sufferings. The witnesses of their woes have been powerfully impressed, and filled with admiration at the principles which could produce such effects. As some fell in their ranks, others rushed forward to fill their place, and were baptized for the dead. Hence it was always said that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Churches.

In this number we rank *the divisions and parties which have sprung up among its professors*. At these some good men have been sadly alarmed; and in their lamentations they have added rhetoric to grief. They have talked of the seamless coat of the Redeemer, and of his beloved as one and undefiled—not considering that in a thousand instances variety is compatible with unity; and that the essence of a thing is not affected by its circumstances and appendages. The differences which subsist among those who hold the head, do not touch upon the real oneness of the Church, any more than the many branches destroy the oneness of the tree, or the various members prevent the oneness of the body. These differences have operated as stimulants; they have excited emulation and zeal; and religion has been a gainer by them. The contention and separation between Paul and Barnabas caused the Gospel to flow in two opposite directions when otherwise it would have been confined to one. The same may be remarked with regard to the disputes between some of the first reformers: nor is it doubtful whether the parting of Whitfield and Wesley injured or benefited the revival of serious and evangelical religion in our own land. Thus too opportunity has been furnished for the exercise of liberality, and candour,

83

and mutual forbearance, which the sameness of uniformity would have rendered both needless and impossible. It is better for Christians to love one another than to pry through the same key-hole of opinion. Hence too Revelation has been more regarded in all its extent. One class urging more the doctrinal; another the practical; a third the disciplinarian and ritual parts, no portion has been left unexplored or unenforced.

We are aware that there are differences of a more serious kind. We do not resign the importance of sentiment in religion. We do not believe in the harmlessness of error and heresy: we think they are always injurious to the welfare, and dangerous to the safety, of the individual himself. But we are now remarking the effect of things on the interest of Christianity itself: and one thing must be conceded with regard to *all* religious parties; they have proved salutary checks on each other, so as to render interpolations and expunctions of the Scripture impossible. Had a Trinitarian been so disposed, he could not have inserted a verse or a sentence in favour of his creed; the Arians would have detected and exposed him. Or had the Socinian attempted to erase a passage that bore on the divinity of the Son of God, some of the Orthodox would soon have exploded the treachery. The same may be said of the advocates or opponents of *all* other principles: however widely they have erred, they have been by their mutual hatred and jealousy vouchers for the integrity of the originals and versions of the Scripture.

Shall we mention also in this number *the miscarriages and falls of its votaries*? It would seem impossible to render these even harmless to the Gospel.

84

There are characters of which we are ashamed, and we almost wish we could keep them away from our assemblies, unless they had invisible bodies. Woe to the world because of offences. By these the way of truth is evil spoken of; and the enemies of the Lord are made to blaspheme. No thanks therefore to the delinquents themselves! But what is the fact even here? These scandals were all foretold; and are therefore proofs that the Scripture is true. They evince that the Gospel is Divine and almighty, since it can bear to be betrayed within, as well as attacked without. The excommunications of such members most strikingly shew the purity of the Church, and that it cannot bear them that are evil. Their fellow professors are led by such awful examples to examine themselves, and fear and pray: while ministers, holding up such warnings, cry. Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

On the ground of the subject thus explained, we bring forward, by way of improvement, three admonitions.

First. *Be fully persuaded of the stability of the cause of Revelation.* Let not your heart tremble for the ark of God. Dismiss your fears as equally baseless and dishonourable. The Church in danger! What Church? Surely not the Church of which the Lord of all spoke when he said, "On this rock will I build *my* Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The unbelief of men shall not make the word of God of none effect. It is incorruptible seed; it liveth and abideth for ever. It is firmer and more durable than the heavens and the earth: *they* may pass away; but his word shall not pass away till the whole be fulfilled. Herod the

85

persecutor, smitten by an angel, gave up the ghost; but it is immediately added, "Mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." Julian! He had a medal struck, on one side of which was inscribed, "See how the Christians flee before the Romans:" and on the other, "Julian, the destroyer of the Christian name." Did he destroy it? A few months after in his Persian expedition he bit the dust, and exclaimed, "*Thou* hast conquered *me*, O Galilean!"—So shall all thine enemies perish, O Lord, while they that love thee are as the sun when he goeth forth in his strength.

At present the enemy of souls seems peculiarly at work, deluding some and impelling others. But God is at work too. He has all his enemies under his control and subserviency. All their attempts against the Gospel shall prove like billows that rise and roar, but dash against a rock, and break only themselves in pieces. Look back to the days of Luther, and observe the perplexing and discouraging state of things when he was labouring to promote the work of God. He had to contend not only with the Papists, but with some of the reformed. He suffered not only from foes, but friends. He was annoyed with a prophetic party who issued their dreams and visions in the name of the Lord. He was grieved and dishonoured by antinomians from among his followers, who turned the doctrines of grace into licentiousness. He had to deal also with fanatical levellers, who wished to subvert all civil magistracy: while the deluded peasants set about burning the mansions of the rich, and the castles of the great—Yet through all, and over all, the cause lived and prospered. So shall it be now. Let us not be faithless, but believing. The murmur-

86

ing of the thunder terrifies, but it shall clear the air, and reviving showers shall fall on the earth. The Divine government of the world is most strikingly seen in the confusions which seem to unhinge it; and His care of the Church will be displayed peculiarly in all the commotions that menace it. He could dispense with these trials, but we should then lose the triumphs they occasion. He chooses to act again as at the beginning; and will command light to shine out of darkness, and bring order and beauty out of confusion and deformity.

Secondly. *Make use of the Scriptures yourselves, and apply them, to all the purposes for which they were given.* You cannot destroy the Bible, but the Bible may destroy you; yea, it will destroy you with the sorest destruction, and prove the savour of death unto death—unless you receive the love of the truth that you may be saved. “The words that I have spoken,” says the Saviour, “the same shall judge you in the last day.” Your coming in contact with the Scripture is the most awful thing in your existence. You can never shake off the connexion you have had with it. It will be always true that you have had the Bible in your house, in your hand; that you have read, that you have heard it. Through endless ages it will adhere to your very soul in remembrance, in accusation, in effects.

What then should be your serious, your immediate, your supreme concern? This can only be determined by the design of God in the unspeakable gift. And was this to amuse your curiosity? To furnish you with “a form of knowledge?” To make you “vain talkers?” or skilful disputers? No; but to turn your feet into the way everlasting. The Scriptures

87

are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.” “Whatsoever things were written aforetime,” says the Apostle, “were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” The Evangelist also tells us that “these things are written that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name.” You are therefore only trifling with this blessed Book, unless you come to it with the question, “What must I do to be saved?” unless it brings you to the foot of the cross: unless you can say, with Paul, that I may win Christ and be found in him; that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his *sufferings*, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Embrace therefore its promises. Obey its commands. Be swayed by its authority. Let it regulate your worship, your lives, your callings. Take these testimonies as an heritage for ever. Make these statutes your song in the house of your pilgrimage. “Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light: and reproofs of instruction are the way of life.”

Thirdly. *Be concerned to communicate them.* I see no alternative between our believing the truth and the importance of the Scriptures, and feeling an obligation to extend the diffusion of them. What can you impart to a fellow creature like the bread of heaven, the water of life, the unsearchable riches of

88

Christ? It is therefore the truest charity. And you cannot complain of being left to serve alone in this noble work, or feel a want of means, opportunity, and encouragement. There are those who are in marshalled and active operation to carry your wishes "to the ends of the earth," "and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh."

Here I am naturally led to notice the BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY, though I fear the advocate will fail to give justice to the nobleness of the cause; for, to use the words of Mr. Hall on a similar occasion, a speaker can never be so dissatisfied with anything he delivers as when he attempts to recommend an institution which by its own merits is exalted above all eulogium.

I need scarcely advert to the moral exigency in which the Society originated. All at first acknowledged the necessity of such an institution with regard to the foreign department, but many questioned whether there was a call for such, exertion at home, presuming that in a Christian country all families, or nearly all, were possessed of the Scriptures. But every successive examination convinced them of the multitudes that were destitute. This was singularly the case in Wales. Such a scarcity of the Sacred Volume in their own language was found there, that it was no uncommon thing for several householders to have one Bible between them as a joint property, and to keep it alternately for reading by the week. Mr. Charles, the pious clergyman of Bala,* soon an-

* This excellent man, who seemed piety itself, at a meeting of more than three hundred ministers and elders of the Welsh Calvinistic Connection, was asked, whether he thought

89

nounced the affecting truth, and one of the first efforts of the rising Society in Town was to meet the want. And we have recorded, and I cannot forbear the relation, that when the people of his parish learned that the first burden of the word of the Lord was approaching, a number of them went forth to meet the vehicle, and removing the horses, drew it themselves into the market-place, where, in the course of a few hours, the whole supply of Bibles and Testaments was disposed of. What followed? Some kissed the book. Some pressed it to their bosoms. The young seemed in ecstasy at the prize they had acquired: while many a labourer took the treasure a-field, and refreshed his toil by reading it at his meals.

What one thing excellent in itself, and likely to be useful, was ever yet unopposed? The opposition here, if not coeval with the Society, yet springing up as it became active and prosperous, was just such as might have been expected in the quarter from which it came. Under the name of Protestantism it partook of the spirit of Popery, really displeased at the spread of light and liberality, but professing apprehensions for the established Church, from the occasional inter-

it right to co-operate, in the British and Foreign Bible Society, with Arians and Socinians. He immediately expressed his abhorrence of their sentiments; hut having done this, he unhesitatingly answered—"That Society knows no names. As for these deluded people, if they believe the truths of the Bible, they would no longer be Arians and Socinians. Do all you can to get them to assist in the glorious cause. It will do them good, and they can do you no harm." In conformity with this, when he visited London, he called upon Dr. Rees, and secured him as a supporter of the Welsh Auxiliary Bible Society.

90

mixture of churchmen with dissenters, and from the going forth of the Bible among the common people, without an accompaniment; as if God himself could not be trusted to speak to his creatures alone. But the opposition only served to purify and fan the holy flame; and the opponents were put to silence—though now and then ever since some pious or prejudiced opponent has endeavoured to blow the same trumpet.

As the field was the world, and the expenditure of cultivation would be vast, no private and sectarian combinations could have reached the grandeur of the design. Comprehension and universal co-operation were required; and in a large degree they were obtained. By the admirable simplicity of its structure, the institution was formed for extension and increase. Accordingly the little one soon became a thousand; and the Annual Report, from a few pages speedily swelled into a large volume. The example of the metropolis was followed in cities, towns, and villages all over the land; other countries emulated our own; and Bible Societies were soon heard of in all the quarters of the globe.

The advantages that resulted from the Institution accorded with its success. It did more towards harmonizing the religious world than anything else ever had done, or was likely to do. Nothing had before been found capable of furnishing a ground for all who *professed* themselves Christians to unite upon, without any compromise of their individual views; and I know of none that *could* have been found but the thought that struck a few wise and pious minds—That as all professed a regard to the Bible as the source of truth, *all* might unite—not in the expia-

91

nation, but diffusion of it—not in any ecclesiastical communion—not in any form or acts of Divine worship—this was never contemplated; but as *workers together and common contributors to raise resources to circulate the Scripture without note or comment*. Such a circulation of the Scripture had undoubtedly to do with religion, as everything connected with the Bible has: but the Society was no more, strictly and properly speaking, a religious Society than the committee for building churches is a religious Society. We know that churches are only reared for the worship of God, and the preaching of the Gospel; but the committee itself is only a committee of means and management for a definite purpose, and is composed, we presume, of members whose creeds and whose consciences are not previously gauged. The builders too of these sacred edifices are engaged in a religious work, “for the building is not for man, but God;” yet in such a case we only think of its destination and use, and do not involve the orthodoxy and regeneration of the mason and carpenter. Whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we are to do all to the glory of God: and we are to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus—Yet whither would this rule carry us, if it were interpreted as some apply it in one particular case? What a sacred thing is the printing of the word of God, if we refer to the holiness of the subject, and the result of the perusal? and why should not the compositor or vendor be a Trinitarian, as well as the man who gives it, or contributes to its dispersion? When nothing but the word of God, the source of all religious knowledge, is spread, what evil or danger *can* grow out of it? Truth *must* be a gainer, and error *must* be a loser by

92

the measure. I have not the shadow of a doubt that it was God who put the thing, pregnant with such an immensity of beneficial consequences, into the hearts of so many, and has kept it alive there;—that God, from whom all holy desires, all just counsels, and all good works do proceed;—that God who is the author of peace and lover of concord;—that God who assures us that one of the seven things which he supremely hates is he that soweth discord among brethren.

Persons could scarcely be engaged in this service without gaining good themselves. They were naturally awakened to reflection, and led to think of the importance and worth of what they were taking pains, and incurring expenses to distribute. Magistrates, senators, nobles, princes, were drawn out openly to acknowledge that the Bible was the religion of Protestants and Englishmen; and to express their own belief and estimation of it, knowing that their families and the public at large would judge them by their avowals, and look for some consistency at least in their character and conduct, with their witnessed and recorded declarations. And to this cause mainly, though not exclusively, we may ascribe that religious movement which has been observed of late years among many in the higher walks of life; and which, if God has mercy towards the country, will be increased more and more.

Never was there such an aggregate of learning, talent, eloquence, and piety—genuine and tried piety, as was now found openly attached to this flourishing cause. Thousands and millions of prayers also for its efficiency were constantly ascending to the Throne of Grace from the retirement of closets, and family

93

altars, and worshipping assemblies: and when the Society held their meetings, there was the prayer of the heart to Him who looketh at the heart, and accepts the principle of devotion where the formality is wanting, and who knows that what is desirable is not always attainable. If nothing more express was performed, it arose not from a want of dependance upon God, but from the peculiar nature and circumstances of the Society, which wisely bound its various parties to one point of agreement, pledging themselves to leave every other free. And there is no society upon earth but is limited by some difficulty or exigency, and that is not required to forbear or give up something otherwise preferable, for the sake of giving or receiving an advantage which is deemed really or relatively more important than the object sacrificed. It cannot meet every individuality of claim; it cannot accomplish every purpose. It is enough when He who knoweth all things looks on, and smiles, and says, "Let her alone, she hath done what she could."

We may observe too that in a world like this there is no doing good without the possibility of incidental evil; and that where human agencies are employed, we are not to look for perfection. To this the Bible Society never advanced pretensions: and when we consider the rapidity of its growth, the multitude of its agents, and the distance of many of its operations, can it be wondered at if those who were watching and wishing for its halting, should now and then have discovered a mistake or a failure? But we are bold to say, that whenever such complaints were substantiated, they were immediately rectified; and that pledges were given against their recurrence in

94

the name of all that was honourable and worthy of being trusted. To object and *find* faults is about the easiest thing in the world. A disposition to censure is not always the best proof of humility, or, according to our Saviour in his dissuasive from judging, even of sincerity. A man may be inconsistently and awkwardly engaged in pulling a mote out of a brother's eye while a beam is in his own—under the law the snuffers were to be of pure gold. Those who, as individuals, or societies, demand a freedom from all defects in others, must be willing to be judged by no relaxed rule themselves; they must expect that every mistake or failing in them will, by a provoked law of retaliation, be eagerly kenned and probably magnified.

And let those who have perfectly a right to think and act for themselves, and whose principles and aims we have no wish to arraign or suspect, only see—whether they have no church fellowship with any heretical pravity; or whether in their new constitution all their leaders and members are entirely free not only from whims and follies, but even serious errors; whether they labour with none as assistants who though orthodox in the Trinity are heterodox in other essentials of the creed, or unsound in all the commandments; and whether, when everything is open among others, they never think it safer to do business with closed doors—

Untried institutions can afford to be very liberal and magnificent in promise. Courtship is expected to abound with fair speeches; and the lover often raises expectations which the husband sadly defeats. It is easy to vaunt and vapour before the battle. The absence of blemishes may be boasted, while as yet

93

little or nothing is done. But *we* plead for a Society which *has* borne the burden and heat of the day, and for near thirty years endured every kind of exposure, and examination. Yet what are the delinquencies with which it is charged? And what lowering has it sustained in the estimation of the multitudes of wise, competent, and godly judges? Let others, at the end of so many years, and after accomplishing so much good at home and abroad, remain as high in public opinion, and be as free from all charges unless those infirmities which inevitably adhere to all religious exertion as well as religious experience in the present state; and we trust there will be found enough who will wish them God speed—Till then, we hope they will not be surprised or offended at the caution, “Let not him that putteth on the harness boast himself like him that putteth it off.”

I am sure I prayed distinctly before I came into the pulpit against the influence of an improper spirit; and I hope I shall not speak uncharitably. Yet I wish it to be observed that I speak *feelingly*. I have read of a son who, though dumb, when seeing his father going to be assassinated, in the agony of regard cried out, and saved his life. A beloved object is never so endeared to real affection as when it is misrepresented and injured. It is a fact you must all be aware of, that as friends to the British and Foreign Bible Society it is not optional with us to be advocates only; we are constrained to be defenders. The cause is not only left, but attacked. Surely it would be possible for persons in such a case to be seceders and not opposers; to be opponents, yet to keep within the rules of honourable conflict; to fight with men, and not to take captive women, who should never

96

be the spoils or the engines of war; to strike openly, and not in secret; to assail measures, and not motives; to explain, and not insinuate; to expostulate, and not insult; to argue, and not calumniate—But what a sad discrepancy do we often perceive between the possible and the actual!

Many of you, my dear hearers, in this large assembly, are young; and your connexion with this Society is limited. It is not for you to judge of the interest some of us feel who were with it from the beginning. Can *we* ever forget the unutterable pleasure and gratitude we experienced, when, attached as we were to the Scriptures, and having so often prayed, “Send out thy light and thy truth,” we heard that a Society was going to be established, the sole purpose of which would be the diffusion of them? Can *we* ever lose the delicious recollections we have of its original formation in London? Of its sudden and wide extension? Of the meetings we enjoyed in Town and country, when, in hours of heaven upon earth, we have felt the presence of truth, of wisdom, of goodness, and of God himself? and when the temple of Janus closed, and the discords of party hushed, we seemed to hear only the angels’ song, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, goodwill towards men;” and silently exclaimed, “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the

97

head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."—*Can* we give up all this as Christian delusion? and, at the dictum of presumption and scorn, believe that we were setting our seal to a wicked and "God-denying enterprise?"—*Can* we ever forget the manner in which this dignified Society has holden on its course? The meek and kind temper it has always evinced towards its adversaries? Its noble avoidance of low and degrading controversy? Its employing scrupulously none of its funds in its own defence? The number of institutions to which it has given rise? The charities which it has befriended? The amazing multitudes of individuals which, living and dying, have blessed God for the benefit they have derived from its Godlike efforts? *Can* we forget that under the Divine blessing the Society has promoted, directly or indirectly, the distributing, printing, or translating of the Scriptures, in whole or in part,* in one hundred and fifty-three languages and dialects; in one hundred and four of which they had never before been printed? That the total number of Bibles and Testaments issued by the Society exceeds seven millions? That, exclusive of these seven millions, about five millions of copies have been distributed by Bible Societies in foreign parts, called into existence by the example and encouragement of the British and Foreign Bible Society? And that the world is indebted to it for two-thirds of the copies it now

* This was said so early as 1832; what has God wrought by it since?

98

possesses? Who can think of such an Institution and not exclaim, If I forget thee, let my right hand forget her cunning; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not thy welfare above my chief joy.

One word more, and I conclude. Ye friends of this glorious cause! whatever provocation you meet with, beware of being betrayed into any improper temper or language. Bless, and curse not. The Saviour, when reviled, reviled not again; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously.

Yet be not terrified or discouraged by your adversaries—a character, alas! under which they seem determined you shall view them. Thousands and millions are ready to come forward to support your wishes and hopes. God is in the midst of a Society that has no interest in view but the spread of his word, the salvation of the world, the promotion of his glory—It must be dear to His heart.

But while you rejoice in its prospects, and are grateful for the wonders it has accomplished, let your motto be—“Go forward.” How much yet remains to be accomplished! And how many are perishing for lack of knowledge! And how short and uncertain is your life, upon which all your opportunities for usefulness depend! Whatsoever therefore your hand finds to do, *do* it with your *might*. Become collectors, subscribers, contributors. Shew your unabating countenance and regard by your attendance and liberality at the Twentieth Annual Meeting, which I have the pleasure to announce, and which will be holden on Wednesday, at the Upper Rooms. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

“THE RICHES OF HIS GOODNESS:”

A SERMON

PREACHED IN

THE REV. ROWLAND HILL'S CHAPEL,

JUNE 17TH, 1832.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Sermon has never been *published*, but it was *printed* by the late Rajah Rammohun Roy. The case was this. The Author was then preaching in London, at Surrey Chapel; and on the Sunday evening the Rajah with the Lord Mayor honoured him with his attendance. When the service was over, the Rajah came into the chapel-house, and pressed for leave, at his own expense, to print the Sermon for distribution among his friends. The Preacher, after a little hesitation, yielded, and sent him the discourse (for he had preached from a few short notes only), transcribed from the copy of a friend who was present, and had accurately secured it.

The Rajah particularly wished that the Sermon might retain its free and popular mode of address; and herein his wish has been strictly complied with.

The Author, with regard to this very extraordinary man, cannot help remarking, that not only from the circumstance of his espousing this Sermon (which, though not highly doctrinal, has allusions and intimations which would not accord with some Theology), but from subsequent intercourse, as also from the testimony of others, he is persuaded that though at his first embracing Christianity he was Unitarian in his views, he was after he came to this country a sincere and earnest enquirer after evangelical truth, and would have professed his adoption of it, had he not been prematurely removed by death.

Bath, Percy Place,

April 28th, 1843.

THE RICHES OF HIS GOODNESS.

"I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was unto them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws; and I laid meat unto them."—Hosea, xi. 4.

MY BRETHREN,

DAVID speaks of the greatness of God's goodness; and to impress his mind the more with the subject, he considers it under the distinction of future and present, purposed and accomplished, concealed and displayed—and exclaims, "O how great is the goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!"

The exclamation is just and true. How great is the goodness which he has "laid up" for them! This indeed is the principal part. This surpasses all representation and conception. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Eternity itself will be necessary to develop fully "the glory that shall be revealed." Yet how great is the goodness which he has "brought for them!" For though they have far more in prospect and hope, they have also much in actual possession and enjoyment. Though the inheritance is reserved for them in heaven, and they are now under age, yet even in their minority they have the privileges of heirs. As yet it is not day

102

with them, but it is dawn, and “the path of the just is as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” As yet the work of God in them is not completed, but it is begun; and we are “confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in them will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”

The operations and expressions of the divine goodness are diversified according to our conditions and exigencies. Let us see what it did for Ephraim of old, and what it does for his people now. *I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was unto them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws; and I laid meat unto them.*

Here are three leading articles:—**ATTRACTION**—*I drew them with the bands of a man, with the cords of love:* **EMANCIPATION**—*I was unto them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws:* **PROVISION**—*and I laid meat, unto them.*

It is easy to exemplify the meaning of all this with regard to the Jews. God would attach them to himself by conviction and disposition: he therefore drew them with the bands of a man, and the cords of love. When he delivered them from the land of Egypt and the house of bondage, he took off the yoke on their jaws. And when he commanded the clouds, and poured down manna, and furnished a table in the wilderness, he laid meat unto them.

Let us now pass from Jews to Christians; “God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” And while we are looking after our own concern in “the riches of his goodness,”

103

O Thou whose power o'er moving worlds presides,
Whose voice created, and whose wisdom guides,
On darken'd man in pure effulgence shine,
And cheer the clouded mind with light divine—
Great God! from Thee we spring, to Thee we tend,
Our medium, way, original, and end!

The first article of this goodness is *ATTRACTION*—*“I drew them with the hands of a man, with the cords of love.”* And here you will observe that the drawing is *to* himself, as well as *by* himself. This is necessarily implied in the very term. In driving, you urge the thing from you, but in drawing you bring it towards you. And this is the aim of God in all his dispensations—it is to bring us to himself. The design regards the state we are previously in; a state of alienation and distance from him. For man is a fallen creature, and the truth of the fall appears in his wandering away from the holy and blessed God. He is now naturally without “God in the world.” God is not in all his thoughts. And when he would enter them, he is repelled as an intruder, and the resister says unto God, “Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.”

While in this state we see his sin, we equally perceive his misery. If with God “is the fountain of life,” it must follow that all they who depart from him shall perish; and that we can only be happy in proportion as we are near Him. He has furnished all the creatures he has produced with some convenient good, suited to their kind. Natural bodies have their proper places, and declare, so to speak, by resting in them, that they are where they ought to be. Sensitive beings and all the animal tribes are led respectively towards some provision made for them,

104

as adapted to their wants, congenial with their propensities, and perfective of their condition. But it was the distinction and glory of man, that he alone was made capable of knowing and enjoying God, and was designed for it; and being designed for this noble end, and made capable of it, he is in a state of derangement and wretchedness apart from it. Though a relapsed being, he still retains the same essential relation to God as his supreme good; and therefore, though in the absence of God he turns to creatures to supply his place, *they* cannot afford him the satisfaction he requires. In the midst of his sufficiency he is in straits, and even in his indulgences feels a void within still prompting him to ask, "who will shew us any good?" His efforts may indeed divert the mind, though they cannot satisfy it; and it is by means of these diversions that he maintains anything like peace within. But that forced calm is attended with anxiety, and is liable to interruption. It is no easy thing to keep off reflection entirely. Truth will sometimes enter like an armed man, and proclaim its rights. At best, this constrained delusion, this "truce to thought," is only for life. Thistle wood, one of our late traitors, as he was ascending the drop, said to a comrade, "We shall now soon know the great secret." The meaning was, whether the soul survived the body or perished with it; whether another world followed this; whether hell was a reality, or the bugbear of superstition. Ah, my dear hearers, you will all quickly know this great secret yourselves; but how awful will it be to learn it when it is too late to rectify a mistake, and for your doubts to end, where your torments begin! And

105

Say, ye gay dreamers of gay dreams,
How will you weather an eternal night
Where such expedients fail—

as you now employ to amuse your minds, and keep off apprehension? And will you never think of the dreadfulness of entering, with all your present passions and appetites, another and a changeless state of existence, and where you will find no opportunity or object to indulge them for ever! O what a mercy to be drawn to God as the home of the heart, and our portion for ever: to be drawn to his ways, to his people, to his house, to his throne, to his table: to be drawn to the cross, that centre of interview, re-union and friendship between God and the sinner! "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled unto God." This brings us to glance at the manner in which he attracts us to himself.

First he says, *I drew them with cords of a man*. He means rationally. Hence religion is called a reasonable service, and every Christian is to be ready to give a reason of the hope that is in him. You cannot convince a beast, or inform a beast, or reason with a beast. A beast is inaccessible to motive and argument: you therefore have recourse to power, and coerce a beast. But it is otherwise when you would influence a man. You reason with him; you enlighten his mind, and endeavour to persuade him. And this is the way in which God deals with us. "He works in us," says the Apostle, "to will and to do of his good pleasure." Did he work in us to *do*

106

and not to *will*—it would be violence and tyranny; but he works in us to *will* as well as to do; and whatever we do willingly (however that willingness be induced) we do freely and with pleasure.

We by no means deny that there is a divine energy employed in the conversion of the sinner; but God always employs it in a manner suited to the nature of the being in whom it is exerted. Now this being is a rational being; that is, a being governed, not by his passions and appetites and senses, but by his judgment and reason: i.e. when he acts as he ought; and the design of divine influence is to bring him into a proper state of action. Hence God begins by shining in the heart; and all the operations of his grace, as Dr. Owen remarks, commence and are carried on with “the renewing of the mind.”

Secondly, he says, *I drew them with the hands of love*. He means affectionately. There is something very engaging and winning in love. Indeed there is nothing else that can draw your fellow-creatures. Other attributes are repulsive rather than attractive. Wisdom may cause you to be feared; power, to be dreaded; riches and fame, to be envied. Love alone can cause you to be loved; or effectually attach and bind to you the heart of another. The observation of this, as long ago as the days of Solomon, furnished a proverb: “He that will have friends should shew himself friendly: and there is a friend, that sticketh closer than a brother.” If you think you can induce people to love you in any other way, we would recommend you to make the trial. Go, and tell them that they *ought* to love you. *Command* them to love you. *Threaten* them, if they do not love you. Surely you have succeeded now! What alluring

107

modes are these!—Why, they now feel farther off than ever. No; the only way to be loved is to be, and to appear, lovely; to possess and display kindness, benevolence, tenderness; to be free from selfishness, and to be alive to the welfare of others.

When Dr. Doddridge* asked his little daughter, who died so early, why every body seemed to love her, she answered, I cannot tell, unless it be because I love every body. This was not only a striking, but a very judicious reply. It accords with the sentiment of Seneca, who gives us a love charm. And what do you suppose the secret is? “Love,” says he, “in order to be loved.” No being ever yet drew another by the use of terror or authority.

God himself never drew a soul by the law which only commands and condemns—for “the law worketh wrath,”—yea, “the strength of sin is the law;”—but by the gospel, which “shews the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us by Christ Jesus.” By losing his confidence in God, man fell, and he is only to be restored by the recovery of it; and Christianity may be viewed as an infinite expedient to dispossess the mind of a sinner of his unworthy and repelling thoughts of God, and to fix in his trembling bosom a hope, that shall be the principle of his return. Accordingly, therefore, this is asserted to be the grand, yet simple design of the whole of Revelation, and of the mediations of Christ. “For whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.” “Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things,

* Around this anecdote the Rajah, in the copy he sent the preacher, had drawn a pencil-line.

108

as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you; who by him do believe in God that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.”

Here we wish we had time to enlarge. We have been thinking of four kinds or instances of goodness, which are very impressive and attractive; and they are all to be found in the goodness of God our Saviour. We can do little more than mention them, leaving their fuller illustration to your own meditations.

The first species of goodness which we mention as attractive is *undeserved* kindness. And this is the case with regard to God and us. What right to wages and support has a servant who has run away from his master? What right to protection has a subject that has turned rebel and traitor to his sovereign? By sin we have forfeited every claim upon God, and it is of his mercies we are not consumed—all he does for us therefore is mere favour.

The second we call *disinterested* kindness; that is, when the benefit conferred obviously and only aims at the advantage of the person receiving it, and regards not the profit or reputation of the giver. There is very little beneficence that will bear examination, or is free from the operation of some by-end. Hence much of what is called charity may be dispensed by an individual, and yet go for nothing; for the perception of any selfish respects in a benefactor will destroy all the influence of his kindness. The partaker

109

feels no obligation. "It is true he relieved and served me, but it was to serve himself." But as God needs, so he expects nothing from us. "Can a man be profitable unto God?" Our "goodness extendeth not to him." "He is exalted above all blessing and praise."

The third we call *magnanimous* kindness. This is very attractive and powerful. Suppose a man had the liberty and life of another at his disposal, and should spare him, and restore him to freedom;—would not this be very winning? And should we not think very badly of the wretch who would not be drawn to love and praise such a deliverer? Some of the subdued Syrians came to Ahab with ropes upon their necks, acknowledging, by the very manner of their application, that they deserved to perish. But instead of putting them to death, "he said unto them. Live," and sent them back with supplies for their journey, to their wives and children. Doubtless, this generosity deeply affected them: doubtless, they went home, talking all the way of the merciful king of Israel, and would never again engage in war against him, unless they were compelled. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." We were therefore exposed to the curse of the law which we had transgressed. We were completely in his power. But when trembling for our doom, he stretched forth the sceptre of mercy, saying, "Touch, and live." "I will be merciful to thy unrighteousness, and thy sins and iniquities will I remember no more!" Hard is the heart that such love will not dissolve!

The fourth we call *expensive* kindness. Zeleucus, the king of the Locrines, made the loss of both eyes the punishment of adultery. Soon after the decree,

110

his own son was detected in the commission of the crime. He was now in the greatest strait between a regard for the law which he could not violate, and love to his son whom he wished to favour. What did he? To spare one of his son's eyes, he consented to lose one of his own. Could this son ever see his devoted and maimed father, and not feel? But it was a *child* for whom this prince suffered.

A few instances are recorded of individuals who have suffered for others, not as warriors, but as victims. Regulus was the Roman consul. He had destroyed the Carthaginian fleet, and landed in Africa, and taken two hundred places. At last he was defeated by Xanthippus with a loss of 30,000 killed, and 15,000 prisoners. He himself also was taken prisoner. The Carthaginians sent him to Rome to obtain an exchange of prisoners, and if possible, negotiate a peace; exacting from him, however, an oath, that if he did not succeed, he should return into captivity. He went; and, persuaded that the terms he bore were disgraceful to his country, he prevailed upon the senate to reject them: but faithful to his engagement he broke from the wailings of his family and friends, and returned. The Carthaginians learning that he had prevented the acceptance of their proposals, were soexasperated against him, that they cut off his eyelids, exposed him for some days to a burning sun, and then rolled him to death in a barrel barbed with spikes! This you say shewed great firmness and patriotism, and we know the impression it made on the Roman people. But it was for his *country*. When Edward the Third took Calais, he only consented to spare the place on condition that six of the principal citizens should be delivered up to

111

death. The people were plunged into the greatest consternation and dismay. In this extremity, Eustace de St. Pierre, a rich merchant, offered himself as one of the sacrifices. His noble example was soon followed by five more. The number being completed, they passed the gates amidst the lamentations and blessings and prayers of the inhabitants, to the royal tent, where, laying down the keys, they implored mercy. The king, resentful for the toils and losses occasioned by the tediousness of the siege, was in danger of losing his humanity; but the queen falling at his feet, pleaded for their lives, and prevailed. But you say, and you say justly, this did not detract from the heroism of their kindness, and it is easy to imagine how their fellow-citizens would view them on their return, and how they would ever afterwards point to them when they passed, and say, "There goes one of those generous men who preferred our safety to their own lives." Yet these men were not perfectly sure they should suffer, when they volunteered themselves; and if they had fallen, yet it would have been for *citizens*, their *neighbours*, *relations*, and *families*. Produce an instance in which anyone, since the world began, ever sacrificed himself *knowingly* for his *foes*. This exalted benevolence remains to be displayed.—No. It has been displayed. It was displayed on Calvary, in "the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." But "while we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son." "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love

112

towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "For when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."

The Second Article—for we shall now follow the order of things, and leave the order of the words—the second article of the divine goodness is the PROVISION he has made for our relief and supply. "I laid meat unto them." You will readily conclude that the provision of which we are now to speak is food for the soul—

The soul's the standard of the man.

Yet there are many who seem to have no more regard for their souls, than if they were persuaded they had none, but were made like the beasts that perish. To pursue business, to get money and spend it, to dress and adorn the body, to nurse it in sickness, and pamper it in health, engrosses their whole attention. If ever a thought of the immaterial and deathless part strikes them, it is only of its existence and faculties, not of its danger, salvation, and welfare. But "what is a man profited if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" The only wise God knows its infinite value. In his sight, a body languishing and dying for want of food, is a far less pitiable object than a soul perishing for lack of knowledge; and, therefore, as the God of all grace, he has prepared all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, and says to the impoverished famishing children of men; "And ye that have no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your

113

labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me; hear, and your souls shall live. And I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

To do some justice to this provision, it is held forth in the Scripture by a feast; not an ordinary feast, but a royal feast; not an ordinary royal feast, but a feast which a king made for the marriage of his son; and who sent forth his servants, saying, "Tell them which are bidden, behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are now ready; come unto the marriage. Yea," said he, "go into the highways and hedges, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the wedding." This shows fulness and freeness and extensiveness: and yet how far short does this representation fall of the magnificent and unlimited design of the gospel! For "in this mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined."

Our Lord, to enforce an attention to this food, speaks of its imperishable quality. "Labour," says he, "not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, and which the Son of man shall give unto you, for him hath God the Father sealed." This immortality he ascribed to it, not only to shew that it is indestructible in itself, but because it confers endless life on every partaker of it. He therefore said to the Jews, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread that came down from heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die." "I am

114

the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." "Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

He also added, to shew that he was referring not to the benefit of his doctrine only, but also of his sacrifice—"My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed!" As if he would say, There is a truth, a reality, an excellency, a deliciousness—a satisfying character in this food, that raises it above all created enjoyment; and to this, the experience of every believer can testify; for he that believeth hath the witness in himself. The Israelites were much honoured and privileged; and because their sustenance was produced by no human exertions, or earthly instrumentality, but created in the clouds and dropped immediately from the sky, God is said to have "given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels' food." But, Christians, your entertainment is superior to that of angels—

Never did angels taste above
Redeeming grace and dying love.

Creation is theirs, redemption is yours. Their Lord is your elder brother. In his righteousness you are exalted. He came not only that you might have life, but that you might have it more abundantly. In the plan of their salvation, in the price of their pardon, in the renovation of their nature, in the changes of their experience, in the dispensations which have attended them in their passage through the world, in their conquest of death, in their triumph over the grave; what reviews! what materials of reflection, what sources of enjoyment will the spirits of just

115

men made perfect command! and which will be peculiar to themselves for ever.

This is the meat which, in the Scriptures, in the preaching of the gospel, in all the ordinances of religion, in all the means of grace, he has laid unto us.

But what is the presentation of food without the participation of it? or what would the choicest provision be if we could not feed upon it? We should resemble—it is the image in the text,—we should resemble the muzzled ox in danger of starving though with plenty before him, unless the yoke were taken off from his jaws. But God's goodness wants nothing to complete and recommend it. Behold, therefore.

The Third Article, in which it is exemplified: EMANCIPATION.—I not only laid meat unto them, but (says he) I set them free from every restraint, to enjoy it—I was unto them as they that take off the yoke from their jaws. What yoke?

The yoke of *Judaism*. I know not how it strikes others, but it has always appeared to me a convincing proof that Moses was no impostor, and was known to have received from God the system which he delivered, that such an untoward, unruly people as the Jews ever submitted for a year or a month to such bondage as it placed them under. Think of the painful nature of some of its rites, and the expense and troublesomeness of others. You complain of being so often called upon to give in the service of God; did you ever reflect upon the sums the devotion of a Jew required of him? You sometimes complain of difficulties attending the service of God, and mere trifles will often keep you from it: but a Jew, whatever was the road, or the weather, or the distance, was obliged to appear three times every year before the Lord in Jerusalem. You are affected

116

by no distinctions of meat but such as your health or your taste may impose: but how many things, and some of them very inviting, were forbidden him! If he touched a dead body or a grave, he was sent home and shut up for a week. How often had he to "observe days and months and times and years!" He had precepts for building, travelling, ploughing, sowing, reaping. The very substance and make of his garment, and even the cutting of his hair, were subject to ordinances. In a word, a Jew could hardly stir without danger of violating something pertaining to his religion: and when we consider how numerous and trying were its rules, restraints, and impositions, we see with what propriety Peter called it a "yoke, which neither we," says he, "nor our fathers could bear." And we do not wonder that Jesus, seeing his countrymen thus burdened (and at that time also additionally suffering from a multitude of traditions of the Elders), should have said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light!"—What yoke?

The yoke of *Popery*. Popery is called "the son of perdition," because it is doomed to perish, and because it has occasioned and caused the temporal and spiritual destruction of thousands and millions. It is also called "the man of sin," as if it were iniquity itself personified; and who can be ignorant that it has abounded with every kind and degree of wickedness? Have not many of their holinesses themselves been a disgrace to human nature? Was there a vice from which some of the Popes were free? And did they not tolerate and encourage every evil abomina-

117

tion in others, by loosening the conscience from divine authority, and by the sale of indulgences? The system comprised in it much that was Jewish, more that was Pagan, and everything that was licentious and superstitious. It made one encroachment after another, till the disciples of Christ were robbed and spoiled: the common people were reduced to nothing: none were allowed to act, or think, or speak, or peep, or mutter, but as they were permitted by an ignorant, corrupt, tyrannical priesthood. The worship of God, if it deserved the name, was performed in an unknown tongue: the merit of works was added to the sacrifice and righteousness of the Saviour: a rabble of patrons and intercessors were associated with the only Mediator between God and man: and though the Scripture was in existence, it was not in the vernacular tongue, or was forbidden to be read. O, how mysterious, that such a system should have been allowed to arise and prevail so long, and enslave so large a portion of the human race! At length came the REFORMATION, and took off the yoke from the jaws of numbers and of nations. Then their eyes saw their teachers; they knew what they worshipped; they had access to the prophets and apostles; they obtained the Scriptures in their own language, and were allowed to search them, and go over the whole land of revelation in the length and breadth thereof, and to gather what flowers, and to eat what fruits they pleased—each authorised to say, “Thy testimonies I have taken as an heritage for ever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart.”—What yoke?

The yoke of *Persecution*. We are sorry to say that the Reformation did not absolutely abolish every thing of this nature. They who had thrown off the

118

tyranny of Rome were too ready to lay restraints upon the consciences of others; and while they nobly refused to call any man master, they seemed not averse to be called masters themselves. "We shall not therefore go back to papal persecutions, or even to the reign of Mary, when so many sealed their belief of the truth with their blood. At a later period what numbers were offered up at the shrine of uniformity! How many in Scotland were hunted down like beasts of prey! they were fined, imprisoned, whipped, maimed, every kind of insult being added to cruelty. In England, also, many fled to the wilds of America, and others who remained suffered in various ways for their principles; and later still, many, "of whom the world was not worthy," were driven from their livings, and not only deprived of support, but forbidden to preach within a certain distance of their former labours, so that if they assembled with any of their people, it was in small parties, and full of apprehension. We ought to look back, and "call to remembrance the former times," and learn to be thankful for the REVOLUTION, which took off the yoke from the jaws. In vain you say, this only gave us our rights. What is right to some people? They only place right in power. It is questionable whether, in opposing arbitrary measures, you would have either acted or suffered as your forefathers did. And, blessed be God, it is not necessary. "Other men laboured, and ye have entered into their labours." You are accustomed to call it the *glorious* Revolution; and it well deserves the praise; for though it did not achieve every thing, it did much. Liberty of conscience was then secured essentially; and it has been in our days completed by the removal

119

of the last civil disabilities for religious opinions. Our worship is now more than tolerated, it is legalized; and whatever persecution arises is derived from the ignorance, prejudice, and wickedness of mankind; it has no sanctions from the powers that be; it cannot appeal to the statute; and if attended with violence, it cannot hope for impunity. It is said of Herod, that he added this to all his other wickedness, "that he shut up John in prison." Our nation is free from this guilt: "they are dead that sought the young child's life:" and "the word of the Lord has free course, and is glorified." Who can help admiring and loving such a country? Who would not pray for the peace and prosperity of such a country? Who would not unite all their endeavours to repress every abuse of privilege; and, dreading insubordination as much as tyranny, resolve to act upon the admonitions of the Apostle: "As free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the King."—What yoke?

The yoke of *Bigotry*. There will be always some differences of judgment, even in the truly pious, with regard to many subordinate subjects in religion: and the variety of opinion would, in most cases, be of little importance, if it did not injure the spirit of the parties, and hinder co-operation, and preclude at least partial and occasional intercourse and fellowship. I bless God, I feel no yoke of this kind on my jaws. I could hear of Christ crucified wherever he is preached, and hold communion with any body of Christians, who hold the head. Some may call this laxity; I feel it liberty, the liberty wherewith Christ has made me free. I may indeed prefer my own denomination;

120

but preference is not exclusion. Yet some, when they cannot hear what they deem "the truth as it is in Jesus," in their own place of worship, will refuse to go where they know meat *is* laid unto the people, because the table is not spread in an Episcopalian or a Dissenting mode. For bigotry is not always found on one side; but we equally censure such contractedness wherever it is found; and cannot but lament the loss of comfort and improvement which frequently arises from it.

No differences are so slight as those which regard forms and modes; and no conformities are so weighty as those which regard principles and doctrine. Am I a dissenter? I ought to feel an evangelical churchman to be far dearer to me than an heretical dissenter. Am I a churchman? I ought to feel an heavenly-minded dissenter far dearer to me than a worldly-minded churchman. Where otherwise is the communion of saints? How else can I pray in faith, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity?" "What is the chaff to the wheat?"—What yoke?

The yoke of *Legality*. As man was made originally under a covenant of works, a legal bias seems natural to him; and we commonly find persons, in their first religious concern, seeking after something whereof they may glory before God, or at least by which they may justify their reliance on Christ; and, often remaining strangers to that evangelical relief which is otherwise nigh them, by waiting for some attainment, which, if it is not to entitle them to it, is to qualify them for it. But the thing is impracticable. The candidate will never reach his proposed mark; with growing reflection, his light will increase;

121

and he will be the more conscious of his guilt, deficiencies, and inability. Thus he will find himself labouring in the fire—and wearying himself for very vanity: or, to change the metaphor, the righteousness of his own, which he has been working out, is “a bed shorter than that he can stretch himself on it, and a covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.” And what recommendation, in this case, do we need? Is not the gospel a system of free grace? What fitness in applying to a Saviour can equal our need of him? If he is a Redeemer and a Physician, my best preparation is to be sensible that I am enslaved, and dying: and the worse my condition, the more necessary is the deliverance which he alone can give.

May the Lord take off this yoke from those of you who are labouring and suffering under it. May you remember, that “to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness;” that though you need a mediator between you and God, you need none between you and Christ; that you must come to him as you are; and that the most suitable frame you can be in, is, to feel that you are very unworthy, and believe that you are equally welcome, and be constrained to say, “I will tarry and hesitate no longer—I will partake of those blessings, not because I deserve them, but because I must perish without them; and because I find I am not only allowed but commanded to take of them freely; and should therefore be guilty of disobedience in refusing for “this is his *commandment*, that we believe on the name of his son Jesus Christ.”

Something of the evil we are here opposing adheres, perhaps, and perhaps insensibly, to the

122

Christian through life, and keeps him straitened in the liberty of the gospel, and lean in the comforts of the Holy Ghost. In a dying hour he is frequently freed from it. He then must have strong consolation, but can only have it from the faith of Christ, and when brought to say, looking only unto Jesus,

“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
 On thy kind arm I fall:
 Be thou my strength and righteousness,
 My Jesus, and my all”—

his soul is filled with all joy and peace in believing. Why is he not by the same means made thus free and thus happy in life also? Would it endanger his practical religion? Would it relax his obedience? or cool his zeal? The more God has enlarged his heart, the more will he run in the way of his commandments. The consolations of the gospel are not opiates, but cordials. “The joy of the Lord is our strength.”

There is yet one yoke more to be taken off.

It is the yoke of *ignorance*. The blessings of the gospel are infinitely suited to the wants of sinners, and adequate to all their relief: and in the fulness of Christ there is enough and to spare, however numberless the applicants. But how is it possible for persons to enjoy or value, or seek these supplies unless they are informed of them? It is very true, that there is no difference between Jew and Greek, and that the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him; but the Apostle well asks, “how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? ”

Hence the importance of knowledge: “by his know-

123

ledge shall my righteous servant justify many:" "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Now there are millions of our fellow-creatures, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, who are in darkness and the regions, of the shadow of death. There is salvation in none other; but they never heard of the name of Jesus; and though they feel guilt and depravity, know nothing of the blood that cleanseth from all sin, and the grace that makes us new creatures. And there are not a few to be found, even in our own country, who have not been led into all truth; and who never hear the preaching of that doctrine to which God gives testimony as the word of his grace in the conversion of sinners, and the consolation and sanctification of his people in life and death.

Let us lay these things to heart. Let us pray that he would send out his light and his truth; that his way may be known on earth, his saving health among all nations. Let us rejoice in the assurance that all flesh shall see the salvation of our God, and all know him from the least unto the greatest. And let us also be thankful, that of this blessed day the morning is already spread upon the mountains—whatever the calumniators of the Holy Ghost may say, as if he had forsaken us, and was doing nothing, or nothing worthy of our notice or praise. His cause *is* spreading; the gospel is advancing to the ends of the world; his people are made willing; and a multitude of agencies are in motion, which, by the ordinary blessing of God upon them, must produce the exclamation, "What hath God wrought!" "God is the Lord which hath shewed us light; bind the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar." For, to conclude—

124

Remember, my dear hearers, that with this light you are favoured. "Blessed are your eyes, for they see." But your responsibility increases with your privileges. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them;" but "to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is sin." The knowledge of some resembles the letter Uriah carried in his bosom, and which only served to place him in the hottest part of the battle. It is bad to perish without knowledge; it is far more dreadful to perish by it. "The servant that knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself shall be beaten with many stripes." "Where much is given, much will be required." YET A LITTLE WHILE IS THE LIGHT WITH YOU. WALK WHILE YE HAVE THE LIGHT, LEST DARKNESS COME UPON YOU. Amen.

FRIENDSHIP IN DEATH:

A DISCOURSE

SACRED TO THE MEMORY

SAMUEL HALLETT, Esq,

WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE MAY 22, 1825.

PREACHED IN ARGYLE CHAPEL, BATH.

ADVERTISEMENT.

FROM the age and infirmity of the Deceased, the Preacher frequently looked forward to the Service which produced the following Discourse; and he always foreboded it, as one of the most painful exercises in which he could ever be engaged. But he was not perplexed for a moment in selecting a subject for the occasion. As soon as he saw his friend going the way of all the earth, his feelings led him to the words of Thomas; and he found in the discussion, that the sentiment he had adopted for a text, was echoed from the bosoms of a numerous and weeping audience.

Sometimes, in sending abroad what he had delivered, he can truly say—he has reluctantly complied with the desire of others; but, in this instance, he was pleased with such an application—not from a persuasion of the goodness of the Discourse, but from a conviction of the excellency of the character it attempted to portray; and from a wish that some likeness and memorial of him might be spread and perpetuated among his connexions; and from the gratification it would afford the Preacher, of thus publicly and permanently testifying how much he loved and esteemed the individual whose death called it forth.

Percy Place, June 1825.

127

“Let us also go, that we may die with Him.”—JOHN xi. 19.

THIS is the language of a man who bore two names—Thomas and Didymus; the one Hebrew, the other Greek. Each signifies a twin; and probably he was one, and some peculiar circumstance attending his birth gave rise to the denomination.

It is surely needless, not to say absurd, to look after a mystery here; and to suppose with some that he was so called, under the direction of Providence, in foresight of his having in him nature and grace, flesh and spirit, faith and unbelief.

In this way, however, a large portion of the Word of God is disposed of by the spiritualizers of the Bible, who, dissatisfied with the real and obvious import of revelation, turn its figures into facts, and its facts into figures, just as it suits the exigency of their creed, or the weakness of their capacity. But they are bad interpreters of the Scripture, who give it meanings which it never had; and by their supposed ingenuity, render its readers uncertain whether it has any proper and determinate sense. At best we can only give these men credit for the goodness of their intention. They may think to improve the Scripture; but by their ennoblings they debase it, by their enrichings they impoverish it, by their en-

128

largings they contract it. They may alter and they may add, but it would be better for them to have nothing to do with these finished paintings, or to present them as they are left by the hand of the matchless master.

The sovereignty of God appears in the much greater notice the Scripture takes of some than of others. Little is said of Thomas. He was one of the Lord's Apostles, and he is mentioned in three places; and mentioned as the sacred writers always mention characters: for they never write as censurers or eulogists, but state facts, whether they betray infirmity or excellence; and leave them to make their own impression and to supply their own improvements.—When the risen Saviour appeared to the eleven, Thomas was absent, and his absence occasioned a loss of conviction which the testimony of his brethren could not repair; but the Saviour repaired it, by his condescension in accommodating himself to his weakness, and inducing him to exclaim, "My Lord and my God."—At an earlier period, when our Saviour was delivering his farewell address to his disciples before he suffered, and when he had said, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," Thomas saith unto him, "Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way Here was ignorance; but ignorance ingeniously confessed, and accompanied with a desire of information; and therefore Jesus said unto him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also, and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him."—But the first time he is introduced, as a speaker, is in the words of the

129

text. "Then," said Thomas, "who is called Didymus," unto his fellow-disciples, "LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM."

Here a difficulty occurs. It is not easy to determine whether Thomas alludes to our Saviour or to Lazarus. I confess, Rafter repeated reflection, my own mind is yet unfixed. The connexion seems to leave it undecided: and if we appeal to authority, we find expositors of equal weight on each side of the question. It is singular, that while the candid Doddridge is so impressed with the former reference as not to mention the latter,— the great and judicious Howe is so impressed with the latter as not even to mention the former. Both allusions, therefore, must have much probability in them, and as each is instructive and useful, let us consider the words:—

I. In connexion with our SAVIOUR: and

II. In connexion with LAZARUS.

The subject could never be unsuitable and uninteresting; but it will be found peculiarly appropriate this morning, when we are assembled together to pay—not the *last* token of respect: No,—but *a* token of respect, a *public* token of respect; a *deserved* token of respect; an *edifying* token of respect, to the memory of Samuel Hallett, so long a worshipper in *that* pew—a place which now knows him no more for ever; and for many years an honourable member and office-bearer in this church.

I. Then we consider the words in connexion with our SAVIOUR. Here it will be necessary to observe, that our Lord had been twice at Jerusalem of late, and each time the Jews had evinced a disposition to kill him. From the past, it was natural for his dis-

130

ciples to fear for the future; and, therefore, when he said, "Let us go into Judea again," his disciples say unto him, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou *thither* again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walle in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him."— Upon which, concluding that he would throw himself into certain jeopardy by this journey, and looking upon him as a dead man, Thomas said unto his fellow-disciples, "Let US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM." Here observe:—

First, That his apprehension was not verified. So far from it, Jesus was not only preserved, but magnified; and Thomas and his companions saw his glory; and had their faith confirmed, and shared in the honour of being the disciples of such a master. Thus groundless are often our forebodings; and thus the Lord frequently reminds us of a trial and brings it nigh; but when our disposition appears, and like Abraham, we are willing to make the sacrifice, he exempts us from the enduring, and says, "It is well that it was in thine heart." For he looketh to the

131

heart, and honours the design when it fails of execution—not for want of principle and zeal, but of means and opportunity. When we follow the world, we find disgrace where we promised ourselves glory; and bondage where we looked for liberty; and wretchedness where we sought for pleasure; but in following the Lord Jesus, our fears are falsified, our hopes are surpassed, and he does for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think; according to his own decision, “whosoever will save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.”

Secondly, Though however in this instance the event differed so widely from his anticipation, at length the time arrived that the Son of Man *was* betrayed and apprehended in order to be put to death. And how did Thomas *then* behave himself?—*He* who had so heroically said, and said sincerely, too, “LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM.” Was he willing *then* to follow him to prison and to death? “*Then all* the disciples forsook him and fled.” Ah, Thomas, where are you now? Are you now confessing him before men? Are you now a companion with him in his bonds? Are you now soothing him by your sympathy? “He looked for some to take pity, and there was none; and for comforters, and he found none.” “Lord, what is man?” What a difference is there between an imaginary and a real conflict! “The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle.” What a difference between a warm frame and a heart established with grace! What can a man depend upon in the hour of temptation?—His

132

professions? His resolutions? His former experience? “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool.” And what is he that trusts in his own grace? “*My* grace,” says the Saviour,—not thine; “*My* grace is sufficient for thee.” Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. But

Thirdly, The disposition Thomas *now* expressed was such as well becomes every disciple of Jesus. Yes, they ought to feel that perfect love to him which casteth out fear; to be willing to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; to be ready to suffer with him the loss of all things; and to say with Paul, Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death.—If we consider what he *commands*, this disposition is *obedience*: and has he not said, “If any man will be my disciple, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. He that forsaketh not all that he hath cannot be my disciple?”—If we consider what he has *done*, this disposition is gratitude. And what has he not done? He remembered us in our low estate. For our sakes, when rich he became poor. He died that we might live.—If we consider how *important and necessary* he is to us, this disposition is *wisdom*. And can we do for a moment without him?

This flesh of mine might learn as soon

To live, yet part with all my blood;

To breathe when vital air is gone,

Or thrive and grow without my food.

—If we consider him as *able and engaged to indemnify* us for all we can lose or suffer, this disposition is *self-interest*. And has he not said, “There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or

133

wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."—If we consider our *profession* of his name, this disposition is *self-consistency*—and are not his vows upon us? We have come to his table; we have joined ourselves to his people; we have opened our mouths unto the Lord, and we cannot go back.

Fourthly, We admire also his zeal in wishing to infuse his own spirit into his brethren, and to animate them to the same tone of holy and high resolution. "Let *us* go, that *we* may die with him." Does this imply any indifference in those he addressed? Were the disciples turning aside and whispering among themselves about going forward? Were they hesitating through fear whether they should advance, even with *him*, into the jaws of danger? It is possible, it is probable. Therefore, says St. Thomas to his fellow-disciples, "What! shall we abandon such a master in the hour of trial? Shall we see him likely to be sacrificed and not rally around his Sacred Person? Shall we refuse the fellowship of his sufferings? Let us bare our bosoms to the same treatment. Let the same blow that strikes him strike us also. LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM." For good men are not always in the same state of mind. They are not always themselves. There are cases in which nature seems ready to prevail over grace; and "Wo," says Solomon, "to him that is alone when he falleth, for there is not another to keep him up." Hence our Saviour sent forth the seventy disciples in pairs, not only to render their testimony stronger, but that they might watch over each other in temptation, and cheer each other in

134

discouragement. Thus “Jonathan went to David in the wood, and strengthened his hand in God.” Thus “as iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend.” And hence we are commanded, like Thomas, to “strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees and to “*consider* one another, to *provoke* unto love and good works.” We proceed,

II. To view the words in connexion with Lazarus. Jesus, you will remember, had plainly said, Lazarus is *dead*; but immediately added, “Nevertheless let us *go unto him*.”—Then said Thomas unto his fellow-disciples, “Well, since *he* is dead, let us also go, that we may die with him.”—Thus uttering a sentiment, in some respects, perhaps, too passionately expressed, but which, I presume, appears perfectly natural; and has doubtless been felt by every individual in the hour of bereavement. And it implies four principles,—warmth of affection, indifference to life,—powerful conviction,—and delightful hope.

First, Warmth of affection. Such there appears to have been between Lazarus and the disciples. Whoever was dear to Jesus was dear to them; “now Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus.” Also when speaking of him, he said, “*our* friend, Lazarus, sleepeth marking thereby their attachment as well as his own. And the gradual and gentle manner in which he communicated the intelligence of his death, shews that he knew how deeply it would affect their minds. There was, it would seem, much also in Lazarus that was attractive. For it is not the death of every one that draws forth

135

the exclamation, "LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM." There are persons whose death would awaken no emotion but that of pleasure. "When," says Solomon, "the wicked perish, there is shouting." The neighbourhood feels it to be not a loss, but a riddance. If some were allowed again to return to life, they would find every avenue by which they could re-enter the world bolted and barred against them. But how would some be welcomed back again? How would many surround the mouth of the grave to hail them, and accompany them home with songs of praise? "For when the eye saw them, it blessed them; and when the ear heard them, it gave witness unto them; because they delivered the poor when he cried, the fatherless, and him that had no helper. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon them, and they caused the widow's heart to sing for joy."

All religious individuals do not intrench themselves deeply in the affections of others. The Apostle makes a distinction between a good man and a righteous man. "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some will even dare to die." It is goodness that wins the heart, and makes one man a god to another. And such a man was Lazarus; nor is it improbable but that the disciples were under peculiar obligations to his kindness and generosity; and thus gratitude mingled with friendship, to produce the language of endearment.

We are made capable of affection; and he is unworthy the name of a man who is a stranger to it. It does the highest honour to our nature; and religion, so far from opposing it, sanctifies it, and in-

136

creases it; and “by this,” says our Saviour, “shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.”

And can there be a stronger expression of love to any one than wishing to be near him—with him,—with him in life and—with him even in death? Paul tells the Corinthians, “I have you in my heart, both to live and to die with you.” Ruth saith to Naomi, “Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried.” Hear the dying Patriarch when he had blessed his sons; “And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite; in the cave that is in the field Macpella, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah.” In vain persons ask for a reason to justify such a preference. He has no heart, who *can* ask. The sentiment is founded in our nature, and pervades every human bosom, unoccupied by “the god of this world.”

But the strength of affection is evinced most strongly at the moment of separation. It is the want that teaches us the worth of our comforts. What we have securely, we hold loosely; but we take a firmer grasp when we feel that it is leaving us. When Elisha knew that his master was going

137

to be taken from his head, how he prized the last interview! How determined was he to improve every moment, and therefore refused to go back, though enjoined again and again!

“How mercies brighten as they take their flight!”

You love your child; but it is when he is leaving you to take a long voyage that parental tenderness overflows. You may value a mother, and treat her with every respect; but it is when she is embracing you for the last time, and you can no longer have access to the bosom that has been the asylum of your care and grief—it is then that filial affection hallows her image, and says “my wound is incurable.” When the object of our regard is separating from us, we feel many a tie of which we were not sensible, till the cords were touched. Then we fear and groan. Then even our past inattentions and little undutifulnesses endear the beloved the more. Then we forget all his imperfections, and remember and magnify his excellences; and a sacredness seems thrown all around him by death—“LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM.”

Secondly, It implies indifference to life. To this we are commonly too much attached; not as a sphere of duty and usefulness, in which we may glorify God, and perform services to our fellow-creatures which we cannot perform in another world; but as a residence, a home, a portion. Yet, since we must leave it, and leave it soon, it would be wise to be ready and willing to leave it: and there are moments in which the fascinations that charmed us are dissolved, and the ligatures that confined us slacken; and we say with Job, “I loathe it, I would not live

138

always; let me alone, for my days are vanity." Afflictions in general have this detaching influence; but nothing so powerfully draws us off from everything here as the removal of an object in whose life our own is felt to be bound up, and whose departure seems to leave nothing worth staying for behind.

Dr. Young says,

"Our hearts are fastened to the world
With strong and various ties;
But every trouble cuts a string,
And urges us to rise."

And well he adds,

"When Heav'n would set our spirits free,
And Earth's enchantment end,
He takes the most effectual means,
And robs us of a Friend."

And in another place,

"Our dying Friends come o'er us like a cloud,
To cool our brainless ardours."

Ah! many of you have been through this scene, and have said, "Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness." Some of you perhaps have suffered from nearer claims. You have known the death of a father, in whom was combined all that was venerable and affectionate, all that was interesting and attractive. You watched the menacing of the disease; and your hope often revived and fainted again with the variation of the complaint. But when the physician intimated that further assistance was vain; when the voice and the more speaking eye said Farewell; when in the deep and solemn silence that followed you felt plainly, "Lazarus is dead;" when you

139

kissed the ice-cold cheek for the last time before your treasure was screwed up for ever; when you saw the procession leaving the house to return no more; when at the grave you heard the sentence "dust to dust"—how changed, how desolate did everything appear, did everything feel! How incapable of rekindling former passions, of renewing former pursuits! How dead was the heart to avarice, to ambition, to envy! How loosely did life hang upon you!

We allow that the feeling at such a time may be carried too far. Weeping, says Henry, must not hinder sowing. We must not, because one comfort is gone, undervalue all our remaining mercies, and say, "Let God take all, now he has taken this." We think that we cannot do without such a friend or relation; but God tells us we *must*, and time and experience tell us we *may*. And it is well when the fractured vessel drives us nearer to the fountain, and we can say with David, "How, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee."

Yet, we are censured, we are condemned, if we do not lay it to heart, when the righteous perish, and merciful men are taken away. Yet there is an enlightened reason for our diminished regard for earth, in the loss of wise and good men. It is thereby impoverished. It is much less worthy of our esteem. There is less of truth, less of holiness, less of God's image here; and if all were gone, who would wish to tarry here a day longer? While, on the other hand, the country towards which we are going, is enriched in value and loveliness; and we have fresh attraction to draw us upward.

"There our best friends, our kindred dwell—"

140

“Let us also go, that we may die with him.”

Thirdly, It implies powerful conviction. This regards the nature of the death he contemplated. Thomas must not have considered Lazarus's death as a mere cessation of being. Had he believed that Lazarus died like the beasts that perish; or, still more, that he died as an unpardoned and unrenewed sinner; even had he died the most admired and dignified character in the world; he would not, he could not have said, “Let us also go, that we may die with him;” rather he would have prayed with David, “Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men.” To die with *them* is to be driven away in our wickedness, and to fall into the hand of the living God. Death and damnation are the same to the unconverted. Some of you are nearer hell than you are to the grave: your wretched bodies may be left a few days unburied, but your soul is in a moment with the devil and his angels. But the righteous hath hope in his death. The day of his death is better than the day of his birth.

What is this death which appears so enviable? We call it death because it was so once, but the curse is turned into a blessing; and according to our Saviour it no longer now deserves the name: “If a man keep my sayings, he shall never see death.” No, he shall only fall asleep in Jesus: he shall only depart to be with Christ, which is far better. What is the death of the believer? It is generally comfortable, even when preceded by many fears. Sometimes it is joyous; and the dying chamber is “none other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven.”

141

There, has been brought to pass the saying that is written, "death is swallowed up in victory." There, we have been almost in love with death, and have been ready to exclaim "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation." This is not indeed always the case. He does not always die in rapture; but he always dies in safety. It is not in the power of death, whatever be his apprehensions and feeling at the moment, to injure one particle of his portion. Yea, to die is gain, inconceivable and everlasting gain. The result, therefore, is always the same. If he wants the light of God's countenance, he who withholds it loves him still; and if the valley of the shadow of death be dark and gloomy, it is not long, and opens into endless day. Then, O blessed exchange, he leaves all his sin, and reaches his God, in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Some may be ready to envy the death of the scholar. His name is announced in the journals with all his honours. Some masterly pen is immediately engaged to publish his life and his works. The marble perpetuates his name, and his bones are entombed by the side of poets and philosophers. But the soul, where is this? Alas! he was great everywhere but in the sight of the Lord. He could speak every language but the language of Canaan. He knew everything but the one thing needful. But see that cottager, on yonder pallet of straw. He is dying fameless and unknown; but he knows Christ Jesus the Lord, and knows that in him he has righteousness and strength. And the excellency of this

142

knowledge raises him above the fear of death, refreshes his fainting spirit, opens a heaven in his heart, and brings angels near. Let me go and die with him!

Some may be tempted to admire and covet the death of the hero. Regardless of the righteousness of the cause in which he is engaged, falling in the field of battle, if he dies a victor, he is shouted. He falls on the bed of honour and in the arms of glory. A public funeral is decreed him. A country follows. His name goes forth into every land. But where is his soul? Who thinks of this? I think of it, and turn away. I turn to the soldier of Jesus Christ, fighting the good fight of faith," and laying hold on eternal life. His exploits, unnoticed and unknown on earth, are gazetted above. By faith I see him more than a conqueror, led in by the captain of his salvation, who confesses him before his Father and the holy angels; and the promise is accomplished, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." Let me go and die with *him!*

We read of another Lazarus in the Scriptures. He was a beggar and full of sores. And we read of a rich man at whose gates he was laid to implore relief. They both died. But nothing is said of the burial of Lazarus. But the rich man was "buried" according to his rank. Yet, observe the difference. Lazarus died in the favour of God, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. The rich man died and was buried—but while the undertaker was displaying the emblems of his wealth and grandeur, he was lifting up his eyes in hell being in torment, and in vain craving a drop of water to cool his

143

tongue! Now, I ask, with, which of these two men would you have wished to die? Why, even a Balaam, when his eyes were open, said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

Fourthly, The sentiment in our text includes a delightful hope. Thomas had a satisfactory persuasion that death, so far from separating him and his fellow-disciples from Lazarus, would bring them together again, and renew acquaintance and intimacy as before. Such an expectation is not visionary, but well founded; and is necessary to reconcile us to the death of our connexions and to our own. We are formed for society, and much, very much, of our happiness depends on our intercourse with each other. You talk of comfort and pleasure! Think of what the Apostle calls the comforts of love; think of the pleasures of friendship, and especially of religious friendship. Think of the hours you have passed with those who are gone before you—in the morning and evening walk—in gazing on the beauties of nature—in mental discourse—in pious conversation—in taking sweet counsel together, and going to the house of God in company—in the songs of Zion. "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart, so doth a man his friends by hearty counsel." And is all this intercourse terminated for ever? No, it is only suspended for a time—suspended till you also die. They cannot indeed come back to you, and would you desire it,

"and constrain

Their unbound spirits into bonds again?"

But you will go to them; and you will mingle with them again; and there will be mutual knowledge:

144

and not only will you know each other, but your communion will be renewed, and not only renewed, but improved. And then your intercourse will be attended with a thousand advantages above all you now enjoy.

Witness the regions you shall meet in *there*. "For the land whither ye go in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out." "It is a better country." "New heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Witness the exclusion of all afflictions from your condition *there*. Now, you not only rejoice but weep with your connexions. It is unavoidable, if you love them. For they also are born to trouble; and you are embarked with them in the same vessel, and must encounter the same winds and waves. And what so grievous as, to-see an endeared object in grief? And how much more is endured often by sympathy than the sufferer himself feels? But *there* you will no longer be called to fortify them under reproach; or to soothe under pain. You will no more be required to sustain the aching head, or to administer the irksome draught. The inhabitant shall no more say, "I am sick." No more will your heart be pierced with the words or looks of anguish beyond your relief: "Pity me, pity me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me."

Witness the absence of all moral imperfections *there*. Now you try your friends, and they try you by infirmities of temper and carriage. It must needs be, that offences will come, among beings only sanctified in part; and the case is, that if love is to go on, it must cover a multitude of sins; if you would live in peace, you must forgive one another. But *there* they will

145

have nothing to bear with in you, and you will have nothing to bear with in them.

Witness the fulness of intelligence possessed *there*. Allowing that there are degrees in glory, yet the least in the kingdom of Heaven will know more than any philosopher or divine here; and with all this knowledge in the works of Nature, and dispensations of Providence, and wonders of Redemption, we shall be prepared for and enjoy the most sublime communion:—

“No vain discourse shall fill our *tongue*,
Nor trifles vex our *ear*;
Infinite grace shall be our song,
And God rejoice to hear.”

Witness the superior modes of communication *there*. Now we often mistake each other, and embarrass ourselves by the penury of language. We can only now convey ourselves by words—and how defective are these! They are not definite enough to prevent error, or tender enough to express many a feeling of the heart, or sublime enough to do justice to the conceptions of the mind. The utterance of a big meaning is often diminished, mangled, suppressed, by them. There, no labour and sorrow will attend the birth of our thoughts; our speech will be commensurate with our sentiments; we shall speak with “the tongue of angels!”

Witness the opportunities of intercourse *there*. Now our seasons for this are few and impaired, by distance, by sleep, by the avocations and cares of life. By a thousand nameless preventions how little do we now enjoy of the presence and converse of those we most highly esteem and most dearly love! There,

146

our freedom will be uninvaded, and our conversation uninterrupted. For

Witness, finally, the duration, the “perpetuity, the eternity of our fellowship *there*. How short is the letter over whose page you now glow! How soon ends the delightful conversation you are now sometimes privileged to enjoy! You expect a friend, and prepare for the enjoyment, but the interview seems a vision rather than a visit:

“She is come—she is gone—we have met,
And meet, perhaps, never again!”

And O the dread of separation! The anguish of loss when they leave us—in death! You sorrow, most of all, that you “shall see their face no more!” But you *shall* see them again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you; and looking at the picture of departed worth, you may recollect with a hope that maketh not ashamed, your “*last adieu*: ”

“But was it such? It was. Where thou art gone,
Adieu and farewells are a sound unknown.
May I hut meet thee on that peaceful shore!
The parting sound shall pass my lips no more.”

By these reflections, I know I have expressed the feelings of some, and I am persuaded also, of many, with regard to the removal of our excellent Friend and Brother, of whom it will now be expected that I should take a more particular notice, not to extol the creature, but to glorify God in him.

Services of this kind are, sometimes, very trying—not only by the excitement of feeling, but by the task they impose upon our ingenuity and conscientiousness. For the sake of fond and unreasonable connexions, we

147

are expected to create something out of nothing; or, at least, to magnify and enrich the poor and slender materials we find. For brass, we are to bring gold; and for iron, we are to bring silver; and for wood, brass; and for stones, iron. And while we abound in panegyric, we are not at liberty even to hint a fault or a blemish. Sometimes, even in good characters, there is much to censure or bewail; but it must all be concealed or extenuated. So arduous and painful, indeed, are these exercises become, and so much more likely are they to offend than to satisfy, when they are faithfully performed, that some ministers have determined to preach no funeral sermons at all. O that you would so conduct yourselves as not to pain your ministers while you live, nor plague them when you die!

But I have no embarrassment this morning. In the man before us, there is nothing to find out, nothing to hide, nothing to excuse. He was a child of the light, and of the clay. Not that he had already attained, or was already perfect, or had ceased to own himself a sinner at the footstool of divine mercy—

“For he was frail as thou or I,
 And evil felt within;
 But when he felt it, heav'd a sigh,
 And loath'd the thought of *sin*.”—

And his life was the harmony of principle and practice; and his creed was embodied in his conduct; and he was an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile; and in this he exercised himself, always to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man.

I have not been furnished with any precise, information concerning the commencement of his religion,

148

nor did I deem it necessary to make any inquiries after it. The reality is the thing to be ascertained. Here we have the evidence of analogy. The changes we observe in nature, are not sudden and sensible disruptions from a preceding state, but the gradual working and melting of one thing into another. The difference between day and night, and summer and winter, is great; yet the transition is imperceptible in its progress, though undeniable in its effects. In the experience of many, there has been nothing in the process of their conversion definitive enough as to time, or place, or manner, or means, to form a narrative. Neither is it important. It is with the proof and the consequences we have to do. It is enough if we are able to say. Whereas I was once insensible to the things of God, I am now alive to them; whereas I was once blind, now I see. That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

Neither do I lay so much stress as many do on a few dying expressions. Indeed they are never to be much regarded, unless they come from characters that yield us satisfaction without them. When elevated frames and triumphant confidences are not preceded by a way, of which they are a suitable end; when the death, instead of being the natural and Scriptural conclusion of the life, is the reverse of all that could have been reasonably inferred from it; we should always speak with caution and fear; for though we are not to limit the Holy One of Israel in the sovereignty of his operations, he has limited us in the rule of our judgment. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." Where there has been a real and obvious dedication to the service and glory of God, it is encouraging to

149

see how God honours them that honour him; and when persons have said by their practice, "For me to live is Christ," it is delightful to hear them say by their comfort, "For me to die is gain." But physical causes may have great influence here; and I have known some very good men, who have expressed but little confidence and joy in their last moments; and the full assurance of hope is not what I *only* or *principally* look after in a Christian dying; but the penitence which lays a man low at the foot of the Cross; the self-abasement which, under a sense of unworthiness and unprofitableness, cries "Behold I am vile;" the gratitude which acknowledges under every pain, "He has not dealt with me after my desert;" the resignation that avows, "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me;" the love to the Saviour that feels Him "precious," and speaks "well of his name;" the concern to do good, that leads him, "while life and breath remains," to commend His ways to those he is leaving behind—all connected with humble confidence, and a "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." And all this was displayed in various instances by the deceased. I am not provided with any written document, but from the oral communications of his constant attendants, and my own visits to the chamber of sickness and death, I can testify how full he was of self complaint; how patient in tribulation; how affected with his little improvement of spiritual advantages; how fearful lest the end of his former sickness and recovery should not have been answered; how desirous of obtaining grace to suffer as a Christian, and to glorify God in the fire. Whenever, as I

150

was kneeling by the side of the bed of languishing, I asked him what I should pray for on his behalf, the answer always indicated just such views and feelings as became his condition, and contented a pastor's heart.

Many wish to be imposed upon, or at least, to be kept ignorant of their danger; but the deceased had engaged his medical attendant beforehand, to inform him of his real condition. Soon after taking to his room he reminded him of his promise; and when he expressed his apprehension, he received it with firmness, and thanked him for his freedom. Though everything like ecstasy was unknown, the calmness of hope continued like the softness and mildness of a summer's evening; and he finished his course with peace, though not with joy; and had, if not an abundant departure, yet an abundant entrance, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour. His experience reminded me of the language of a good minister, whose death-bed I was attending; "I cannot," said he, "*triumph*, but I can *trust*."

I need not say he was an *amiable* character. The religion of some professors is not only defective, but deformed. To imperfections they add disagreeablenesses. Instead of inviting and alluring, they check and repulse. They seem to think that Christian seriousness consists in moroseness; and fidelity in rudeness; and deadness to the world in saying to others, "Stand by thyself, come not near to me, I am holier than thou." But Samuel Hallett was one of those who pursue "whatsoever things are lovely and of good report;" and who not only *maintain* but "*adorn* the doctrine of God our Saviour." His natural disposition was humane and tender, and

151

gentle and obliging; and this being principled and sanctified by divine grace, produced in him that cheerfulness of mind, and gentleness of manners, and readiness of intercourse, and preference of the gratification of others to his own indulgence, that attracted and attached all who knew him. For whatever some ungracious lovers of themselves may think, as if it was religion that procured *them* dislike and disesteem, the words of the Apostle will always be found true,—“He that in these things serveth Christ, is accepted of God and approved of men.”

No one can question his *beneficence*; for he had it in his power, as well as inclination, to do good and to communicate. His life was a stream of kindness flowing from a generous heart. Who ever applied to him in vain? Who ever was insulted, or humbled, or pained, in receiving relief? His charity was administered with feeling and courteousness. He was a cheerful giver. Freely he had received, and he freely gave.

Some congregations are not remarkable for hospitality to ministers. But our friend was a noble exception. *His* house was always open to receive and accommodate the workmen, who are worthy of their hire. And he found, as Henry says, that the ark is a guest that always pays for its entertainment. It made him more intimately known to many of the servants of God, who benefited him by their conversation, and gave him an interest in their prayers. How many of these had said in their Master's name, when under his roof, “Peace be to this house!” How many of these bore him upon their minds at a throne of grace, in the closet, the family, and the sanctuary, during his sickness and death!

152

As he was a man of good natural talents, of a sound understanding and a clear judgment, and had an enlarged acquaintance with men and things, he was continually consulted, and he much served his generation by his wise and cool counsel and advice.

But nothing could exceed his *diffidence* and *humility*. He was clothed with it. A copy of a letter has been found, written years ago, to a friend, anxiously laying open the state of his mind; and wishing his unreserved and faithful opinion concerning his experience, after stating what makes him fear that he is a stranger to the new creation, and what sometimes leads him to hope that he is not. It would well bear reading, if time would allow. The solicitude it betrayed was a token for good: it could only have resulted from the very thing it questioned. This carefulness never diminished. Instead of talking of his conversion as a thing past and certain, he, like one before him, prayed, "Lord, create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." He required to be urged to come forward and make a profession of religion when he first joined our communion: for while his minister and all his fellow-worshippers had the fullest confidence concerning him, *he* feared that the root of the matter was not in him, and that, having only a name to live, he should prove a disgrace to the cause of Christ, and come short at last. Lor, like Fearing in the Pilgrim's Progress, he had no fear beside this. He was not devoid of moral heroism. He would not have hesitated to cut oif a right hand or pluck out a right eye. He never shunned the avowal of divine truth, or drew back from following where duty led the way. And if his soul refused to be comforted, it was not because he

153

did not love and desire the blessings contained in the promises; but because he *did* love and desire them supremely; and *therefore* feared that they were too good and great to be designed for one like him. For though it be commonly said that it is easy to believe what we wish, the experience of every man gives the lie to the observation; and the more importance we attach to a thing, and the more our happiness is felt to be wrapped up in it, the more anxious we become; the more liable and alive we are to fear; we want evidence upon evidence, and assurance upon assurance, and can never deem ourselves sufficiently certain. If it be blessed to be "poor in spirit," "to hunger and thirst after righteousness," "to mourn for sin if "blessed is the man that feareth always," he was, the Bible being true, an heir of promise; and whatever he suspected, his title was divinely valid.

His *sentiments* were the result of examination and conviction; and he held them with firmness, both with regard to doctrine and dissent. But who ever witnessed the least intolerance or bigotry in him? When did he ever lay an undue stress on any of the circumstantial differences of real Christians? At what moment could he not say from the heart, "Grace be with *all* them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with sincerity:" For *whosoever* shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother?"

It has been said, and truly said, that in religion a man is really what he is relatively. By this, rule let the departed be tried. What a testimony has he left in the bosom of all those most intimately connected with him, that "in simplicity and godly sincerity,

154

not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God he had his conversation in the world, and more abundantly to them-ward!" What tender and approving remembrances has he left,—in *those* servants who so long attended upon him,—in *those* workmen that have grown grey in his service,*—in *this* worthy partner of his business, with whom, from the commencement to the close of their connexion, there never was one moment's disagreement,—in *this* large circle of friends, many of whom have come from a distance to weep at his grave,—in *this* mourning, bleeding widow,—in *these* tender and devoted daughters,—in *this* amiable and dutiful son-in-law,—in *these* church members with whom he walked,—in *these* fellow-deacons with whom he officiated,—and in *this* minister on whom his intelligent and mild countenance always beamed affection and respect, who for thirty-four years was never grieved or tried by him; and who, though often employed as the comforter of his friend, was never once called to reprove!

This brings me to observe his conduct in connexion with the church. Of this he was not only a very honourable member, but a deacon also. To this office he had been chosen for a number of years by the suffrage of his brethren, keeping their eye upon the recommendations of the Apostle, "Likewise also must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of

* One of whom said on the morning of his interment, "Forty-two years I have been working for him; when I pleased him he praised me, when I offended him he forgave me, when I was distressed he relieved me, when I was sick he visited me,—and I wish this day was over."

155

filthy lucre; holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also be first proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave; not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well, purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus."

And here can I avoid remarking what you must all have observed, the *invariable constancy of his attendance on the means of grace?* This is the way to prosper. "The hand of the diligent maketh rich. Blessed is the man that heareth me, says Wisdom, watching early at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." The religion of those who can wholly or partially forsake the assembling of themselves together, must not only be in a very low, but a very doubtful state. "In all places," says God, "where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee;" but *his* presence and *his* benediction they deem it not worth their while to put themselves to the least inconvenience to enjoy. *He* was as regularly in his pew as the preacher in his pulpit, considering the duty of pastor and people to be mutual; and knowing that the conduct of an officer in the house of God, is more observed and exemplary than that of a private member. The week-day services were always attended by him as well as the sabbatical; for he delighted in them, and found them necessary to refresh and enliven his mind in the things of God among the vexing and deadening cares of the world. All the visits he paid or received were regu-

156

lated with a view to his religious opportunities, and never interrupted them. Nor was he like some who are laid up and confined on the Sunday, yet abroad, in any weather, in their own affairs, on the Monday—for the Sabbath is a very healing day with them. How often has he been here, when, like his minister, (forgive me this wrong,) pain and indisposition would have justified absence! No, he *could* not question his attachment to the sanctuary; and therefore he said, with a peculiar emphasis and confidence in him; “I *have* loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.”

I could enlarge; for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. But I have already far exceeded your time, and can only justify the length of the service by a fact we all feel, that such an occasion and such a character do not often come before us.

Well he loved the temple below, and is now in the temple above, never more to go out. He loved the Sabbath, and on the morning of that sacred day he entered the Sabbath that remains for all the people of God. He loved the praises of Israel, and now he is singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. “LET US ALSO GO, THAT WE MAY DIE WITH HIM.”

What shall I say to this bereaved family? I am far from wishing to diminish your loss; but you must, yes, you must be thankful—that he has not been suddenly snatched from you, but after various intimations to prepare you for it, and in a manner the most gradual and gentle—that he has not been prematurely removed, but in a good old age, like a shock of corn fully ripe in his season—that he has not left you in embarrassed or contracted circum-

157

stances, but having all things richly to enjoy, and possessing the means of doing good—that you are not sorrowing as those who have no hope, assured that, absent from the body, he is present with the Lord.

YOU, the long and faithful and affectionate wife of his bosom, in whom his heart so perfectly reposed; you, I know from your disposition, as well as years, will be “a widow indeed, desolate and trusting in God, and continuing in prayer night and day”—and prayer will bring you the relief, the comfort, the grace, every remaining duty and trial will require, during the diminished period of your separation.

My YOUNG FRIENDS; “a good man,” says Solomon, “leaveth an inheritance to his children; an inheritance better than thousands of gold and silver—his example, his instructions, the prayers he offered, and which are had in remembrance before God, and the special blessing of divine Providence. For God acts upon the principles of the truest friendship; and as David asked, “Is there any left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan’s sake?” so “the generation of the upright shall be blessed.” Indeed, whatever advantages you derive from the deceased, you could not be saved by his religion. He could not exercise repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, for you. Godliness is a personal thing—you must be made partakers of the same grace, and be made wise for yourselves. And, blessed be God, you have chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from you. He is therefore, if not watching over you now, yet waiting to receive you into everlasting habitations. Be concerned to perpetuate him by

158

spiritual descent. Let there be no contrast ever complained of between the father and the children. Let not the cause of God, or of the poor, write Icabocl on the door; or passengers shake the head and say, "the glory of that house is departed." Catch his mantle. Imbibe his spirit. Maintain the principles and the conduct, the piety, and the benevolence, and the hospitality, which cause the memory of your just father to be blessed.

With Him who has made this breach among us is the residue of the Spirit. Let us pray that by the conversion of some, and the increased zeal of others, the loss made by this removal may be repaired. And with regard to ourselves, individually, let us resolve not to "be slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

To conclude. I ask you all, my dear hearers, with whom do you wish to die? With Lazarus? If so, you must live with him. He died as he lived; and our friend died as he lived. I have little opinion of a death-bed religion. It is a bad time in which to attend to the things which belong to your everlasting peace. True repentance is, indeed, never too late; but late repentance is seldom true; and when it is true, how can it be evidenced, either to the individual himself, or to others? It *must*, and it *ought*, to remain doubtful.

Your desire, therefore, is nothing, unless it leads you to wish to live with the people of God, as well as to die with them. But if you love them; if you delight in them as the excellent of the earth; if you make them your examples and companions; if you take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, "I will go with you, for I have heard that God is

159

with you if you run the same race, looking unto Jesus: then at death, "being let go," you shall go "to your own company," and "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God." Yea, "you *are* come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly, and Church of the first born which are written in Heaven; and to God the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Amen.

AN ATTEMPT TO REGULATE THE CLAIMS
OF THE
CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

A SERMON
PREACHED AT THE SEPARATION OF
THE REV. JAMES STRATTON,
TO THE PASTORAL OFFICE
OVER THE
CHURCH AND CONGREGATION
MEETING IN
PADDINGTON CHAPEL,
NOVEMBER 18, 1818.

“Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the Messengers of the Churches, and the Glory of Christ.

“Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the Churches, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.”—2 COR. viii. 23, 24.

TO THOMAS WILSON, ESQ.

SIR,

IT would pain me, could I think, that the Pastor, or the Church and Congregation, or the numerous and respectable Ministers who joined them in urging the Publication of the following Discourse, deemed themselves slighted by the Individuality of this Dedication.

I am persuaded, however, that without a single Exception, they will applaud the Conviction that has determined me, without his Knowledge, to inscribe these Pages solely to a Gentleman—who was the generous Founder and Supporter of the Chapel, in which the Solemnities were held—who has long been the unwearied Friend and munificent Patron of the Institution to which the People owe their approved Minister—who values property much more as an Instrument of usefulness than of Honour or Enjoyment—and, by the Grace of God, is ready to every good Work.

I am, Sir,

With the most unfeigned Respect,

Your humble and obedient Servant,

WILLIAM JAY.

Bath, Dec. 1, 1818.

163

“Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my Priest.”—JUDGES xvii. 13.

WE are here led back to an early period of the Jewish history, and to a sad portion of the Jewish church. But while we wonder and condemn, it becomes us to admit into the account the peculiar disadvantages, civil and religious, under which they now laboured; and to remember, that sins are to be judged of, not by their grossness, but guilt; and that guilt is to be determined by the measure of means and privileges neglected and abused. “The servant which knew his Lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”

—Let us enter into the story. Here is an old matron very covetous, and yet very religious in her way. She had saved up eleven hundred shekels of silver, and concealed them. But Micah her son soon finds and seizes the treasure—for there are children who are neither ashamed nor afraid to steal from their parents;—upon which, she falls into a passion, and not only raves, but even curses. Her imprecating the divine vengeance on the head of the thief, terrified him; he confessed the roguery, and restored

164

the money. This threw her into an ecstasy of pleasure, so that, instead of upbraiding him, she exclaims, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, my son:" declaring at the same time that she had *intended* the whole sum for holy use—"I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord, from my hand for my son, to make a graven image and a molten image." The property, however, though wholly pledged, was too precious, on recovery, to be wholly parted with: she therefore keeps nine hundred shekels, and appropriates only two for the sacred service.

These "she gave to the founder, who made thereof a graven image and a molten image; and they were in the house of Micah." Thus a species of idolatry entered this family, and from this family spread through the whole tribe of Dan. It was not a sin committed against the first commandment, in worshipping another God: but against the second commandment, in worshipping the true God under a similitude.

But what will he do for a priest? "He consecrated one of his own sons." But He does not long remain in office. The case was this. A strolling Levite had gone abroad in search of employment and promotion. In his vagabond rambles he comes to Mount Ephraim, and to the house of Micah. "And Micah said unto him, Whence comest thou? And he said unto him, I am a Levite of Bethlehem-Judah, and I go to sojourn where I may find a place. And Micah said unto him. Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel, and thy victuals." Clothes and food, and twenty-five shillings a year, were no great matters. "The ministry," says Henry, "is a good calling, but a bad trade." The Levite however is content, and his employer is happy

165

—“Then, said Micah, Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest.”

Here we have something to commend, and something to censure, whether we consider the case more generally, or particularly.

It was surely *right in him, to be concerned for the blessing of God.*—“The Lord will do me good.” It is obvious that he expected nothing without the Divine Favour; and was persuaded that “the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it.” I am bold to say, that many of our fellow-creatures are not equally wise. They live without God in the world. God is not in all their thoughts. If ever he breaks in among them, he is considered an intruder, and they labour to expel him, saying with those in the days of Job, “Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways or with those in the time of Isaiah, “Cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us.” Not that this, is the utterance of the lip, but of the life: actions, we say, speak louder than words; and the sacred writers, to shock us with their nature and tendency, put the dispositions and the conduct of the wicked into language.—Have they succeeded in business? “They sacrifice to their net, and burn incense to their own drag; because by them their portion is fat, and their meat plenteous.” Have they a journey or an enterprise before them? They say, “To-day, or to-morrow, we *will* go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain.” Whereas they ought to say, “If *the Lord will*, we shall live, and do this or that.” They are anxious and eager to please men, especially if they have power and influence; but they forget that

every thing depends on our pleasing God. For in *His* favour is life. He only is blessed whom God blesses. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." We should be principally concerned to secure the benediction of God; and above all things His gracious favour.—"Remember me, O Lord, with the favour thou bearest unto thy people!"

But while it was right in Micah to be regardful of the blessing of God—it was *wrong in him to derive his expectation from such an ambiguous and delusive source of evidence*.—"Now I know the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest." Ah, my brethren, this fine reasoner has had a number of followers in every age. The Jews, because they had among them the ark and the temple, and the rite of circumcision, and could call Abraham their father, presumed upon their security; and their destruction took them by surprise. Many now, according as the degree of their ignorance requires a grosser or a more refined delusion, conclude that God will surely do them good, because they were born of Christian parents, or were baptized in their infancy, or have observed Good Friday and Lent, or have fasted and given alms to the poor, or have been moral in their deportment, or have reformed themselves from every vice, or have been the subjects of conviction of sin, or possess edifying gifts, or rank with professors of religion, "having a name to live"—But it would be endless to particularize all the articles in this magazine of delusion. "He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" My dear hearers, you must be accepted

167

in the beloved; you must be saved by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; you must worship God in the spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, before you are authorized to say, with regard to prosperity or adversity, sickness or health, life or death, time or eternity—"Now know I that the Lord will do me good." "We know," says the Apostle, "that ail things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—But all besides this, is only the repetition of Micah's folly in another shape.

Again. I observe the same mixture of right and wrong, truth and error, in a more particular instance, and which brings us nearer our subject. Micah does well in *prizing* the priestly office, for it was the appointment of God; but he does ill in viewing it *without discrimination*, and regarding it as an *absolute* criterion or expedient; for a thing may be excellent in itself, and not available in all cases. But his confidence has no qualification: he despairs of nothing, *solely* on the ground that he has to officiate for him, one of the sacerdotal race. "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest."

Behold then, my brethren, the developement of the plan we have in view this morning. You have now auspiciously established among you, a settled ministry. This is an institution for which you ought to be thankful; you should consider it a token for good, and you should look for a blessing from it. And yet you may conceive of it improperly, you may think more highly of it than you ought to think, you may even convert the privilege into a penalty. Allow me to say, with regard to the ministry of our young and

esteemed brother now separated to the pastoral office—in this church and congregation—That you may undervalue it—That you may rely too much upon it—That you may pervert it. Against these three mistakes, it will be my endeavour to guard you. I shall—

I. ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY THE ESTIMATION IN WHICH IT IS YOUR DUTY TO HOLD THE MINISTRY.

II. I SHALL SHEW IN WHAT CASES YOUR DEPENDENCE UPON IT MAY BE IMPROPER AND CENSURABLE. And

III. I SHALL EVINCE THE POSSIBILITY OF YOUR EVEN TURNING THE BLESSING INTO A CURSE.

I. Did you ever observe, my brethren, the language of the Apostle to the Thessalonians? “Know them that labour among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.” This, it must be acknowledged, is a high demand. To “know” them—to “esteem” them—to esteem them “highly”—to esteem them “very” highly—to esteem them very highly “in love!” But the Apostle adds—“for their work’s sake.” As if he had said, the respect regards the office rather than the man; and attaches to the man only in reference to the office, and in proportion only as he *is* the office really and alive. Such is the EXALTED ESTIMATION in which it is our DUTY to hold the ministry of the word. How shall we JUSTIFY IT?

Let us appeal to *the declarations of God the judge of all*. What was to crown, according to Jeremiah, the return of the Jews from Babylon into their own land? “I will give them pastors after mine own heart, who shall feed them with knowledge and understanding.” What does Isaiah consider a full

169

compensation for all the calamities of life? “Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying. This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.” What does God by Amos deem worse than famine and drought? “Behold the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, or a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord, and shall not find it.” What does the Lord Jesus deem the worst of all judgments, with which to alarm the Ephesian church to repentance? “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.”

Let us appeal to *the example and authority of the Lord Jesus*. It was said by a Scotch writer that God had one only begotten Son, and he made a preacher of him. This is no more quaint than true. It is certain that when he entered this world, he did not become a merchant, he did not become a scholar, he did not place himself at the head of an army, or ascend a throne—all this was beneath him: but he *could* say, “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation he *did go* “through all the towns and villages preaching:” and with regard to *Him* it was said, “The poor have the gospel preached unto them!” And he not only honoured the minis-

170

try, by preaching in person—"He came," says the Apostle, "and preached peace to you that were afar off, and to them that were nigh." How did He preach to them that were "afar off?" Not personally. He never passed himself the confines of Judea: He was the minister of the circumcision: He was only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.—But, he did it relatively: He did it by sending forth his commissioned servants, and saying, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following."

Let us appeal to *the manner in which the office was fully and permanently established*. We are taught to consider it as nothing less than the fruit of our Lord's mediation, the consequence and the proof of his exalted state. And was it a trifle for which he died and rose again? Was it an insignificance that crowned the triumph of this unexampled conqueror? "Wherefore he saith, when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and he gave gifts unto men"—And what were they? "He gave 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 of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Do we not here see that the office is not of temporary obligation, but to last as long as the sun and moon endure throughout all generations? Do we not see that ministers are the gifts of Christ, and the gifts not of his bounty only,

171

but of his glory?—A spiritual excellency requires a spiritual perception to discern it. “If the world knew *him* not,” if they saw in him “no form nor comeliness,” what wonder is it, if they see none in his servants, who are men of like passions with ourselves, and compassed with infirmities, and often destitute of secular attractions? but angels, who are proverbially wise; angels, who saw what was the first thing He did as soon as He had received all power in heaven and in earth; angels, who heard him say. I’ll now bestow something, do something worthy of my elevation—and then established the ministry in its various branches and degrees: angels in their intercourse with our world, view the heralds of salvation as the most important characters in it, and repair to the ordination of a minister with more interest than mortals ever crowd to witness the coronation of a king. Angels were present when Timothy received his orders: “I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.” They rejoice, not at the foundation of a museum, but of a sanctuary; and, if they foreknow things, exult not at the birth of a Wellington, but of a Whitfield.

For let us appeal to the *design* of the institution. It has been remarked, that the office of a lawyer is important, because it watches over our property; and the office of a physician much more so, because it guards our health; “For the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment.” But even these are nothing to the soul and eternity; the soul and eternity alone are absolutely great: yet to *these* our office is appropriated, and by these it is infinitely dignified.

What, my young brother, can equal the mission which you have received of the Lord Jesus “to testify the gospel of the grace of God;” and “to shew unto men the way of salvation?” No angel ever came from heaven to earth on so weighty an errand as yours—“I send thee,” says the Lord Jesus, “to open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.” *Your* aim is nothing less than to rescue guilty and depraved, yet immortal beings from the lowest hell, and conduct them to the heaven of heavens; to transform them from the resemblance of the devil, into the perfection of the image of the invisible God. And when all the labours of other professors will be annihilated: when the finest paintings, the sublimest statues, the most durable monuments, the pyramids of Egypt;—when the immortal works (so are they called) of philosophers, legislators, historians, poets, shall be consumed; and the earth, and all that is therein, shall be burned up—the effects of your tears, and studies, and visiting, and praying, and preaching, shall remain. And when every other relation now subsisting is destroyed, and the race of men will never blend again as masters and servants, as princes and subjects, as parents and children, and husbands and wives, the relation which has been formed and publicly ratified between you and this people, will be indissoluble; and when they die, or when you are dying, “What is your hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even they in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming? For they are your glory and joy.” I know not how to leave this article,

173

or how to do anything like justice, to it. It is, my dear brother, the sublime and the momentous *end* of your function that reflects so much honour upon it, and attaches so much importance to it. Things common or mean in themselves may acquire unspeakable excellence and grandeur by association and destiny. Your office is frequently held forth in the Scripture by images derived from employments, abstractedly considered, rather humble than glorious; but the weight it acquires from relation and design is never for a moment left out. You are “a soldier,” but it is in “the good fight of faith.” You are a “fisher,” but “a fisher of men.” You are a “labourer,” but a “labourer together with God.” You are a “builder,” but it is in “God’s building.” You are a “watchman,” but you “watch for souls.”

You watch for SOULS for whom the Lord
 Did heavenly bliss forego;
 For SOULS that must for ever live
 In raptures or in woe.

Thus a small insignificant piece of paper is converted into a bank note, and by a sovereign impression becomes current for a thousand pounds. Thus Raphael took a roll of canvas, of which the weaver thought nothing, and the vender nothing: but he threw down upon it his immortal tints, and bade it become the admiration of the world. And thus, Sir, your office rises into ineffable greatness, by taking the soul of man for its subject, and eternity for its aim.

Again. Let us appeal to *its adaptation to usefulness*. A minister is the same to a Christian as a master to a pupil. The pupil, left to himself, would be neglectful; other things would crowd in, and the lesson be often forgotten. But the master, by his

174

fixed and regular attentions, keeps off neglect and forgetfulness. Though the Scriptures are in the hands of all, and all are commanded to search them, we know what are the avocations, interruptions, and indifferences of the generality of mankind. The minister, by his separation from "the affairs of this life," and giving himself "wholly to reading, and meditation, and prayer," is likely to become better acquainted with the extent of revelation than others; and will be able to unite what lies in the Scriptures scattered; to particularize what is general, and to apply what is common. He has an opportunity to place things so directly before the mind, that it cannot get by them unobserved; and so to characterize individuals, that hearers cannot elude the finger-charge of conscience, "Thou art the man." He follows his hearers into the various relations of life, and trains of condition, and presents the most suitable directions, warnings, cautions, and encouragements. He studies tempers, and prejudices, and infirmities, and urges each by the most appropriate motives; he bends to circumstances, and becomes all things to all men, if by any means he might save some. In nothing does the wisdom of God appear more than in such an appointment. Julian the apostate was so struck with the importance of such an institution, in order to maintain or spread any system, that he had thoughts of establishing a Pagan ministry himself, for the revival and promotion of heathenism. Indeed what can equal the advantage of a living address from man to man, where numbers are assembled together in silence, the place they occupy sacred, and all reminded that they are in the presence of God? No other mode of communicating information with

175

which we are acquainted, or which we are able, to conceive, can awaken half the attention, or excite half the interest, as the ordinance of preaching the word: it is not only the understanding speaking to the understanding, but the heart speaking to the heart, and the conscience to the conscience. By this engine, if wisely used, every power of the mind is plied, and every feeling of the soul is touched. God forbid we should ever undervalue the Bible, yet we are accustomed to say "The gospel is come" into such a town or village, when it begins to be preached there; and there is a propriety in the remark: for though the gospel was there before in the Scriptures, it was there as a revelation only, not as a dispensation. It was there presented to the eye, but not addressed to the ear, and "faith cometh by hearing." There was the "hammer," as God calls his word; but no hand to strike with it; There was the trumpet; but not the man to put it to his mouth, that it might "give a certain sound." There was the seed, but not the sower; and it is the seed, not lying in the barn, but sown, that yields "first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear." To all this we may add—that baptism, as an ordinance of God, is to be administered.—That churches are to be formed, and members added to them, as souls are converted.—That the Lord's supper is to be disposed to the household of God.—That his sheep and his lambs are to be watched and fed.—That discipline is to be maintained, and offenders suspended or cut off. Can a book, even an inspired book, do all this?

Once more. Let us appeal to the *success* by which it has been owned and honoured. How many have been called by it out of darkness into God's marvellous

176

light! Of the numbers now serving in this vale of tears, and the myriads adoring before the throne, what an immense majority are acknowledging that it was by the preaching of the gospel that as sinners they were converted from the error of their ways! Yet be it remembered, that the usefulness of the ministry is not to be confined to conversion. It *helps* those much who have believed through grace. It builds them up in their most holy faith; and presents every man perfect in Christ Jesus. How many of you can here bear a grateful testimony! How often has the minister been to you like the angel to Hagar in the parching desert: he has opened your eyes and shewn you a well! How often has he removed your fears, and inspired you with holy confidence! How often has he strengthened your weak hands and confirmed your feeble knees! How often has he comforted you in all your tribulation, so that you have returned home able to face with fresh courage the trials of life again! Perhaps to him you owe your respectability in the world: perhaps to his wise counsels and faithful rebukes you owe your preservation from a false, or a fatal step, that would have involved you in mischief or ruin—perhaps to him you owe even your own self beside. For neither is the usefulness of the ministry to be judged of by its saving effects. In how many ways does it restrain where it does not convert; and moralize where it does not sanctify! Indeed, with regard to the morals and welfare of the community, we are persuaded, if an accurate comparison could be made, much more would be found to depend on ministers than magistrates. In the largeness of our wishes, and while reflecting upon the degenerate state of every neigh-

177

bourhood, after all the means used for their amendment, we sometimes complain too much, and are not aware of the variety and the degree of wholesome and happy effects produced by religious institutions. Were our altars thrown down, our sanctuaries shut up, and every minister silenced, we should soon read, in frightful style, the value of an office which too many despise.

Finally. We appeal to *the divine engagements*. For, my brethren, God has not left the institution to its natural tendency: neither are we encouraged and animated, with regard to its utility, by observation and experience. We have his word, upon which he has caused us to hope, and the Scripture cannot be broken. He has said, "In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee." He has said, "I will abundantly bless her provisions, I will fill her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall shout aloud for joy." He has said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Now these are not remarks designed to lengthen out a discourse; neither are they great swelling-words of vanity, arising from a wish to give a disproportionate importance to a calling in which the speaker himself is placed. They are the words of truth and soberness. They are reasonings; they are arguments; they are proofs: and the more they are examined fairly and impartially, the more worthy of countenance and support will the ministerial function appear.

And therefore, my young friend, feel the worth of your work, and magnify not yourself, but your office. A personal valuation would be censurable, but a re-

178

lative is both allowable and useful. It is perfectly compatible with humbleness of mind, while it will preclude thoughtlessness and levity; and prevent all those indecorums and buffooneries, from which you have been so exemplarily secured, but which bring discredit on so many of our rising priesthood. It will make you feel your responsibility; it will be a source of vigilance, circumspection, and prayer; it will inspire you with a holy anxiety to walk worthy of the high vocation to which you are called.

And you, the members of this church and congregation, be assured, that instead of rebuking your pleasure on such an occasion as this, we partake of it, "and joy and rejoice with you." Yes, these are reasons, why you should hail the ministry of the gospel with which you are favoured, and indulge a lively expectation of blessings from it. But the expectation must not be *unqualified*. We wish not to diminish the regard you feel, but we would purify the principle, we would give it a safe direction, we would keep it within proper bounds. We therefore proceed,

II. To observe. THAT YOU MAY OVERRATE THE MINISTRY; AND TO SPECIFY THE INSTANCES IN WHICH YOUR RELIANCE UPON IT IS IMPROPER.

And First, It appears *in laying an undue stress on a particular description of its officers*. Micah thought nothing of the character of his priest, if he had Levitical blood in him. He might be as wicked as Satan, if he could prove legitimate descent: and therefore, though he knew him to be an idle, time-serving, hungry hireling, prostituting himself to the service of idols to get a piece of bread, he was satisfied, and

179

sung out his superstitious confidence; "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest." What ignorance and delusion, to expect that the divine blessing would assuredly flow through such fingers, merely because of the tribe to which he belonged! And yet are there not persons, in a much more enlightened period, who approximate the same folly? Some, whatever may be his gifts or grace, would not for the world hear a man that is not episcopally sanctioned—yet will hear any thing upon earth that is. Yea, we have been told, that in this country, all who worship out of the established church are left to the uncovenanted mercies of God; that all their ministers are destitute of a legitimate authorization; and therefore that all their ministrations are invalid. Yet it is not many years ago, since the venerable Seeker filled our metropolitan chair; but he was baptized by the hands of dissenters, without either godfathers or godmothers to be answerable for him. Yet he ordained numbers to the sacred office; and, what is more lamentable still, he baptized his present Majesty, the head of the church, all of which, according to this principle, was null and void, as being performed by an officiator who either had no baptism himself, or a useless one. Nor was this a solitary instance. It is well known that Bishop Reynolds in England, and Hopkins in Ireland, and Cooper and Leighton in Scotland, were in the same dilemma, so that all they did personally, and all that was done by those on whom they laid hands, was illegal and ineffectual; and now, alas! it is to be feared, that it is too late to stop consequences, or even to ascertain the multiplied directions in which the unhallowed streams have

run!!—And are there persons pretending to serious religion, who know the importance of doctrine, and of holiness in a minister, and yet can recommend people to attend on a man, *merely* because he is a Levite, however wretched in living and teaching too—while God has placed near them a man of acknowledged godliness, and who preaches “all the words of this life?” O tell it not in Gath. “What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.”

But let us turn from the episcopalian to the academic. A degree of the same leaven works nearer home. It is, blessed be God, the boast of the dissenters—forgive us this wrong—that among us, office never has been, and never can be, a substitute for morality of character and truth of doctrine. Yet there was a time—for there is less of it than formerly—when a minister was rather coldly received and lightly regarded, unless he had been brought up at the feet of some Gamaliel. We are far from depreciating the schools of the prophets. A thousand advantages attend a solid education for the ministry: and it is peculiarly desirable in this age of increased and diffused knowledge, for young men to be initiated into their work through these excellent institutions, which the grace of God has provided. But if we abuse privileges by laying too much stress upon them, God will pour contempt upon our pride, and shew that he can call a man from the field, as well as from the grove. Some of our most acceptable and successful preachers have been, shall I say, rather irregularly introduced: but what they wanted in Levitical training, they made up in diligence and zeal: and while their more learned and regular brethren, who rather looked suspiciously towards them,

were smoothing their dull periods, and softening the tone of the bells, whose "drowsy tinklings were to lull the distant folds," these men, with burning words, and fervent in spirit, rushed forth and called sinners, to repentance.

Some regard only a man of genius and splendid abilities. Talents are the gifts of God; and it is delightful to see extensive learning, a profound understanding, the power of reasoning, and eloquence of speech, consecrated to the use of the sanctuary. But it is not to be concealed, that men of the mightiest fame will be surrounded hereafter by a small number of converts, compared with some whose natural and acquired endowments never raised them into celebrity; but who deeply knew, and affectionately preached, Jesus Christ and him crucified. The treasure is put into earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may appear to be of God, and not of man. Dr. Owen, early in his ministry, went to hear Dr. Calamy, one of the most famous preachers of the day. After waiting in the place for some time, he saw ascending the pulpit a plain country man, and felt disposed to withdraw; but reverence forbade.. He was soon struck with his prayer, and still more with his sermon. His text was "O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt?" and he entered so experimentally into the doubts of God's people, and so satisfactorily solved them, that the mind of this "prince of divines," as Cecil calls him, was so effectually released from a burden of distress, that from that hour he went on his way rejoicing. And I knew a man who was once hearing a minister, whose preaching was very inferior to his character. At first he was much disappointed, and a naughty temper was

working in him; but he received, he hopes, a very salutary rebuke by seeing at the end of the pew a poor Woman bathed in tears, under this very sermon; and he said to himself “what God has sanctified call not thou common.” A spruce, self-conceited young divine was recently in company, turning into ridicule a very plain, but laborious, useful preacher in a village. There are occasions when if we were to hold our peace, the very stones would cry out. A senior minister therefore said, “Sir, I never heard any one admire you, except yourself; but I have heard many speak well of the labours of this good man. I have never heard of any good you have done; but I have admitted two members into my church, both of whom were lately awakened by his warm and familiar addresses.”

Some are entirely wrapped up in a favourite. A preference is allowable; and I hope it will always, among you, be in favour of the man you have voluntarily chosen. But he cannot, he ought not to be always confined to this pulpit. Others must preach occasionally; and how censurable will it be if they look down and see empty pews; if they watch ill visages coming up the aisles, and malignant features in the seats—that seem to say to God, that he could not bless them now, if he would! Some, if they know it, will not go unless their idol is to preach; but when he is present, it is enough; they think of nothing else; and go with the presumption “now know I that the Lord will do me good.” “But might not this idolatry justly provoke God to remove this robber of his glory, or to render his services unprofitable?” “For are ye yet carnal? For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions,

183

are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

Secondly. You improperly rely upon it, when you view it as *the only medium of usefulness*. It is owing to this, that some pious men, concerned to do good (and such a concern is natural to the new creature), are eager to enter the sacred office when they have little encouragement from the Providence of God. Hence they often leave their callings, and involve themselves in worldly difficulties—not considering that there are numberless ways in which we may glorify God and serve our generation according to his will, without our assuming the ministerial character. Paul speaks even of "women that laboured with him in the gospel not by preaching, for this he interdicts, but by influences and exertions becoming their sex and their condition in life. And, blessed be God in our day, we know how to understand this. We have multiplied proofs that females can co-operate with ministers in the advancement of the cause of God. Witness those young women who devote so many of their leisure hours to the instruction of our Sunday schools. Witness those mothers and grandmothers, who from children teach their Timothies to know the Holy Scriptures, which are able to; make them wise unto salvation. Witness those wives who by their "chaste conversation coupled with fear," and "the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit,"

184

“win” their husbands “without the word.” Witness those servants who by early rising, and order, and cleanliness, and fidelity, and not answering again, “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.” A man may carry on business, and devote a good portion of it to the support and spreading of the gospel: and *he* labours for God in the shop, while another pleads for him in the pulpit: and I feel it my duty to pray for the success of the tradesman as well as of the preacher.

And as God is not to be confined to this expedient in doing good *by* us, neither is He to be confined to it in doing good *to* us. The Holy One of Israel may limit us, but we must not limit Him. He dwelleth not exclusively in temples made with hands: neither are ministers the only mediums of his gracious communications. Preaching is indeed the ordinary means - by which He converts, edifies, and comforts His people; and His people therefore prize it; and He induces even those who never had the advantage to long after it; and He will not sanction our neglect, not even our occasional neglect, not even the neglect of the week-day service, when it is in our power to attend. Yet persons may be called to travel in “a dry and thirsty land where no water is.” They may be removed by business into a neighbourhood where the dispensation of the gospel is not enjoyed. They may be confined by accident, disease, or infirmity from the courts of the Lord, in a kind of domestic exile—But in cases like these, when they are unable to follow Him, He will follow them. He will teach them by the rod, when they cannot hear the word. He will be “a little sanctuary to them in the midst of the heathen:” and where they little expected any

185

thing either of God or glory, give them reason often to exclaim "This is no other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." And have you not found private devotion, the reading of the Scriptures, family worship, meetings for social prayer, Christian conversation—have you not found these profitable as well as the ministry of the word?

Thirdly. It is unduly regarded when you suppose it can do you any good *without the influence of the Spirit of God*. This is a lesson which ministers must learn. In proportion, my dear brother, as you learn it, you are likely to be useful. It will make you, not less studious, but more prayerful. You will honour God more by your dependence, and them that honour Him, He will honour. You will then also be encouraged and animated in your work, not according to the degree of your learning, or eloquence, or reasoning powers, but the sufficiency of his grace and the promise he has given: "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." xknd people must learn this lesson, if they would hear to profit. God would be accessary to idolatry, had he established any religious means that would become substitutes for his presence, or draw you off from dependence upon himself. He will convince you by experience, as well as Scripture, that instruments, however suitable in themselves, and though divinely appointed, can do nothing without his own

agency. He will bring you to look beyond means, and to cease from man; for in this, as well as in every thing else,

“Sure as on creatures we depend,
Our “hopes in disappointment end.”

The gospel is expressly called “the ministration of the Spirit,” and it is so denominated, not only to account for its revelation, but its efficiency. “Our gospel,” says the apostle to the Thessalonian converts, “came to you not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.” When Paul and Barnabas went forth preaching, “the hand of the Lord was with them,” and as the result, “many believed and turned unto the Lord.”

Fourthly, You improperly rest upon it when you imagine it can do you good without your own concern and concurrence. There are some who seem to believe that preaching is to operate like a charm; and that it is enough to wear the talisman, without thinking of it. They appear to confound it with those physical causes in nature, which act without our anxiety or even our knowledge. The process of digestion, the circulation of the blood, the secretion and mixture of the spirits and fluids, all these agencies go on as well when we are asleep as when we are awake.

But is this the case with your religious instruction and improvement? Can these go on, not only when you are attentive to the word, but when you are slumbering under it? Moral means can only operate morally. Even the influence of the Spirit does not supersede or even alter this process. When God sanctifies our powers, he engages and employs them He does not work upon man as mechanics work

upon dead matter, where the timber and the stone are unconscious of the operation of the saw and the chisel, and senseless of the uses for which they are preparing them. God does not work *upon* us at all.—He works *in* us: and he works in us to *will* and to *do*. So that what he does for us is not yet done without us. We are the instruments as well as the subjects of his operation. He teaches, but *he* does not learn. *He* does not repent, but leads us to repentance. *He* does not pray, but inclines and enables us to pray; and so of the rest.

Now let us apply this axiom to the case before us. The minister's thinking is not to hinder your thinking, but to aid it. What he delivers will do you no good, but as you understand it, and believe it, and receive it, and remember it, and act upon it. If you retire and pray before you go; if you enter the house of God with seriousness, and ask "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"—If, instead of hearing for others, you apply to your own souls the doctrine or the duties you hear: if you resolve in the strength of the Lord to forsake whatever you shall be convinced is wrong, and to pursue truth, regardless of consequences; if, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes you desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby:—You may then reasonably and scripturally conclude that God will surely do you good, and that your coming together will be for the better, and not for the worse: for he has said, "Blessed is the man that heareth me, *watching daily* at my gates, *waiting* at the posts of my doors."—"Blessed are they that hear the word of God and *do* it." "Whoso looketh into the perfect

law of liberty, and *continueth* therein, he being not a *forgetful hearer*, but a doer of the *work*, this man shall be blessed in his deed." But if you come here from mere custom or curiosity; if you come only to criticise, or to controvert; if you come, like Ezekiel's hearers, because the prophet is like "one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument if you turn a solemn ordinance into a mere amusement, and disregard the doctrine of the cross, in quest of good language and flights of fancy; if you begin without God, and retire without reflection; you have no warrant to hope for any saving advantage. Yea, it is the way

III. TO TURN THE BLESSING INTO A CURSE; AND TO RENDER THE MINISTRY THE VERY PLEDGE AND OCCASION OF YOUR SPIRITUAL AND EVERLASTING INJURY AND RUIN. This is a very awful part of our subject, not only as there is a possibility but also a probability that it will be exemplified in many, very many, who attend the preaching of the word. But I dare not keep it back. I must remark four things.

First. You are in great danger of *soul-delusion*. Why else does the Apostle James say, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves?" It is a thousand times better to have a wounded spirit than a seared conscience; a thousand times better to "write bitter things against" ourselves than to "cry peace, peace, when there is no peace." "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion."—But observe how the man is lulled into a belief of his religion and safety, when he has none. We are too prone to think well of people solely because of their attachment to a particular place of worship. We

189

forget that in our day there are few populous neighbourhoods in which the Gospel is not preached; and that an attendance may be maintained on the most evangelical means accompanied by every kind of conduct; so that the habit is no criterion. Yet when persons become frequent and fixed hearers, when they seem to listen with attention, and are accustomed to express their approbation of what is delivered, we are too apt to set them down as decided, or at least as very promising characters; and their reputation contributes to their self-confidence, for we naturally and strongly lean to a favourable opinion entertained of us by others. The delusion is increased by attaching themselves to the ministrations of a man noted for his plain dealing, and their being able to abide all his faithfulness and severity, while others are offended and flee. It is fed by the consideration that they have been convinced and alarmed; and that in their temporary and selfish distress some promise occurred to their mind, which without hesitation they applied, and felt relieved. It is strengthened, if they have sometimes heard the word with joy, and had their natural feelings powerfully excited by the eloquence and energy of the speaker. And now—now, nothing comes pure into their minds; everything is perverted and poisoned in its passage by this self-delusion. The sorrow of the world, which they must sometimes feel, is viewed by them as that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto life. The admonitions of the preacher, urging the children of promise not to be faithless but believing, they apply to themselves, and repel with earnestness every suspicion of the reality of their religion, every inducement to self-examination as the temptations of

190

the devil to doubt and unbelief—while without pain, without concern, they are led to view their wrong tempers, their offences in word, their forgetfulness of duty, the coldness of their zeal, and the reluctance of their charity, as the infirmities of the dear people of God; for Paul himself felt a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and said when he would do good, evil was present with him!

An alarm! I sound an alarm in the camp!—An enemy has crept in, and is harboured under the mask of a friend! I hardly know a plan for tranquillizing the conscience without putting it in a state of safety like this. It is an expedient that requires far less sacrifice and self-denial than any other with which we are acquainted. And as it is the most cheap, so it is the least suspected, and therefore the likeliest to be employed often, by a being who can “transform himself into an angel of light.” For this deceiver takes men, not only according to their tastes, but their convictions. What he is doing in the work of delusion in the church of Home by pilgrimages and penance, and relics, and holy water, he is too wise, too skilful to attempt by the same means among Protestants. His purpose would be frustrated by the use of follies so bare and exploded. He knows the difference between Madrid and London: and he also knows the difference between congregations hearing nothing but moral doctrine and salvation by works; and those assemblies which are blessed “with the truth as it is in Jesus.” In a large and very growing class of Christians, both in the establishment and out of it, he will not destroy (allow me a strange phraseology), as a superstitious and self-righteous, but as an evangelical devil—by the very means of grace—

191

by a mere attendance upon, and—a barren approbation of, a gospel minister.

Secondly. You are in great danger of *penal obduracy*. There is such a thing as judicial impenitency. It is indeed no ordinary guilt that provokes it; as we see in Pharaoh, whose heart “the Lord hardened.” And, Is not—let me ask, is not the guilt of those of you who sit under the sound of the Gospel faithfully and affectionately preached; is not your guilt peculiarly great? Have not you been reprov'd and warn'd much oftener than Pharaoh? Has not God spoken unto you by his Son? Have you not had “life and death set before you” in the most pleasing and awful forms? Have you not been “woed and awed, blessed and chastised?” Have not the messages of the word been enforced by the uneasiness of conscience; the admonitions of friendship; the afflictions of Providence; by personal sickness; by family bereavements? Yet you have made—him, year after year, stretch forth his hands all the day long to a disobedient and gainsaying people—and in the very “place of the holy” you remain “filthy still.” And would it then be wonderful if God should send this young minister with the direful commission he addressed to Isaiah, “Go and tell this people. Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.” This can be fulfilled as effectually by withholding a necessary influence as by any positive infliction. If food be deprived of its power to nourish, we die in the midst of plenty; yea,

192

with the very elements of life in our lips. And do you apprehend no danger? Do you feel no dread?

If when the rain fell upon your neighbour's field, yours was always seen dry and parched: if, when the sun shone upon the surrounding gardens, a dark cloud overshadowed yours—you would be instantly alarmed—you would be filled with horror—you would inquire, [by what peculiar offence you had provoked him to signalize you as the victim of his displeasure. And yet—yet you feel nothing, though you have seen numbers awakened and converted, sanctified and comforted by the word, while you have remained the same under all these salutary administrations—perhaps five—perhaps ten—perhaps twenty years—

But, setting aside a penal obduracy, there is—

Thirdly, what may be termed an *acquired impenitency*, *the natural result of conduct*. Thus a heart maybe “hardened through the deceitfulness of sin:” sin flattering the transgressor and alluring him on, till what was occasional becomes constant; and practice produces confirmed habits—and as well, says the prophet, may “the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as they learn to do good who are accustomed to do evil.” And the heart is perhaps equally hardened by a course of unsanctified familiarity with the ordinances of religion. No characters are so unlikely to be wrought upon as those who have heard till they are “past feeling,” and have been seized with “the spirit of slumber.” When Paul preached before Felix and Drusilla, as he reasoned of “temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come,” which of them “trembled?” Not Drusilla—she was a Jewess: but Felix, who was a heathen. She was

193

accustomed to the sparks; but they were new to him, and he startled. He had never heard the bell before—but she had lived hard by the church, and could sleep under the chimes, and the tollings too. We can usually distinguish a new hearer in our assemblies; he is struck; he listens; and sometimes seems forced to do it in spite of himself. But there is often a kind of careless ease, an air of indifference, an unsusceptibility of impression, in older hearers, that seem to say “We know all this—and *only* know it.”—I cannot be chargeable with personal reflection, as I am ignorant of individuals in this assembly. I can only draw the bow at a venture, but, O God, if the culprit be present, direct the arrow between the joints and the harness. Are there none here who once heard, and felt powerfully under the word? You then feared—you wept—you resolved—you promised, you forsook your vices—you sometimes even entered your closet—you seemed to walk with God. But after a time these convictions were starved away, and you returned again to folly. You neglected private prayer, and began to tamper with sin; at first in slighter instances, and then in more criminal—and, perhaps, though concealed from the eye of the world, you are now living in dishonesty, or drunkenness, or chambering and wantonness—and yet retain your place in the house of God. And now nothing you hear affects you—nothing, however threatening, alarms you—nothing, however tender, melts you.—But now, after the hardness’ and impenitence of your heart, you come here “treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” For

Finally, you are exposed to *aggravated misery as*

194

the final result of misused privileges. If YOU perish YOU will have no cloak for your sin, and no alleviation of your punishment. YOUR condemnation first, will not be the condemnation of a *Heathen*. “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.” “But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment than for you.” YOUR condemnation, secondly, will not be the condemnation of a *Jew*. “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven.” “He that despised Moses’s law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and has done despite unto the spirit of grace?” YOUR condemnation, thirdly, will not be the condemnation of a *Christian* ill-instructed and neglected—the condemnation of a *Papist*, who was denied the use of the Scripture, and led by a blind guide—or the condemnation of a *Protestant*, who never heard “the word of his grace” to which God alone gives “testimony;” but of one whose pastor kept him at the foot of the cross, and with tears “prayed him in

195

Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God." YOURS will not be, fourthly, the condemnation of a *devil*—The estate which he kept not is nothing compared with that which you have rejected—Jesus took not on him the nature of angels—They never neglected "so great salvation"—They never refused a pardon—It was never offered them.

Ah! said Simeon as he delivered back the adorable babe into the arms of his mother—"This child is set for the falling and rising again of many in Israel." The same may be said of the destiny of this young minister. Some—oh! that it may be many!—Some will hail the hour they heard him, when they come to die, and the memory of it will delight them through all eternity. Others—may you all go home and ask "Lord, is it I?"—others will execrate the day he arrived among them. Of all the objects that will haunt their wretched imaginations hereafter, the chief will be the figure of this pulpit; and of all the food for the worm that never dies, and the fuel for the fire that never shall be quenched, the principal will be the sermons which he has delivered in vain from it. His ministry cannot be neutral. It must be a blessing or a curse. It cannot be inefficient. It must either kill or cure—save or destroy. "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life: and who is sufficient for these things?"

THE MINISTER'S REQUEST:

A DISCOURSE,
DELIVERED AT ST. THOMAS SQUARE, HACKNEY,
OCTOBER 31, 1811,

ON THE SETTLEMENT OF THE
REV. HENRY FORSTER BURDER, A.M.,
AS ASSISTANT PREACHER
TO THE REV. SAMUEL PALMER.

THE MINISTER'S REQUEST.

"Brethren, pray for us."—I THESS. v. 25.

From what a trifling elevation will one man look down upon another with consequence, if not contempt! God has made of one blood all the nations of the earth; he has derived the whole human race from one original pair; he has invested them with the same faculties, he has rendered them capable of the same satisfactions, he has subjected them to the same wants and infirmities—and thus he has related and equalized them all. Yet kings do not call their subjects, and *Masters* do not call their servants—*Brethren*. Even ministers too exclusively appropriate the appellation of *Brother* to individuals of their own order, as if they were peculiar, if not superior beings.

But observe Paul. The Apostles were the most extraordinary personages the world or the church ever possessed. They stood secondary in dignity and authority to the Son of God. They received communications immediately from heaven. They could pierce futurity, and unveil things to come. They could discern spirits. They could raise the dead. Yet Paul, though an Apostle, here calls the Thessalonians, *Brethren*; and supplicates the prayers of common believers—*Brethren, pray for us*.

And if inspired men, if miraculous men—if Apostles were led to ask for the prayers of their people, what wonder if this should be the case with modern

199

ministers, who can make no claims to anything supernatural?

This then is the single, but comprehensive request we have to make this morning in the behalf of our VENERABLE FRIEND, who has long borne the burden and heat of the day, and for near half a century has sustained the pastoral office in this church; and on the behalf of our AMIABLE BROTHER, who has been unanimously chosen to assist him in holy things, and will in future labour with him, as a son with the father, in the Gospel. Imagine them now rising up, and by my lips addressing you in language, which I am sure expresses the feelings and wishes of their hearts—*Brethren, pray for its*: while the preacher, and every fellow-minister attending the service, cries—*And for me also*.

Let us consider the propriety of the demand; and for this purpose let us examine it on two grounds.

I. The ground of *necessity*.

II. The ground of *equity*.

I. Let us examine it on the ground of *necessity*. It will be found necessary if you consider

First, their *work*. They who imagine that the ministry of the! Gospel is an idle, or an easy task, are grossly mistaken; and were it not that the honour of God is concerned in it, we should be disposed to say to them, Make the trial. The experiment, if fairly made, would soon convince them of the truth of Dr. Doddridge's words—

“’Tis not a work of small import
The pastor's care demands;
But what might fill an angel's heart,
And fill'd the Saviour's hands.”

200

Every minister may say with Nehemiah, *I am doing a great work*. Indeed it regards everything that *is* great: God; the soul; and eternity. It is a work that cannot be prosecuted without constant application and labour—and such application and labour as often exhaust the spirits, and may bring youth and old age together.

For the office is not to be judged of by the manner in which it is frequently filled up. There are too many who make it a sinecure, disregarding its duties, and *looking to their own way, every one for his gain from his quarter*. They are *dumb dogs; they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber*. But how is it represented by him who instituted the high calling? The Scripture defines a minister as a *labourer; a workman* that needeth not to be ashamed; it holds him forth as a *watchman; a fisherman; a husbandman; a builder; a soldier; a wrestler; a racer*.

What are the obligations of a *good* minister of Jesus Christ? He meets the actual and diversified state of his people, and commends himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. He seeks out acceptable words as well as words of truth. By adaptation, and not by falsifying or trimming, he becomes all things to all men. He warns them that are unruly; comforts the feeble-minded; upholds the weak; reclaims the wandering; and guards the exposed. By a faithful and judicious application of the promises and threatenings, reproofs and encouragements of the Gospel, *he takes forth the precious from the vile, and is as God's mouth*. He levies a tax of improvement for the edification of his hearers upon all events and occurrences.

201

His study is not confined to an hour of constrained; perturbed thought on a Saturday evening—he is observing and collecting all the week. *He gives himself to the word of God and prayer.* He does not sit trifling in company till the appointed moment of worship arrives: he is previously, and much, with God alone: and when he enters the sanctuary he is like Aaron when the rich oil had been poured upon his head; and the priest was betrayed by the savour as well as by the service. The spirit of devotion rests upon him in the absence of all his official administrations. The parlour does not war with the pulpit. He is the man of God in all his social intercourse. Wherever he is, he produces a religious atmosphere, whose innocent, genial, and improving influence is felt by all who breathe within its reach. He rules well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; for if a man knows not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? He is an example of believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

It would be endless to specify all the various parts of the ministerial function. But the imperfect sketch we have given of them leads us to' exclaim. *Who is sufficient for these things?*—Is a fallen creature? Is a man of like passions and infirmities with yourselves? Is a worm? *Brethren, pray for us.* It is necessary if you consider,

Secondly, Their *trials*. A minister is a truly honourable character; but I fear the employment is often viewed too much on the side of the pleasing and attractive. Hence many *desire the office of a bishop*; and they certainly desire, a *good work*. But

202

it. is at the same time a burden as well as an honour. Its advantages are purchased at the expense of numberless privations and sacrifices: and therefore it behoves the minister as well as the Christian to count the cost. If this were done, many, instead of pushing themselves forward, would be found, even when called for, hid among the stuff. They would require to be drawn forth: and even then would be ready to say, *Send, Lord, by whom thou wilt send.*

I hardly know a greater object of commiseration than a minister who enters sufficiently into the spirit of his work—to reach and grapple with its difficulties. It is well the scene gradually opens. The Lord draws us on by a sense of our obligation to his redeeming love, and the value of perishing souls; but leaves us to acquire the knowledge of what is discouraging by slow degrees. Thus experience rectifies what was erroneous, and supplies what was defective in speculation. Hence the ministry has been compared to John's little book, a bitter sweet; and we have been told that the sweet comes first. The bitter is tasted when we are gone too far to recede with honour or safety: when we know that if we decline the prophet's message we shall have to encounter the prophet's storm: when conscience comes forward, and says. *Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel.*

A minister has trials in common with men; he has trials in common with Christians; and in addition to both these, he has trials peculiar to himself. No man is so liable to misrepresentation. He is the subject of general, and therefore of ignorant criticism. He is often censured when he acts with the greatest wisdom and rectitude, by those who cannot discern the

203

circumstances that guide, or appreciate the motives that sway him. He frequently makes persons his enemies because he tells them the truth. Many are unsteady in their attendance, and fickle in their attachments. Such hearers frequently endeavour to justify themselves by accusing the preacher: *they* are not capricious, but can no longer *profit* under *his* ministry. After, perhaps, hearing a new preacher every Sabbath, and five sermons a week, and acquiring a fastidiousness and a vagrancy of mind that nothing can satisfy or fix— they impute to him the effect of a change which has only taken place in themselves. If they cannot undermine his character, they will assail his orthodoxy. If he preaches—as he ought to do—the doctrines of the Gospel richly and openly, he maybe deemed an Antinomian: and if he does justice to the whole scheme of Divine truth (and the Gospel may be abridged where it is not mangled), and brings forward doctrines in their experimental and practical bearings, he may be vilified as a legalist. It is not an unusual thing for those who were once ready to pull out their eyes for his sake, to leave his labours, and to pass him unnoticed in the street.

This is not the only quarter from which he suffers. There are, perhaps, individuals in his church of whom he stands in doubt. With many things in them, that are amiable and useful, there are some things exceptionable and painful. They endure his fidelity; they are not offended with his reproofs; but go on as before. He seems neither justified to exclude, nor continue them in the fellowship of the church. They give their pastor many proofs of their kindness—O! that they would give him one more; and abandon those inconsistencies which prove his perplexity and

204

his distress. O! that they would set his heart at rest, and free him. from the reflections of the [censorious, and the complaints of the pious, which he is so often compelled to hear.

Again observe the preacher. At the time appointed he must appear, whatever be his frames or his feelings. He must preach, yet seems to have nothing worthy of communication. He must rouse others to zeal, while his own mind is languid; and administer comfort to others, while his own soul is disquieted within him: though, like an officer in the field, he is compelled to hide his fears from the men. He often sits down in the pulpit with a blush. He closes the Sabbath in the closet, with the exclamation, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" He fears that he has been preaching into perdition many of those he would gladly save; charged, like Isaiah, with this dreadful commission: "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed!"—How distressing to manure, and plough, and sow, and never reap. How grievous to see the blossoms covering the tree in the morning, and in the evening strewing the ground! When he looks back to a little success with which he was indulged at the commencement of his labours, he cries, "Woe is me! for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage; there is no cluster to eat: my soul desired the first ripe fruit." He often suspects that he is a vessel in which the Lord no longer takes pleasure. He dreads standing in the way of another's usefulness. In the bitterness of his soul he kneels and asks permission to retire—

205

Ah, my brethren, this is not a fancy piece: it is taken from the life. Many who hear me this morning know, by experience, the truth of the representation: they know the representation falls below the truth. *You* are not capable of entering into some of our trials: and *we* are not at liberty to divulge others. Like the prophet, we must weep in *secret places*. We must bleed alone. *Brethren, pray for us*. It is necessary if we consider,

Thirdly, Their *danger*. One sinner destroyeth much good. The fall of a common professor of religion is a judgment on the neighbourhood in which it happens. It causes the worthy name by which we are called to be blasphemed. It hardens and justifies sinners in their ungodliness. It proves a stumbling block to the weak, and a grief to the strong. But the mischief is much greater when a minister falls. He possesses more influence, and is more liable to observation. He cannot be hid. The sins of preachers are the preachers of sin.

And are instances of ministerial defection so very uncommon, as to excite no alarm, or to render caution needless? Would to God they were. But how many have we witnessed or heard of, even in our day! Some of these have been forced to enter into secular life. Some have crossed the sea, and commenced the pastor where the sinner is unknown. Some, after a spiritual quarantine, have been admitted again by their former connexions, as wholesome and safe. Some have established a new schismatical interest, and drawing after them a desperate faction, who pretend to be satisfied with *their own avowals* of innocency or repentance, have become more popular than before. In general they

206

have become advocates for a higher strain of doctrine, that will not reproach their laxity of morals: and making up in pride what they want in purity, profess to see things clearly, and decry others as blind. Licentiousness is the liberty wherewith they imagine Christ has made them free.

And is there not in *us* an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God? Have *we* no fleshly lusts that war against the soul? Are not we passing through a world lying in wickedness? Are not we exposed to an adversary, the devil, going about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour? And does not this enemy know his interests well enough to make the *head* his object: and in issuing his orders to his instruments to say—Aim not at great or small, but at the king of Israel; smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered?—“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”

Has a minister been preserved for a number of years? He ought to be thankful; but he must not remit his watch, or dismiss his guard. *Blessed is the man that feareth always.* We are never beyond the reach of temptation while we are out of heaven. Our security in one trial does not warrant our immunity in another. Joab, who was faithful to his sovereign in the rebellion of Absalom, yet turned aside after Adonijah. If a minister be not overcome of vice; may he not fall by error, by vanity, by indolence, by dullness? If he escapes from gross immorality; may not his excellences be tarnished; his talents be injured; his usefulness defeated, by imprudencies? May there not be undue indulgence at the table, where there is no gluttony? May there not be tipping where there is no intoxication? May there not be

207

levities and liberties where there are no violations of virtue? May there not be, especially in the young minister, an assumption of consequence, a creation of trouble, an inattention to order and regularity, which, while he supposes that it indicates genius, will not fail to lower him in the esteem and hope of the families he deranges and disgusts! If he avoids worldly dissipation, may he not indulge in religious; constantly going into festive circles of spiritual triflers and gossips; spending his evenings generally from home; retiring late to rest, and never rising early? If he be not chargeable with filthy conversation which is not lawful, may he not err in foolish talking and jesting which are not convenient? May he not be the rattle, or the harlequin of the room? If he be not inflammatory, may he not be a mere newsmonger, or a noisy dabbler in party politics?

O! to avoid the very appearance of evil—to give none offence in any thing, that the ministry be not blamed—but in all things approving ourselves the ministers of God in much patience, in affliction, in necessities, in distresses—by pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned—by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left—to finish our course with joy and honour like those dignified beings who once presided over this church; a BATES, and a HENRY—to lay down our charge unstained—like a NEWTON and a WINTER, and leave nothing that requires defence or extenuation; nothing but what is lovely, and of good report—*Brethren, pray for us.* It is necessary if we consider.

Fourthly, their *dependence*. This is absolute and

208

extends to every thing. It extends to their natural life. The preservation of their health, their strength, their senses, depends upon God. It extends to their intellectual powers. The continuance and use of their judgment, their memory, their invention, their fancy, depend upon God. It extends to their spiritual endowments. The continuance and the exercise of their faith, their hope, their love, their courage, their fidelity, their tenderness in the discharge of their office, depend upon God. It extends to all their devotional duties. The preparation of the heart and the answer of the tongue in man, are from the Lord. It extends to the success of all their labours. The heart should be the great aim of our preaching; but this is under a divine disposal. It is said of Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul. Our gospel, says the apostle to the Thessalonians, came to you not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.

We readily allow that there was something extraordinary in this case; and we know that miracles have ceased. But God continues to give testimony to the word of his grace; and the effects that attend the dispensation of divine truth require, and demonstrate a divine agency. It is granted that there is a subjective suitableness in the ministry of the word to do good: as there is in a sword to wound, and in a pen to write. But what is the sword without a hand to wield, or the pen without a hand to guide it? And who is Paul or who is Apollos, but ministers *by* whom ye believed even as the Lord gave to every man? "So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase." A

209

minister without his master is like Gehazi. He may go with the staff, and lay it upon the dead; but there will be no life till Elisha himself comes. To refer to a well-known anecdote. When Melancthon was first converted, he thought he should soon convert all his hearers. He supposed that others must see what he saw so clearly, and feel what he felt so powerfully. But his success did not correspond with his expectation; and at length he was compelled to confess, That old Adam was too strong for young Melancthon. And this I presume is one of those truths which we grow in the belief of, as we advance in years. And therefore, though I hope we do not study less, we pray more: though we are not less active, we are more dependent. The conviction in time becomes so strong from observation and experience, that we should be completely discouraged in our work did we not read, that "as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

If therefore you wish us to live; to be strong to labour; to be spiritual and useful; to preach as with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; to turn many to righteousness; to help those much who have believed through grace; if you would have our addresses effectual to wound and to heal, to sanctify and establish; and to make ready a people prepared for the Lord—*Brethren, pray for us*. It is necessary if we consider.

210

Fifthly, their *responsibility*. "So then," says the Apostle, "every one of us shall give account of himself to God." You who are the members of this church and congregation are not to imagine that you have parted for ever with the Sabbaths through which you have passed; the sermons you have heard; the devotional exercises on which you have attended: you will hear *of* them; you will hear *from* them again. They are dismissed for the time; but are like men bound to appear and prosecute at the assizes.

But we are concerned in the solemnities of that day as well as you; and in a sense more than you. Those Sabbaths through which you have passed we have occupied. Those sermons which you have heard we have preached. Those devotional exercises on which you have attended we have conducted: and the prospect resulting from our obligation is awful. Blessed be God, we are not answerable for our success. Though Israel be not gathered, we may be glorious in the eyes of the Lord. "We are unto God, a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one, we are a savour of life unto life; to the other, we are the savour of death unto death." But there is enough for which we *are* responsible to make our faces gather paleness, and our knees to smite one against another. *We watch for your souls as they that must give account.* Account of what?—Of these souls; for if we have not given them warning, and they die in their sins, their blood will be required at our hands—Of this watching: when we have watched; how we have watched. How we have watched to gain them. How we have watched to form them. How we have watched to keep them.—Of our fidelity; our zeal; our influence.

211

—Of our conduct; our aims; our motives. Who does not tremble as we proceed?—

All to the great tribunal haste,
 The account to render there;
 And shouldst thou, Lord, but mark our faults,
 Lord, how shall we appear?

Brethren, pray for us.

Thus far we have addressed ourselves to your compassion. But we shall now appeal to a higher principle—your justice. And having examined the propriety of the demand on the ground of necessity, we shall now consider it on the ground of *equity*. It is the

II. Part of our subject. Here it will be proper to shew—That ministers have claims upon you: and to inquire in what manner your praying for them will discharge your obligation.

Every fellow-creature has claims upon you; and you are required to pray *for all men*. Your fellow-christians of every community have claims upon you; and you are enjoined to make supplication *for all saints*. And have your ministers no claims upon you? Does not the command of God run; “Know them that labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake?”—Let me remark three things.

First, their election. Your ministers are *chosen by you*. I pity congregations that have officers forced upon them, regardless of their wishes, their taste, their profit. There may be in these cases adaptation and acceptance; but they are accidental; and the very imposition will tend to alienate the mind, and

212

keep the people from considering the minister as their *own*. Your preachers and pastors are the men of your choice. This is the privilege of your churches; and you are not backward to glory in it. But does not this very choice lay you under peculiar obligations? When you voluntarily assume any relation, do you not bind yourselves to the duties pertaining to it; and are you not justly reproached for the infraction of them?

Secondly, their destiny. These ministers *are appointed for you*. Their very office is founded in a regard to your welfare. They are helpers of your joy. They are to lead you in the way everlasting. They are designed to feed you with knowledge and understanding. They are given "for the perfecting of the saints, and 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 of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

To you they wholly and exclusively belong. For you they give up their time and their talents. For you they read, and study, and pray, and preach. They are not their own even in their comforts: and crosses. Whether they "be afflicted or comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation." Why was Jeremiah denied all the pleasures and advantages of social life? Because the circumstances in which he exercised his ministry required the sacrifice. Hence, says God, "Thou shalt not take to thee a wife in this place." And how many are there now, whose situation, and work, and finances, equally demand the exercise of the same self-denial? Ezekiel was blessed with a companion peculiarly dear to him. She la-

213

boured under no disease; and might have walked with him for many years as an heir of the grace of life; had not the welfare of the people required the lovely victim to be "offered upon the sacrifice and service of their faith: Son of man," says Heaven, "behold, I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: and behold at evening my wife died!" And he was forbidden even to assume the appearance of a mourner, in order to be *a sign to the people!* Upon this principle all their enjoyments are rendered precarious by you. And to you, as the cause, are to be traced the most painful exercises of their lives. They have been tempted, to know how to succour them that are tempted. They have walked in darkness and have had no light, to know how to speak a word in season to them that are weary. They have struggled with pecuniary difficulties, to be able to sympathize with the poor of the flock, and to aid them to live by faith on the providence of God.

Ministers have talents as well as others; and these abilities, employed in other directions, would place them above dependence; enable them as well as you to provide for their families; and to enjoy the luxury of beneficence. From all this they are excluded. They do not complain of this. They need not. When the chief Shepherd shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away: and having food and raiment, they wish therewith to be content.—But it is for *you* they relinquish or refuse every temporal emolument, every worldly prospect. And have they no claims upon you? That minister who considers the trifling salary given him, or the few gratuities he receives, as a kind of benefaction or alms, is not humble, but mean. He ought to feel

214

that he stands on higher ground than a pauper, or a beneficiary. He is surely nothing less than their servant for Jesus' sake. He earns what he receives. The workman is worthy of his meat: and his support is as much an ordinance as baptism or the Lord's supper: even so has the Lord *ordained*, that they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel. "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things."

Thirdly, their importance. These ministers are *beneficial to you*.—You think a lawyer has claims upon you for saving your substance. You own the physician has claims upon you for restoring you your health. Nor do we dispute them. But what is the body to the soul? Or time to eternity?—Conscience, do thine office. Speak. "There," says one, "there is the man who met me in my mad career, and was the means of turning my feet into the way of peace." "There," says another, "there is the minister who, when I was perishing for thirst, angel as he was, opened mine eyes, and shewed me a well." "There," says a third, "is the teacher who, after others had withheld from me the remedy, and I waxed worse and worse, told me of the balm in Gilead, and the physician there, by whose stripes I am healed."—*Thou owest unto me*, says Paul to Philemon, *even thine own self*. And, but for those who are saying this morning. *Brethren, pray for us*, some of you would have been in hell long ago; or if spared, would have been only filling up the measure of your iniquities. To them under God you owe the health that intemperance would have ruined; and the respectability that vice would have destroyed. Which of you can tell into what mistakes and embarrassments you would

215

have fallen, had not they thought of you when you were asleep, or engrossed in your callings; and made their discourses to bear on your danger?

Did you never observe the words of Isaiah?—"Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, hut thine eyes shall see thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying. This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left." And have you not found the preaching of the gospel a privilege sufficient to counter-balance all that is defective or painful in your lot? Have you not returned from the house of God freed from your burdens; and reconciled, not only to the duties, but to the trials of life?

And on them you depend for future advantages. To them you look for private admonition and encouragement. To them you look for public counsel and comfort. To them you look to spread your personal and domestic afflictions before God in the sanctuary. It is not long before your minister will come to you with the message—*Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.* He will stand by the side of the bed of languishing and anxiety, and say, in the name of his God and your God, *Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive, and let thy widow trust in me.* With your weeping connexions he will follow your remains to the grave, and deposit them in the house appointed for all living. He will return to the house of mourning, and as it is the end of all men, will teach the living to lay it to heart. In a service sacred to your memory, he will hold up your character for the edification of others, and the glory

216

of God. He will teach your offspring to follow your example, and by a thousand pious wishes and endeavours become the guide of their youth.

We have proved that your ministers have claims upon you. Let us enquire,

Secondly, In what way your praying for them will discharge your obligation.

This mode will be the most satisfactory to their own minds. What they principally desire is to live high in your prayerful remembrance. They would rather learn that you entered your closets before you came, than commended their sermons after you returned. If they are spiritual men, this will please them much better than your applause and caresses, your silver and your gold. Nothing so relieves, nothing so encourages, nothing so animates them in their performances. Ministers, conscious that they are labouring among a prayerful people, *must* have some feeling and life; *must* preach with some pleasure and hope.

This mode will best promote your attachment to them. If love begets prayer, I am sure prayer begets love. Whatever engages much of our time and attention, will soon become interesting. If we cultivate a tree or a flower, we soon feel a propriety in it. If we take an orphan, and feed, clothe, and educate him, he is sure to be endeared. All the affections are increased by exercise; while negligence breeds indifference and insensibility. The easiest way to love an enemy is to begin to pray for him. Meeting him at the throne of grace, and under the eye of Him who is kind to the unthankful and the unworthy, we melt, we pity, we pardon, we embrace. If you pray for your ministers, you will think much of them, and

217

at the best time. They will soon possess and retain an importance, and, which is still better, a sacredness in your minds, that will keep your affection from degenerating into the servile, or rising into the idolatrous. You will never see them without emotion; nor hear them without reverence.

This mode will most strongly enforce the performance of every other duty. Prayer, when viewed aright, always supposes corresponding endeavours. It is mere hypocrisy, without a consistent line of conduct. The man that goes to church on the morning of the sabbath, and when the command for sanctifying God's holy day is read, exclaims, "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law;" when he knows that he left his shop door half open, and some of his domestics selling-insults God to his very face. And is he less mocked by that father who prays for the conversion of his children, and never trains them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Is he less trifled with by that professor of religion who prays not to be led into temptation, and then treads- the avenues of dissipation? Is he less offended by that minister who commits himself to God for assistance, and never gives himself to reading and meditation?

Upon the same principle it may be fairly inferred, that there are many people who never pray for their minister. For can they pray for him, and behave improperly towards him? Can they pray for' his support, and, according to their ability, refuse to aid him? Can they pray for his reputation, and speak of him lightly before their children and servants? Can they pray for his comfort, and grieve him by their walk, their absence, or their inattention? Can they

218

pray for his preaching, and come to sleep, to criticise, or to cavil?—Out of their own mouths they are condemned. If they really and earnestly prayed for their minister, every other duty they owed him would follow certainly, and of course.

This mode *will be most productive of their advantage*. In this way you not only may, but must be useful to your ministers. Does not God hear prayer? Has not he appointed it? Here is the promise: “Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” Here is the experience of his people in every age to exemplify, and confirm the promise. He “never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye me in vain.” “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Neither is the efficacy of it hindered by infirmity; “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”

Finally. This mode *is the most accessible*. This way in which you can serve your ministers does not depend upon talents, office, condition. A man, poor in this world, may be rich in faith: and he that is overlooked even by his neighbours on earth may have great interest at the court of heaven. Outward distinctions are here nothing. He who possesses most of the spirit of prayer has most power with God, whether he dwells in a palace, or sighs in a workhouse.

Some of you, perhaps, have no other way of shewing to your minister the regard you wish to pay. You have no mansion, and cannot invite him to a

219

well-spread table. You have no substance, and cannot furnish his shelf with the useful volume, or enable him, as he enters the hovel of indigence and pain, to accompany his devotion with relief. Compassionate hearts! Be not discouraged. "Where there is first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." But you may do him good; great good; unspeakable good. You have a resource, a mighty resource in prayer; and how should you rejoice in it, and employ it! You have a friend ever near you who is almighty; "he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and will not despise their prayer." He can do for this young minister exceeding abundantly, above all you ask or think. He can give him the zeal of a WHITFIELD; the knowledge of an OWEN; the seriousness of a BAXTER; the spirituality of a LEIGHTON; the simplicity and unction of a HENRY; the diligence and amiableness of a DODDRIDGE.—Greatly acceptable, and every way promising as he now is, no bounds can be fixed to his improvement or usefulness, *you also striving together in prayer to God for him.*

There is always a delicacy in describing duties of which we are not only the recommenders, but the objects. I felt it in the prospect of this exercise. Indeed it is almost impossible to engage in a service like this, without seeming to exalt ourselves, in magnifying our office.

But if any statement of the subject can secure us from the imputation, it is the view of it we have been taking. You will bear us witness that we have not been calling for an increase of salary, exacting double honour, or assuming pompous names and titles.

220

We have not appeared before you as dignitaries, but as petitioners. "Brethren, pray for us." This is all we desire. Think of our wants. Remember our work, our trials, our danger, our dependence, and our responsibility. Candidly weigh the claims which we have upon you. Remember we are the men of your choice; we are devoted to your service; and you derive important and numberless benefits from our labours. Discharge your obligation by prayer. Remember it is a method the most satisfactory to our minds; it will best promote your attachment to us; it will most strongly influence the performance of every other duty; it will be the most productive of advantage; it is within the reach of all.

In this way prove and cherish your regard. In your social exercises; around your family altars; and when alone, bear us upon your minds. This is all the return we implore for our services and sacrifices. According to our power we are mindful of you. The study as well as the pulpit is witness, and God is witness, that; we remember you collectively, and spread your cases individually before the throne of grace and mercy. And we have you in our hearts, both to live and to die with you. "O! ye," who constitute the people of our charge, "our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged; now, for a recompence in the same, be ye also enlarged. BRETHREN, PRAY FOR US."

I have been called peculiarly to address the members of *this* church. Here are some who are members of *no* church. I have been addressing those whose duty it is to pray for their ministers.—Here are some—perhaps many! who never pray for *themselves*. I may seem to go out of my way to bespeak

221

the attention of such; but who would not go out of his way to attempt to save a soul from death, and to hide a multitude of sins?

When my dear and honoured friend and tutor, the Rev. CORNELIUS WINTER, was ordained, two persons, even profligate before, were converted, who lived holy, and died happy in the Lord. It seemed a divine encouragement; and his gentle spirit viewed it as a token for good. What a satisfaction would it be to the kindred mind of this young divine, on whose head we have been imploring so many blessings! what a time to be remembered would this morning prove, if, before the service ends, joy in heaven begins, "over one sinner that repenteth!"

—So then it is a truth, that some of you, though you are found in his presence this morning, live without God in the world! You go forth and return; and God is not in all your thoughts! You lie down and rise up; but restrain prayer before God! This duty you neglect! This privilege you despise! The Redeemer suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God; but you are resolved to die eternally rather than approach him by that new and living way which he has consecrated for you! He cries—"Turn you at my reproof: behold I will pour out my spirit unto you; I will make known my words unto you." But you set at nought all his counsel! You despise all his reproof!—You may obtain temporal good things without prayer, but they will prove your curse: and while you congratulate yourselves on the fine pasture into which you are turned, you are fattening for the day of slaughter. "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them." And as to spiritual blessings—those blessings which pertain to the soul

222

and eternity; those blessings, one of which, if you were truly wise, you would desire above the whole world; these—such is the inviolable order of Heaven—these can never be obtained without prayer.—“For all these things I will be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them. ”

Do not therefore imagine that your end will differ from your course. If you live without prayer, you will die without hope; and your history, through endless ages, like Ezekiel's roll, will be read *lamentation, and mourning, and woe.*

THE HAND OF GOD IN AFFLICTIONS:

A SERMON

OCCASIONED BY

THE DEATH OF MISS ANN WHITCHURCH,

WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE

FRIDAY, OCTOBER the 9TH, 1818, AGED 22.

DELIVERED IN

ARGYLE CHAPEL, BATH,

OCTOBER 18, 1818.

—————All, all on
Earth is shadow—all beyond is substance.—
The reverse is folly's creed.
How solid all, where change shall be no more!
YOUNG.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS Sermon, which the Author, feeling a wish to improve an affecting event, preached without solicitation, he publishes entirely at the desire of the relatives and the audience. They therefore are responsible for the discourse, such as it is: and to them he affectionately dedicates it.

*Percy Place,
October 24, 1818.*

225

“Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? Who will say unto him, what doest thou?”—JOB ix. 12.

MY BRETHREN,

IT always highly becomes us to entertain proper apprehensions of him “with whom we have to do.” He is, indeed, “a God that hideth himself.” “He dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, and him no man hath seen, or can see.” There are heights, and depths, and breadths, and lengths in his essence, and attributes, and works, and ways, which elude all created, all finite research: and we may go even to an archangel with the question Eliphaz addressed to Job: “Canst *thou* by searching find out God, canst thou find out the Almighty unto *perfection*?”

Are we then sealed up in total ignorance? Are we called to worship “an unknown God?” No: He has not left himself without witness; in that he is continually doing us good, and sending us rain and fruitful seasons, and filling our hearts with food and gladness. His word is “a lamp unto our path, and a light unto our feet.” As far as our state requires information, He has given us a revelation of himself in this sacred volume; and it is both our duty and our privilege to assume with thankfulness, and to improve with inviolable firmness, the views of the Supreme Being it holds forth—for they will of ne-

226

cessity be fundamental in religion—and all our creed, all our conduct, and all our comfort must be affected by them.

His dispensations with regard to nations, families, and individuals are various. In some of them he thunders; in others we hear only a small still voice. Some of them call us to rejoice; others to mourn. Some enrich us; others impoverish. In some He gives; in others He takes away—But He is the same in all; and all are worthy of our attention. If there be a difference, it is in favour of his more awful and painful dealings with us. *These* peculiarly deserve and demand our regard. In *these* he seems to move out of his common road, in order to awaken and impress the mind. Our food is intended to do us good—but how much more our medicine? When *this* is administered in vain, our case begins to be suspicious, alarming, desperate.

There is nothing, therefore, by which we can more defy and provoke the God of the whole earth, than while he is employing methods so extraordinarily designed and adapted to affect us, we “regard not the work of the Lord,” neither consider the operation of his hand. “Hear ye, therefore,” says the voice from heaven, “Hear ye the rod, and Him that hath appointed it.” “In the day of adversity, consider.” “Behold” Him in all he does; but most attentively and seriously contemplate Him when he comes *to take away*. “BEHOLD, HE TAKETH AWAY, WHO CAN HINDER HIM? WHO WILL SAY UNTO HIM, WHAT DOEST THOU?”

It appears from this passage, that in the losses of life we are to recognize and acknowledge—The truth of his agency—The uncontrollableness of his

227

dominion—and—The unimpeachableness of his conduct.

The *truth of his agency*—“He taketh away.”

The *uncontrollableness of his dominion*—“Who can hinder him?”

The *unimpeachableness of his conduct*—“Who will say unto him. What—doest Thou?”

I. Behold, the *truth of his agency*.—“He taketh away.” It is obvious that our hold of every possession and enjoyment is very precarious, and that our comforts lie at the disposal of another. This conclusion depends not on reasonings; it results from facts: Scripture is not necessary to teach it; all history, all observation, all experience proclaims it.

Wealth is often taken away. Men make gold their hope, and fine gold their confidence; but nothing is more precarious; they are therefore called “uncertain riches;” and we are commanded not to “trust in them.” How many, after devising the best plans, and availing themselves of every assistance that could promise success, are groaning over their defeated projects—“My purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart!” How many are not only in embarrassments, but have their indigence embittered by contrast with the plenty that once crowned their table!

Health is often taken away. “Let not the strong man glory in his strength.” What is it against the decays of nature, the violence of accident, the corrosion of disease? “When Thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth; surely every man is vanity.”

228

Reason is often taken away. No condition, however elevated, secures the possessor. Nebuchadnezzar's understanding departed from him; and in his fancies and feelings he was reduced to a level with the beasts that perish.

—And are not connexions and relatives often taken away? Is there a person in the presence of God who has not had reason to sigh? "Lover and friend hast Thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness." It is needless to enlarge the illustration. It is undeniable that our possessions and comforts are holden by a very precarious tenure; and are removeable at the pleasure of another.

And who *is* the disposer? Who is He that thus intermeddles with our affairs, and lays desolate our comforts? "Behold *He* taketh away." There is no such thing as chance in his empire. His providence is not only real, but universal. "A sparrow falleth not to the ground without our Heavenly Father; Yea, the very hairs of our head are all numbered." "*Who* gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not *the Lord*; he against whom they had sinned?" War is called "*His* sword." He "calls for a famine upon the land," and "cleanness of teeth" stalks through. *He* "breaketh the ships of Tarshish with an east wind." "I clothe," says He, "the heavens with sackcloth," "I form the light and create darkness: I make peace and create evil: I, the Lord, do all these things." "Is there an evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?"

Not that God in these cases always, if ever, acts immediately—He commonly, if not invariably, works otherwise. Even in things purely spiritual, and where the result is so manifestly his own, he uses

229

means to produce it. Paul plants and Apollos waters, though *He* giveth the increase, and worketh all in all. And thus it is in temporal things; instruments are employed: but instrumentality supposes and requires agency—and requires it, whatever ability or adaptation it possesses:—for however keen the sword, or excellent the pen, the one cannot wound, or the other write, without a hand to use it. All events and all creatures depend upon God; and they can neither bless nor injure us, but as he permits, employs, succeeds them.

Hence, too, his interposition is not visible. He really does all, but *seems* to do nothing. His agency, though obvious enough in its results, is imperceptible in its working. Thus it is with the wind; we cannot see it pass, but we can see its passage, and trace the direction of its progress in its effects. Read the preceding verse; “Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not; he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.”

God rarely makes use of the marvellous, or acts so as to alter the regular and established order of things. His agency sometimes indeed resembles a torrent which sweeps over an unusual surface, and bears down cattle, and trees, and houses, and, as it rolls and roars along, draws people to the margin with amazement and dismay: but he more commonly brings his designs to pass in a manner more slow and tranquil, and unobserved, resembling the flow of a river that keeps its own channel, and reaches its fulness by a course as natural as it is efficient. It is a fine image the genius of Solomon employs, when he says, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever he will.”

230

The husbandman does not change the quality but the current of the stream: it still flows according to its natural propension, yet runs under his guidance, and in subserviency to his pleasure. Thus agents act of themselves; yet are his servants: they follow their own inclination, but fulfil his purposes. This fact, misconceived, has led infidels to deny the providence of God in the events of the world; and even philosophers the most convinced of the existence of God, from the appearance of beauties, relations, and utilities in the parts of the universe, have disavowed the hand of God in the management of human affairs, believing that with regard to these, "time and chance happen to them all." The reason of the inconsistency seems to be this. In the fixed system of nature they see creatures acting in a constant and uniform manner; but these being purely passive in themselves, *must* be determined and conducted by a foreign power; and a presiding agency cannot be questioned. But in human life they meet with beings who are masters of their own conduct, and act by knowledge and choice; possessing boundless liberty, and capricious dispositions; sometimes governed by principle, sometimes by example, sometimes by fancy, sometimes by pride, and sometimes by malice; and not able to distinguish between the first cause and the subordinate issues—the chief agent and the instrument—the perfection of the Creator, and the weakness and folly of the creature, they adhere to the immediate and apparent principle of action, without ascending to God, who presides over all, inspiring the good, permitting the evil, and reducing the whole to the accomplishment of his own pleasure.

231

And indeed, if sense only was to be consulted, we should seldom think of God in the most trying occurrences. To find a cause for the affliction of Joseph, why need we go beyond the envy of his brethren? Or a reason for the cursing of David, why need we look further than the malignity of Shimei? Or a motive for the crucifixion of the Son of God, what want we more than the jealousy of the chief priests, and the ivickedness of the Jews? Who, at the first sight of all these, would not have ascribed them to human agency? Yet, "God sent me here," says Joseph, "to save much people alive." "God hath bidden him," says David. And "He was delivered," says the apostle, "according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God."

It is necessary, therefore, to rise above sense, and to call in the aid of that faith which is not only "the substance of things hoped for," but "the evidence of things not seen." And this will be found to constitute the difference between the natural man and the Christian. The former is no better at heart than an atheist: he is without God in the world: God is not in all his thoughts. A Christian only is the true theist. He is the *only* firm and vital believer in the being and empire of God. But he *does* believe in them. He walks by faith, and not by sight. He is aspiring after a world where "God is all in all," and to this state he is already in a measure come. He has begun to see, and hear, and realise God. He acknowledges Him in all his ways; and when others say, "O it was that unlucky accident; it was that unfortunate servant; it was that perfidious friend; it was that deadly enemy"—He cries with Eli, "It is the Lord," and endeavours to add, "Let *Him* do

232

what seemeth him good." I pity the man who, in the day of evil, is the wretch of events, without author or design; and finds himself left alone in a heartless world, with blind chance, with his own evil temper, and with the demons of impatience and unbelief.—The Christian feels himself still with God, "even his own God;" and his presence enlightens all that is gloomy, relieves all that is depressing; brings beauty out of confusion, and turns evil into good. Thus it was with Jesus who suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps! He foreknew all the circumstances of his trial, and all the instruments of his pain—He saw Judas betraying him; Peter denying him; his disciples forsaking him; Herod mocking him; Pilate condemning him; the soldiers nailing him to the cross; the populace insulting him—He saw it all—yet he saw nothing but God: "The cup which MY FATHER hath given me, shall I not drink it?" We are to behold—

II. *The uncontrollableness of his dominion.*—"Who can hinder Him?"

Can the man of power?—There is no power but of God; and what he imparts he can with infinite ease recall or defeat. What a degree of force and influence have some individuals possessed and exerted! When the late Emperor of France led his unparalleled army into Russia, he seemed more than mortal. He felt the presumption of confidence himself, for he said, "Are not my princes altogether kings, is not Calno as Carchemish?—Is not Hamath as Arpad?—Is not Samariah as Damascus?"—What can withstand him? "*He sendeth abroad his ice like morsels. Who can stand before his cold?*"—"How

233

art thou fallen, O Lucifer son of the morning!—How art thou cut down to the ground which didst weaken the nations! for thou saidest in thine heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north.” We read of “an innumerable company of angels,” and they are called *his* mighty angels—

The least of which could wield these elements.—

One of them in a single night entered the camp of Sennacherib, and destroyed an hundred and eighty-five thousand: another, at midnight, passed through the whole land of Egypt, and slew in every house the first-born. An insect in his hand would be omnipotent. There have been four great monarchies in the world, and each of them for the time seemed too firmly established to be rooted up. But in vain the Babylonian said, I will keep my throne; the Persian, I will keep my state; the Macedonian, I will retain my glory; and the Roman, I will retain my dominion. He took them all away, and trampled them under foot as the mire in the street.

Can the man of policy?—There have been persons endowed with extraordinary prudence and penetration. They have seen effects in their distant causes; they have detected the undeveloped designs of an adversary; and made them, as soon as they began to operate, the very means of effecting their own scheme. “But there is no wisdom, nor understanding, nor counsel against the Lord.” “The wisdom of the world is foolishness with God; as it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And

234

again, the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain."

Can the man of prayer?—Prayer has power with God. Prayer has sometimes met Him as Abigail met David, and induced him to put up his sword into his sheath. "Therefore he said, that he would destroy them, had not Moses, his chosen, stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them." But prayer, even prayer cannot avail, when the time to execute his judgments, yea the set time is come. "Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth." He answers prayer; but not so as to derange the system of nature, and the economy of Providence. He answers prayer; yet when he has been taking away, who has not tried its efficacy, and found its success limited to our support under the suffering, but not to our exemption from it?

Can the hearer?—Strong is the regard we feel for the man who has "begotten us in Christ by the gospel," who has fed us with "the bread of life;" who has led us "in the way everlasting;" and comforted us in all our tribulation. But in vain we hang upon his lips. Those lips must be silenced in the grave. How many ministers, regardless of the tears of a church, raised by their labours, and apparently depending upon their ability and zeal, have been taken away in the vigour of their days, and the midst of their usefulness! Moses, the servant of the Lord, must die: and all they among whom Paul has gone preaching the kingdom of God must see his face no more.—Who can hinder Him?

235

—Cannot the wife—the children? Cannot they hinder the removal of the husband, the father—cannot they hinder it, when the loss will reduce *her* from ease to anxiety, and toil, and dependence; and scatter *them* abroad uneducated, unprovided for, exposed to injustice and treated with insult? No! “Leave thy fatherless children: I will preserve them alive, and let thy widows trust in me.”—Who can hinder Him?

Cannot the lover?—There is something very delightful and interesting in virtuous affection. “Marriage is honourable in all;” and God himself has pronounced that “it is not good for man to be alone.”—Tie, who has sanctioned the end, arranges the means. We see each other; we intermingle—some personal charm—some intellectual or moral attraction—some undefined, undefinable quality, perhaps imperceptible to another, seizes and fixes the admirer’s mind—we give up ourselves to the impression—and the time of union is reckoned upon, as the consummation of happiness.

—————What is the world to them?
 Its pomp, its pleasures, and its nonsense all.
 Who in each other clasp whatever fair
 High fancy forms, and lavish hearts can wish;
 Something than beauty dearer—should they look
 Or on the mind, or mind-illumined face,
 Truth, goodness, honour, harmony, and love.
 The richest bounty of indulgent heaven.—

—But, alas, instead of marriage rites, behold funeral solemnities!—Who can hinder Him?

Can the husband?—The husband ought to feel much more attached than the lover. To him the companion of his days has actually surrendered herself—For him she has passed through pains and

236

perils—She lives but for him and those dear pledges of affection which bear his name and his image. Her worth he has tried, and proved, and acknowledged.—

O happy they! the happiest of their kind,
 Whose hearts, whose fortune, and whose beings blend:
 'Tis not the coarser ties of human laws,
 Unnatural oft, and foreign to the mind,
 That binds their peace; but harmony itself,
 Attuning all their passions into love.
 There friendship sweet exerts her softest power,
 Perfect esteem, enlivened by desire
 Ineffable and sympathy of soul:
 Thought meeting thought, and will preventing will
 With boundless confidence—for nought but love
 Can answer love, and render bliss *secure*!

—And can *this*? “Son of man, behold I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke—and behold at evening my wife died.”

.But cannot parents? “Lo! children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward.” We view them as our treasures, and say to each inquirer, “These are the children which God hath graciously given thy servant.” With a joy which strangers intermeddle not with, we see them “growing in wisdom and in stature.” Every day some latent power or quality seems to unfold itself. We watch the tottering steps till they become a walk; and listen to their lisping, till with distinctness they can cry “My father and my mother.” We look forward and indulge in the fondness of hope and the visions of fancy. We expect to find in them our companions, the ornaments of our family, the support of our age, and the hands that shall close the eyes that first sparkled on them with pleasure—But while we are exceeding glad because of the gourd, some

237

worm is preying at the root—and after a few months or years, we turn to the common spoiler, and say, “Me hast thou bereaved of my children: Joseph is not; and Simeon is not—and wilt thou take Benjamin away?—all these things are against me.”

III. We are to *contemplate the unimpeachableness of his conduct!* Who will say unto Him, what doest Thou? He is not to be arraigned, or argued with, or examined. To restrain a man, however, from all this freedom with God, a three-fold conviction is necessary: a conviction of his supremacy; a conviction of his rectitude; and a conviction of his wisdom.

First. A conviction of his *supremacy*. A father may approach a child and say, what doest thou? But does it become a child to say this to a parent? Seeing your servant at work in the field or the garden, you have surely a right to interrogate *him*: but what would you think if he should in like manner question *you*? “Where the word of a king is there is power, and who can say unto Him what doest *Thou*?” With regard, indeed, to an earthly king, this reasoning may be pushed too far; and it often *has* been abused by courtiers, and the advocates for non-resistance and passive obedience; who consider a king as incapable of doing wrong, or amenable to God only for his doings. But a king is for his people. When he speaks *the law*, he speaks as a king, and his orders are to be obeyed, and not to be disputed or debated. But when he speaks against law, or above it, he only speaks as a man, and his mandates are no longer unquestionable. But God is a sovereign, in such a sense as no mortal either is or can be. We are ab-

238

solutely and entirely his: and He has a right to do what He will with his own. "Be still," therefore, says He, "and know that I am God." This was the consideration by which David hushed his passions into silence: "I was dumb; I opened not my mouth because Thou didst it."

Secondly. A conviction of his *rectitude*. The Sovereignty of God is never to be confounded with arbitrariness. Whatever He does. He does it "because it seemeth *good* in his sight." He feels no evil bias, and forms no design but infinite purity and benevolence approve. He is holy in all ways, and righteous in all his works. Even when He strips me. He does not defraud. He comes, not as a robber, but as a proprietor, only to reclaim his own. "I know that his judgments are right, and that in faithfulness He afflicts me." "Is there unrighteousness with God? How then can God judge the world? Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

Thirdly. A conviction of his *wisdom*. A man may mean well, and scorn to do an unworthy action, yet he may err; he may be weak; he may be imposed upon by appearances; he may be drawn aside by artifice, and thus be guilty of very foolish, hazardous, and injurious conduct. Let the ability of a fellow-creature be what it may, it is always limited and imperfect; and therefore I can never give him such *implicit* confidence as precludes the propriety or necessity of investigation. But such confidence in God is more than justified, because his understanding is infinite. He knows what is good in the circumstances as well as in the event: He knows what is best upon the whole, and in the end. The eyes of the Lord

239

run to and fro, throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of those whose heart is perfect towards him.”

“O, who so fit to choose our lot,
And regulate our ways?”

It is therefore needless, presumptuous, dishonourable, to say unto Him “what doest Thou?”

But perhaps you are ready to ask—Has this prohibition no bounds, no qualification? Must we be kept, while God is dealing with us, in absolute ignorance and silence? In answer to this, we have four remarks to make, to which we invite your renewed attention.

First remark. *You would not be often capable of understanding the subject, even were God to tell you, “what he doeth.”* Vain man would be wise, but he is born as a wild ass’s colt. We are of yesterday, and know nothing. We have only a small degree of intellect; and this is diverted and engrossed; limited in the sphere of its activity; and bounded by sense and reflection. We cannot know, where we have no ideas; and in many cases we have very imperfect ones, or none at all. What marvel then if God’s doings are often too remote for us to reach; too deep for us to fathom; too complicated for us to unravel? Such knowledge is too wonderful for us: and it would be useless for God to impart to us communications which we have not faculties to admit. He therefore does with us as we do with our children. They are often inquisitive, but we divert them from the subject. We know that we cannot at present enable them to comprehend the nature, the bearings, relations, and design of our conduct, especially in our most weighty

240

and complex concerns: that is, in those affairs wherein our wisdom is principally exercised. And we know who hath said, "O the depths, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out!"

Second remark. *There may be useful reasons for withholding from you the degree of knowledge which you are competent to receive.* The former article regards you physically; this morally; that regards your intellectual capacity, this your religious probation and improvement. It is well known that a veil left upon the subject will serve to awaken attention and reverence; for such is the nature of man, that familiarity breeds neglect and contempt; while distance genders awe, and excites desire. Nothing was so revered by the Jews as the ark that was not to be touched, and the holiest of all that was forbidden to be entered. The sun is never so much noticed as when eclipsed.—It may be necessary to keep us in suspense to try our faith; for the homage of faith is superseded by perfect knowledge. The grand proof of our confidence is, when we "walk in darkness, and have no light," to "trust in the Lord, and to stay upon our God." Am I willing to follow Him, when he leads me, as blind in a way which I know not, and in paths which I have not known? Am I a son of Abraham, who at the call of God obeyed, and "went out, not knowing whither he went!"—Such concealment also promotes our humility. Man fell from his happiness by the desire of knowing; and he can only rise by his "casting down imaginations, and everything that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ!"

241

Third remark. *An appointed hour is approaching when the restraints you are now under will be taken off; and your inquiries will be fully allowed and indulged.* The present is a world of action rather than of science. This life is a state of trial and preparation; the life to come is for remuneration and happiness. For this reason we shall know infinitely more than we now know, as well as enjoy infinitely more than we now enjoy. The developments of eternity will constitute no small part of the glory to be revealed. We therefore rejoice in hope. "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." "What I do," says God, "thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

Fourth remark. *Some inquiry is permitted you, even now; Yes—If you will speak with modesty and diffidence—If you will not arraign his character—If you will not impeach his supremacy, his rectitude, his wisdom—If you will not inquire from any suspicion of his wonderfulness in counsel and excellency in working—or from idle curiosity—but from a regard to your advantage—to regulate your duty—to guide your godly sorrow—to know what he would have you to do, or forsake: you may even now ask "What doest thou?" and Eliphaz himself recommends you to do so; "I would say unto God, do not condemn me, shew me wherefore Thou contendest with me."*

Now of that which we have spoken, this is the sum.

242

As any of your comforts may be taken away, set not your hearts upon them. This will be found not only the dictate of piety, but prudence. Excessive attachment is the way to lose our enjoyments the sooner, because it adds a moral precariousness to the natural: for it provokes God to slay the idols which rob him of that glory which he has declared he will not give to another. Therefore as snow remains longer in a cool place than in the sun-beams, so all our temporal indulgences are more durable in the region of moderate regard, than in the warmth of ardent affection. By this intemperate attachment, too, you render the removal the more difficult and painful when it comes. What we hold at our fingers' ends we can easily drop: but the tearing away of the heart-strings is death.

Again. *We see what alone it is in our afflictions that can reconcile the mind to them.* It is a view of God; and a view of Him, not only as a sovereign, but a Father. A view of His power will do something; it will shew us the vanity of resistance, and induce us to say, "This is my grief and I *must* bear it." But the submission of a Christian is not the offspring of necessity, or compulsion. It is acquiescence. It is not enough that he does not strive with God; He must forgive him—He must take all he does in good part—He must approve—He must in everything give thanks: feeling a lively persuasion, not only that he is doing all things, but doing all things well. This is a frame of mind that allows indeed of sensibility, but excludes all censure. "Then Job arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped: and

243

said, naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly."

The subject I have imperfectly explained and improved, cannot be deemed unsuitable to any of my audience, for we live in a world of changes; and "If a man live many years," says Solomon, "and rejoice in them all, yet let him remember the days of darkness, for they shall be many: all that cometh is vanity." But it has been peculiarly designed for those who are again called to sigh—

The dear delights we here enjoy,
And fondly call our own,
Are but short favours borrow'd now
To be repaid anon.

They have not only been bereaved, but visited with breach upon breach. A year has not elapsed since God entered the house of mourning, and, by the death of the never-to-be-forgotten head of the household, required a most important and painful sacrifice of the family; and in which the church, the pastor, the Sunday-schools, the poor, the neighbourhood, and the public, suffered along with them.*

And behold again He taketh away. He has now removed, not only a fellow-creature, but a fellow-hearer and worshipper, whose place—*there*—which once knew her, shall know her no more for ever.

* See a very just and elegant delineation of the character of this most excellent man, whose death was so deeply and universally deplored, in an address delivered on the occasion, to the Sunday Schools and the Teachers, by the Rev. Thomas Roberts, A.M.

244

She has been removed—in the bloom of life—lovely in person, more lovely in mind—most lovely in temper. Her disposition was peculiarly kind and obliging; her manners gentle, unaffected, and elegant; and her filial attachment and devotedness most exemplary. It is indeed to be presumed, that the poignancy of her feelings upon the loss of her honoured father injured her delicate frame, and accelerated and promoted the complaint of which she died.

She was not suddenly taken away, but by a slow and often flattering disease, which gradually undermined her constitution. And this was in mercy. It afforded a lengthened opportunity of developing and maturing those principles which had been previously implanted in her. Yes, the heavenly seed was sown before; and I had such a persuasion of this that I proposed her admission to the table of the Lord. That timidity, however, which generally accompanies sincerity, made her shrink back from a profession of religion. But though never admitted a member of a church on earth, she has entered the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and joined the spirits of just men made perfect. And I have frequently imagined the pleasing interview between the father and the child in that world of renewed and finished friendship: and have thought how much more advantageously she is disposed of to be under the wing of a parent in heaven than a parent on earth. Free from infirmity, and care, and trouble, how much more able is the father in heaven to devote himself to her improvement and happiness than the mother on earth!

Though the heavenly seed had been sown before.

245

the lingering illness; the retirement from the world; the sheltered leisure; the intercourse of sacred friendship; and above all, the presence, the conversation, the prayers of a pious parent—these were the showers that made the seed spring up, and in a short time to grow abundantly, “first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear.” The progress and produce were seen, in deep convictions of sin; in great self-abasement; in godly sorrow; in earnest and constant prayer; in dependence on the Lord our righteousness and strength; and in love to his dear name. It would take up too much of your time to go over the process of her experience till within a few days of her dissolution. Suffice it to observe, that she finished her course, not only with peace but joy; fully aware of her approaching departure, and impressed with all the importance attached to the event, yet triumphing over it.

On the Tuesday preceding her death, her mother coming into the room after some absence, she said to her with a smile, “I am happy!” “How precious is the Saviour! he has pardoned my sins, and washed me in his own blood—I long to be with him, and to behold his face in righteousness.”

On Wednesday morning, her respiration becoming more difficult, she prayed if it was the Lord’s will to give her more breath that she might praise him more; and tell poor sinners how precious he had been to her soul. She then repeated with great emphasis—

Jesus, lover of my soul,
 Let me to thy bosom fly;
 While the raging billows roll,
 While the tempest still is high!

246

Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
 Till the storm of life is past;
 Safe into the haven guide,
 O receive my soul at last!

Other refuge have I none,
 Hangs my helpless soul on thee;
 Leave, ah! leave me not alone,
 Still support and comfort me:

All my trust on thee is stay'd,
 All my help from thee I bring,
 Cover my defenceless head
 With the shadow of thy wing!

Soon after this she broke forth and said—

I'll praise my Maker with my breath,
 And when my soul is lost in death
 Praise shall employ my nobler powers:
 My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
 While life, and thought, and being last,
 Or immortality endures.

And again:

My Jesus shall be still my theme
 While in this world I stay;
 I'll sing my Saviour's lovely name,
 When all things else decay.

And then looking upward said, "My heart and flesh faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

—On Thursday morning, after struggling for some time to all appearance in the agonies of death, she revived, and said to her attached friend,* "How precious is the Saviour! O never, never forget him and to her parent, "You, my dear mother, will praise him to all eternity, for all the happiness I feel,

* To whom she was affianced.

247

It appears as if the Saviour's everlasting arms were underneath me; and the angels beckoning me away to glory. O precious Saviour! that I had more breath to praise Thee. O come and take me to Thyself, that I may cast my crown at Thy feet, and sing 'worthy is the Lamb that was slain.'"

At one time she expressed a great desire to be taken home to Bath,* that she might see her young friends, and tell them how good the Saviour had been to her; and exhort them to seek Him while they had health and strength: but finding this to be impracticable, she submitted to the will of her heavenly Father; but said to her mother, "Let me, however, be taken home to be buried. Let my young friends see my funeral, give them my dying love, and tell them how happy I should have been could I have seen them, to speak of the Saviour's goodness." She particularly wished to have seen the preacher who is now addressing you: but as his public engagements prevented her the satisfaction, she desired her mother to tell him "That she had a good hope through grace—That Jesus was all her Salvation and all her desire—That she was cleansed in His blood, and clothed in his righteousness."

At another time she exclaimed, "Though the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolving, I have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

These are only *a few* of her remarks and feelings. She continued exulting in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, when breath permitted, till the moment of her departure drew near: and when she could no longer utter aloud the happiness she felt,

* She died at the Hot-Wells.

248

she was distinctly heard to whisper "O come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Come take me to thyself. I am accepted in the beloved. I am waiting his commands. I am longing to depart to be with Jesus, which is far better."

Well, this beautiful flower is not destroyed, but only transplanted—transplanted from a wintry climate and an ungenial soil to flourish near "the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

And now what remains? When Jesus was dying in anguish on the Cross, and amidst the insults of the multitude, (never was there a scene of distress like hers,) Mary, his mother, was standing by; and I am happy to find the mother of this beloved child here this morning. You who have been bereaved yourselves will sympathize with her. Yet, perhaps, no one of you has been called to lose in sad succession several infants; a son at seventeen, full of every kind of promise; a husband, and *such* a husband; a daughter, and *such* a daughter! But, my afflicted friend, there is one—the God of all comfort—who knows thy frame—knows all thy walking through this great wilderness—and has engaged to deliver thee in six troubles, and that in seven, no evil shall touch thee. Indeed you feel that the affliction has been alleviated, sanctified, glorified! Your grateful mind has led you to acknowledge that you have much more reason for joy than sorrow. Her death is not only her gain, but yours. You have gained by it a fresh claim on the presence of God. You have gained a new promise, "I will be with thee in trouble." You have gained another loosening from earth and another attraction in Heaven; and you will now resemble the sheep that I have seen in the meadow following and bleating

249

after tire shepherd that has taken up her lamb—So you will long to be with Jesus who has gathered your lamb with his arm, and carries it in his bosom.

I feel on the present occasion, but allow me to say, the parent I most pity is, not the parent that has just seen a child delivered from the burden of the flesh, and a vale of tears, and exalted to sit with the Saviour on his throne—but the parent whose heart is bleeding and breaking over a child that has sinned away every religious advantage, and in the career of iniquity is proceeding from evil to evil. “Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away; for he shall return no more, nor see his native country.”—

I am peculiarly concerned to render the event useful to you, the sister and brothers of the deceased. You have, my young friends, been several times solemnly addressed by the Providence as well as the word of God. I trust it has not been entirely in vain. But it is with you to determine whether you are sufficiently decided. It is for you to determine whether you are giving full scope to the convictions, which from your education and advantages you surely must often feel. It is for you to determine whether “the world and the things of the world” are swaying you, or you are living as you will wish you had lived, when you come to die. You have long heard the Gospel. Have you received it? From a child you have known the Holy Scriptures. Have they made you wise unto salvation? You have seen that the saints are the excellent in the earth. Is all your delight in them? You have now much in Heaven. Are you to be connected with it, or separated from it, for ever? God forbid that there should be weeping and gnashing of

250

teeth, when you shall see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and your endeared kindred in the kingdom of God—and ye yourselves shut out.

My young friends in general, suffer the word of exhortation. You have had another instance before you of the delusion of depending on a future season, for an attention to the things that belong to your everlasting peace. In the midst of life you are in death. Childhood and youth are vanity. Should life amidst a thousand perils be spared, the heart may be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, and by unsanctified attendance on the means of grace. Or should you in advanced years be enabled to seek the Lord, the misimprovement of the most favoured period of your time will occasion bitter repentance. You will then see, but too late to retrieve them, the losses you have sustained by the neglect of early piety. I have avoided remarking therefore till now how often and how much the deceased regretted that she had not sought the Lord earlier. “O,” said she, “O that I had known the Saviour sooner. O that I had known Llim from the age of six, or even four, the time then would have been too short to praise Him.” For *your* seeking him early, my young friends, she discovered her solicitude in death. For this purpose she desired to be brought to her own house, that as the eye affecteth the heart, you might be impressed with the sight of so early a corpse. Many of you have seen it; and others have followed it this morning to the grave. And I see you are impressed. You are saying, “Ah! she is gone—our lovely companion—we shall no more see her in the house, or walk with her in the field. We shall no more see her—dealing out her garments to the poor—no more see her teaching.

251

surrounded by her little Sunday School circle—Yes, you weep, and these tears become you. I love to see them.—You are *now* impressed: and I have no doubt of the *sincerity* of your present feelings and vows—but I have of their *permanency*. I fear you will go forth and straightway forget what manner of persons you now are. I fear you will turn again to folly. “O that they were wise; that they understood this; that they would consider their latter end.”

“The voice said, Cry: and I said what shall I cry? All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof fadeth away: but the word of the Lord endureth for ever; and this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.”

ANXIETY DIRECTED:

A SERMON.

PREACHED

AUGUST 9, 1920, AT SALTER'S-HALL,

BEFORE

"THE HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY."

TO THOMAS TOMPSON, ESQ.,

TREASURER TO "THE HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY;"

One of its first Movers, and most zealous and liberal Supporters; as also the impartial Friend of every Institution that keeps in view the welfare of Man, and the glory of God our Saviour:

This Sermon,

as a Token of Respect for his Character, and from a wish to recommend his Example, is affectionately dedicated by

THE AUTHOR.

Bath, Sept. 7, 1820.

255

"I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: hut he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife."—I COR. vii. 32, 33.

MARRIAGE may be a very bad thing, or it may prove a very good thing. It is capable of producing numberless advantages, or of entailing miseries, of which death only is the cure: and, as to some of them, not even this. In the very nature of the ordinance, it cannot be an indifferent event—it must have a very commanding influence over our character and our condition. And hence the Scripture is so frequent and particular in its references to it.

Yet, momentous as the subject is, I appear not before you this morning to deliver a lecture on marriage. I am not going to lead you to the altar, but to the cross. I am not going to inquire in what manner, or at what period, you should enter wedded life. I am not going to determine, whether he that marrieth doth well, or he that marrieth not doth better—but to "beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk and please God, so ye would abound more and more."

It may not however be improper to observe, that the Apostle is not here opposing or depreciating marriage, *in itself*. Indeed no one of the sacred writers

256

has said so much in commendation of it. He tells us that "marriage is honourable in all:" and makes no scruple to rank the "forbidding to marry," among "the doctrines of devils." But he is referring to a peculiar condition of the church. The avoiding it, if practicable, "is," says the Apostle, "good for the present distress." That is: it was a season of persecution. Many were deprived of their substance; expelled from their houses; and had no certain dwelling-place—and "woe to them," said the Saviour, "that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days." Many also were called to lead an evangelizing or missionary life. They were to cross seas, to travel from province to province, and from country to country—flying like angels, "having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell upon the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." Now, in such a case as this, suppose them married. It is easy to see, that—if they took their wives and children along with them, they would prove a hindrance; or if they left them behind, a source of anxiety. Upon this principle the two leaders of Methodism should have remained single. Their plan of life was inconsistent with the advantages and duties of the married state. Accordingly neither of them was happy in it. For the same reason, a preacher, while labouring as an itinerant, should forbear the condition; because he must live in the violation or neglect of those attentions which the Bible enjoins upon him, as a master, a father, a husband, who is "to dwell with his wife according to knowledge." Hence, says the Apostle, "I would have you without carefulness."

Yea, further, the Apostle admits that where there

257

is a disposition to marry, it *should he repressed on a religious ground only*. For why would he have them without carefulness? "He that is unmarried careth for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord." He scorns to mention as an objection the reason of the infidel and the libertine—"That he may have more vicious freedom." Yea, he disdains to notice the excuse of those who remain solitary, "Because they shall be under less obligation to labour, and incur fewer difficulties and inconveniences." There are trials attached to every condition: and to make these the ground of declining the duties of wedded life is selfish, sordid, unmanly, unchristian. No, says the Apostle, if it be declined, let it be declined from a nobler principle—That you may be more free to serve and honour the Lord. This is the rule by which his followers should always walk; this is the standard by which they should always judge.

Once more. He even allows that *when* a man has entered this state, *he ought to conform to it*. The Gospel is not to draw him off from the claims of morality; nor is even the saint or the minister to encroach upon the husband. "He that is married careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife."—Not without qualification—not in all things. If, like Eve, she would induce him to break a Divine command: if she would draw him away from hearing the Gospel to attend a place of more fashionable divinity: if she would involve him in extravagance and expense to rival neighbours in finery and show: if, instead of being a keeper at home, she would be always exhibiting abroad, and in public here conscience must interpose: here a Saviour must be heard; "He that loveth—even his wife, more than

258

me, is not worthy of me." But a man's chief attentions are clue to the wife of his bosom. From the very nature of the alliance; from the confidence she has reposed in him; from the sacrifices she has made for him; and the nameless anxieties, pains, and perils, which attend the relation, on *her* side, she has peculiar and unrivalled titles to his regards. "No man," says our Apostle, "ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church."

It is, therefore, undeniable, from our text itself, that it is the duty of a husband to please his wife: and it would not be difficult to prove that it is his interest too: for what case is there in which the path of duty is not the path of safety?

But to our subject. It is this.

WE SHOULD ENDEAVOUR TO PLEASE THE LORD, BY BEING ALIVE TO HIS CONCERNS—"Caring for the things that belong unto the Lord." Our thoughts will divide themselves into four parts.

I. We shall observe, THAT THERE ARE THINGS WHICH PECULIARLY BELONG UNTO THE LORD.

II. We shall shew, HOW THEY ARE TO ENGAGE OUR ATTENTION.

III. We shall explain, THE OBLIGATION WE ARE UNDER TO MAKE THEM THE OBJECTS OF OUR SOLICITUDE.

IV. We shall PARTICULARIZE WHAT HAS BEEN GENERAL IN OUR REFLECTIONS, AND COMMEND TO EVERY MAN'S CONSCIENCE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD, THE INSTITUTION WHICH HAS ASSEMBLED US TOGETHER.

259

I. THERE ARE THINGS WHICH PECULIARLY BELONG UNTO THE LORD. I say *peculiarly*, for "The shields of the earth belong unto the Lord." "The silver and the gold are his." "All the beasts of the forest are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." "The sea is his, and He made it; and his hands prepared the dry land." "The world is his, and the fulness thereof." All you behold in the immense regions of nature, pertains to Him by a right infinitely peculiar, and which He *cannot* transfer to another—the right of creation. For He made them all; and upholds them, by the word of his power.

And this applies to all your temporal possessions. You sometimes talk of your *property*; but the very word ought to be discarded from the Christian's vocabulary. You have no such thing as property; and you ought, in the place of it, to substitute the term trust. The Lord is the proprietor—you are only the stewards; and the summons is at the door, "Give account of thy stewardship, for thou shalt be no longer steward."

But these are not the things to which our Apostle alludes. By "the things which belong unto the Lord," he means those which relate to his cause; and be it recollected, that when we speak of his cause we are employing a sacred phraseology—"Arise O Lord," says David, "and plead thine own cause." He *has* a cause; a cause in the most perfect sense his *own*, upon which his eye and his heart are continually, and which I hope is dearer to many now in his presence, than their own blood.

These things therefore include The Scriptures—They are "the words of Christ;" a revelation from Him, and of Him.

260

They include The sabbath—This is expressly called “The Lord’s day;” because established in honour of his resurrection from the dead, when “He entered into his rest; He also having ceased from his own works, as God did from his.”

They include The sanctuary—This is “the habitation of his house,” “the place of his feet;” which he has promised to make “glorious.”

They include The ordinances of religion—Baptism and the Lord’s supper; these were instituted by Him, and designed to be memorials of Him.

They include The dispensation of the word by preaching—For “when he ascended up on high. He received gifts for men, even for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them; and He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the work of the ministry, for the perfecting of the saints, 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 of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

They include The divers gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost—For, says Peter, “*He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.*” And “if any man,” says Paul, “have not the spirit of *Christ*, he is none of his.”

They include, “The travail of his soul,” by the sight of which, he is “to be satisfied,” and which is to be seen in the calling of sinners to “believe in his name in having “a people for himself, to shew forth his praise in “the going forth of his righteousness as brightness, and of his salvation as a lamp that burneth,” till “the earth shall be filled with the

261

knowledge of the Lord," and "all shall know Him, from the least unto the greatest."

These then are the things which belong unto the Lord; and it would be delightful to enlarge upon these, but time requires me to proceed.

II. To shew HOW THESE THINGS ARE TO ENGAGE YOUR ATTENTION. You are to regard them even to *anxiety*—you are to *care for them*. Yea, you are to care for nothing else: "Be careful for *nothing*." You may *attend* to other things: but all your *anxiety* is bespoken, and must be sacred to the Lord's concerns only. It is, however, to be feared, that we completely *reverse* this maxim.

Let us enter into the subject; and let us indulge freely in an inquiry which will be found to bear, not only on the proceedings of this day, but the whole course of our Christian profession. *How* is our anxiety for the things of the Lord to operate?

First. We are to care for them *personally*, yet *extetisively*. In a day when so many are strangely actuated to aid a cause which they cannot approve, and become the instruments of divine grace, without being its subjects; it can never be unnecessary to observe, that we must care for the things of the Lord, so as to know them, and love them, and enjoy them, and live under the influence of them, individually ourselves. It will be lamentable if our zeal glows at a distance, but becomes dimmer as it approaches home, and goes out in a chilling darkness, between God and our own soul. It will be dreadful for a dying hour to induce the adoption of the complaint, "They made me keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." We must resemble

262

Joshua, whose resolution embraced personal as well as relative piety, and made the one go *before* the other; "As for me, *and* my house, we will serve the Lord." Indeed we must exemplify what we recommend, if we would not lose our labour, and expose ourselves to reproach. How can the proud enforce humility, or the covetous liberality? If you extol and urge a remedy as infallible, while death is seen pictured in your own countenance, people will think you are only trifling with them, or insulting them: "You do not," will they say, "believe one word of what you profess; if you did, you would try its efficacy on yourselves, and not languish under a disease for which you pretend to claim a specific." In other words, if you talk of divine things, and endeavour to bring people under the sound of the Gospel, while you are close-fisted and hard-hearted, malignant and unforgiving, proud and envious, vain in your conversation, and inconsistent in your conduct; they will conceive that your zeal regards only some curious notions, or the shibboleths of a party; and they will attach no importance to them, because they see *you* derive no benefit from them. He cannot value the soul of a fellow-creature, who despises his own; nor can he who is alienated from the life of God himself, earnestly, or even sincerely, beseech others to be reconciled unto Him.

Yet genuine religion is as social as it is personal; and while it teaches us to begin at home, it never allows us to end there. It not only commands, but enables us to "love our neighbour as ourselves."—Indeed, none but a Cain will ever ask "am I my brother's keeper?" We must therefore not only be solicitous to promote the cause of God in our own souls,

263

but endeavour to advance it in our family circle, in the neighbourhood wherein we dwell, in the church to which we belong, in our own country, in every country: that his "way may be known on earth, his saving health among all nations." He is unworthy the name of a Christian, whose exertions are restricted by any bounds but those of inability, or whose wishes are confined within any limits but those of the globe.

Secondly. We are to care for them *immediately*, yet *perseveringly*. "God commanded me to make haste," was the language of the king of Egypt to Josiah, In *his* lips it was a falsehood; but there cannot be a greater truth in the mouth of every minister and every Christian. God *has* commanded *us* to make haste. "The king's business requires haste"—how much more do the affairs of *Him*, who is the "King of kings, and the Lord of lords; the true and only Potentate?" Delay, hesitation, reluctance, are inconsistent with the greatness of the Being we avowedly serve. Besides, we have no time for procrastination. Our life is a vapour which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. And it is as uncertain as it is short. Yet all our opportunities of usefulness depend upon it; and many of them may expire long before it. The tide offers to subserve our welfare, but it will not wait for our convenience. The summer is short, but the harvest is much shorter; and every day, and every week, *in* harvest, is not equally propitious for action. The golden grain is not only precious, but perishable; and while the idler sleeps, the treasure is destroyed. How many seasons and occasions of doing good can we all review, of which nothing now remains, but

264

the sin and regret of neglect! What work are we yet often making for hither repentance! Surely conscience cannot be always easy. Surely there are moments when we must exclaim, "We are verily guilty concerning our brother." How many have perished, and how many are perishing for ever, through our indifference!—

But it is not enough to commence, we must continue. The command is, "Be not weary in well doing, for in due time we shall reap, if we faint not." Here we have need of patience. The excitements of novelty soon wear off. The prayers offered in faith are not always immediately answered. The schemes of wisdom and benevolence do not always instantly take effect. The seed sown does not spring up the same day, or the same week: and when it appears, there is "first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear." "It is good," says the apostle, "to be *always* zealously affected in a good thing; and not only when I am *present* with you." Zeal, in order to be durable, must be founded in principle, and not dependent on emotions excited by circumstances; it must not rely on the eloquence of a sermon, or the sympathy of a public meeting: it must have a spring head, or, like the summer brook, it will sometimes flow and sometimes fail.

We read of some who "did run well, but were hindered," "they began in the spirit, but ended in the flesh." And we are informed of some who obtained the commendation, "Thou hast laboured, and hast not fainted. I know thy works, and the last to be more than the first." I need not say to which of these it becomes you to be conformed—You must say "I love my master. I will not go free." Your ears

265

must be bored. You must be nailed to the door of your Lord's dwelling; and be his servant for ever. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Thirdly. We are to care for them *openly* yet *simply*. It has often been objected to those who are trying to carry on the work of Christ, like you, my brethren, that they make so much noise and show. I trust you will never make more noise and show than are unavoidable. But unavoidable in a measure they are. The wind cannot blow without your hearing the sound thereof. The sun cannot illuminate, and warm, and fertilize, and bless, without shining, nor can it shine without being seen. But effects are not always motives. Little comparatively can be done in any matter of enterprise by detached efforts: there must be combination, and combination cannot act with the privacy of individuality. The mountain is made up of sands; but though a sand can be hid, a mountain cannot. A single soldier may conceal himself, but an army cannot muster, and march, and contend, and conquer, without display. And publicity is desirable, as well as unavoidable: it awakens attention; it genders sympathy; it reproaches sloth; it weakens fear and shame; it kindles emulation.

Yet it must be confessed, that there is no little danger here, as to the agents themselves: and it is much more necessary to examine our principles, and watch over our motives, when we are called to act on the theatre of observation, than when we are discharging in private duties which none, or few can witness, but God only. Jehu was apparently very zealous, but ostentation spoiled all—"Come see my zeal for the Lord of hosts." But it was only selfish-

266

ness in a religions mantle. If he did the Lord's work, it was not for the Lord's sake. He saw that his obedience to a Divine intimation was the road to preferment, and a ladder to the throne. While therefore your zeal is public, let it be also pure: no longer than your eye is single will your whole body be full of light. Never think of a *name* as a founder, or a leader; an agent, or a contributor. Let no carnal aims ever degrade and pollute your religious exertions: but "live in the spirit, and walk in the spirit." "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works," yet not to "glorify" you, but your "Father which is in heaven!"

Fourthly. We must care for them *boldly* yet *wisely*. In some conditions courage would not be necessary; but it is otherwise where immensely the majority are averse to our object, and striving to support a contrary interest. "Who will rise up for me against the evil doers? who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?" is an address, that supposes opposition, and even invites to contention. Here the man is prepared for nothing who cannot rise above the influence of fear and shame: and say—

"Careless myself, a dying man,
Of dying men's esteem;
Happy, O God, if Thou approve,
Though all beside condemn."

Some will suspect your motives; and some will censure them; some will sneer; and some will curse—You may be opposed by those above you, and whose example will have the force of authority; and you may be opposed by those who are dear to you, and whose example will have the force of affection: and the persecution of entreaties and tears is, to an in-

267

genuous mind, the greatest of all trials. You must therefore feel every moment the conviction, "We ought to obey God rather than man." You must cherish the spirit of a martyr, though not called to his sufferings. You must be willing to "go forth to Him without the camp, bearing his reproach;" and be determined to "follow Him whithersoever he goeth!" And if your faith is considered as fancy, your hope delusion, your meekness meanness, your ardour folly or madness; you must take the scandal, and, binding it as an ornament around your brow, exclaim, "If this is to be vile, I will yet be more vile:" and "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death."

But boldness may be accompanied by ignorance and rashness. You will, therefore, allow me to say, let your firmness and earnestness be blended with discretion. This is not to check, or chill your zeal, but to refine it, and guide it, and keep it from expending itself uselessly or injuriously. The religion of Jesus does not sanctify all the means that may be employed for its promotion; nor must we do evil that good may come. We are to give, but it must be our own: he abhors robbery for a burnt-offering. We are to compel people to come in; but it must be by instruction, entreaty, and persuasion: all force is persecution. We are to contend earnestly for the faith; but we must strive carefully; the very nature of the cause rejects a pen dipped in gall, or a tongue set on fire of hell: "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God." "No one was ever yet," says Cowper, "scolded out of his sins, or into his duty." We are to hold forth the word of life, but we

268

are not to leave our callings in which we are called of God, but to "abide with God" in them.

There are some whose zeal, like a fever, burns up the brain instead of genially warming the constitution like the heat of health. "We must study men and things: we must observe times and circumstances. We must please our neighbour for his good to edification. "He that winneth souls is wise." There are preachers and professors who despise and disdain everything like conciliation and accommodation, as if it argued a want of fortitude and fidelity—or was a base and unworthy tampering with the enemy to betray the cause. But who was it that said "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without?" And did not his practice exemplify and enforce his doctrine? "Even so I please all men, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." "For though I be free from all, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

We have a greater than Paul; and *his* example ought to have the force of a law. The whole of our Saviour's conversation and conduct was a fulfilment of the prediction, "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently." When He commissioned the twelve apostles He said, "Be ye wise as serpents, as well as harmless as doves"—and we cannot have too much of the wisdom of the serpent if we have none of the venom. And when he sent forth the seventy disciples, almost all his admonitions were of a prudential kind; and some of them such as many a young divine

269

would think it beneath him to regard were they to constitute (and they ought to constitute) a part of a tutor's charge. But our Lord knew that things trifling-in themselves became very important by their connexions, indications, and effects. He knew that without prudence a man can give no pledge of proper behaviour in any of those trying situations which are perpetually occurring; yea, that his very excellences may injure his character, and his very talents frustrate his usefulness.

Finally; we must care for them *humbly*, and yet *practically*. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." The wisest plans, the most strenuous efforts, the most powerful means, will be unavailing without his blessing. If you had Paul and Apollos to employ in your mission, Paul would plant, and Apollos would water, in vain, unless the Lord gave the increase. To this conviction the glory of God requires Him to bring us: and the sooner we feel it the better, for when we are weak then are we strong. At every step, therefore, remember the declaration, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord." Labour upon your knees. Let your care for the things of the Lord operate constantly in a way of prayer; and whatever be your advantages and instruments, breathe over them the dependence of David, "O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity."

It has been said, that exertion without prayer is impiety; but it is no less true, that prayer without exertion is hypocrisy. It is not, therefore, sufficient to pray—the sincerity of your prayers must be evinced

270

by your actions: for of this we may be assured, that whatever a man really desires, and in proportion as he desires it, he will seek after, and use all the means placed within his power, to obtain. Out of their own mouths, therefore, many will be condemned—yea, they are condemned already.—They pray—but they *do* nothing. They avail not themselves of the opportunities which the providence of God presents; they call not into action the resources under their control; they never deny themselves, never re-trench, in order to increase their capacity for usefulness. They *talk* enough of the cause of God; but they “flatter Him with their lips, and lie unto Him with their tongues.” “With their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.”

Thus are we to care for the things that belong unto the Lord: and we hasten

III. TO EXPLAIN THE OBLIGATION WE ARE UNDER TO MAKE THEM THE OBJECTS OF OUR SOLICITUDE.

And first. Does not *consistency* require it? “He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk even as He walked.” In these words we are reminded, that our practice should correspond with our profession. It is required, it is expected: it is expected by the world as well as by the church: we cannot maintain *OUR* character without it; for we shall always be judged of by our pretensions.

Now see how this applies in the case before us. You are the professors of Christ. You profess to be his servants—but can you be good servants if negligent in your master’s work? You profess to be his subjects—but can ye be loyal subjects if ye are re-

271

ardless of your sovereign's honour? You profess to be his friends—but can you be faithful friends unless you feel attached to your friend's interests and make his welfare your own?

Secondly. Does not *reason* require it? The things *themselves* are the most excellent, and valuable, and important, and essential. We are careful about many objects which are wholly unworthy of the ardour we expend upon them: but here our solicitude can never become excessive—can never reach the subject. In deciding this, I refer you to a dying hour—

“Men *may live* fools, but fools they *cannot die*.” The delusions of time drop off at the approach of eternity; and things begin to appear what they really are. In that solemn period you will wonder by what process of deception certain objects could acquire their influence over you; and you will be ashamed of the exertions and sacrifices you made to obtain them. You will equally wonder how other things could have been neglected or forgotten: for they are then deemed all in all. Life in the review is seen a dull level, or a dread darkness: nothing rises up, nothing shines with glory but what we have done in working the work of God. All is acknowledged lost labour but the care of the soul. All is felt to be vanity and vexation of spirit but the earnestness of the Holy Ghost.

How different are the views and feelings of angels and of men! *We* are struck with the merchant, the philosopher, the prince, the hero: *they* gaze with pleasure on the missionary; on the Sunday-school teacher that is seeking to save the children of the needy; on the broken-hearted penitent, crying, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” We are attracted by the

272

wonders of nature, and the productions of art: they desire to "look into the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." We exult in a victory: they "rejoice over one sinner that repenteth." We celebrate the birth of a Wellington, and they the birth of a Whitfield—for they "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

What am I saying! God himself cares for these things. In *his* judgment they are of the highest moment. For what purpose did He make this earth, and for what purpose does He continue it? To be a field of slaughter for heroes? A counting-house for merchants? A laboratory for chemists? An observatory for astronomers? No—but to be a theatre, in which to display redeeming grace; a temple, in which to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation; a school, in which to train up the heirs of life for glory, honour, and immortality. In these things He delights. These are his glory. To these He makes everything else subordinate and subservient. To these everything else must bend, or He will trample it under foot: "The nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish." These shall see the "sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood," survive the wreck of the universe; and flourish for ever in the "new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

Thirdly. Does not *self-interest* require it? If concerned for your own welfare, you will surely feel the wisdom of pleasing Him, in whose favour is life: who has the control of all hearts, and the direction of all events; whose are the deceived and the deceiver,

273

the drought and the floods, the winds and seasons: who can withhold, or curse your blessings; and on whom entirely depend, the success of your business, the safety of your family, the health of your body, and the prosperity of your soul. But "with such sacrifices God is well pleased." And what a monarch is reported to have once said to a prime minister. He says to each of you, "Mind my affairs, and I will mind yours."—"He that watereth shall be watered also:" He that soweth plentifully shall reap plentifully." You have read the announcement of heaven, "Them that honour me I will honour, but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed." You have heard the threatening, "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Now turn to the promise, "They shall prosper that love thee." After the death of Uzzah no one seemed willing to admit the ark. Some were afraid. Others were actuated by selfishness. They weighed the expense, and the trouble. "We shall always be exposed and incommoded; all the people will be coming here from curiosity to see, or from piety to inquire." "Well," says Obbedom, "let it turn in to me—I shall deem it an honour and a privilege." And a privilege it proved. The report soon reached even the foot of the throne; and had its influence there. "And it was told king David, saying, the Lord hath blessed the house of Obbedom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obbedom into the city of David with gladness."

274

Now turn for contrast to those selfish wretches who had come back from Babylon to Jerusalem. They pretended that the time was not come for the house of the Lord to be built: yet while the Lord's house was lying in ruins they had reared and were occupying ceiled houses of their own. And what did they gain by "seeking their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's?" "Ye looked for much, and lo it came to little; and when ye brought it home I did blow upon it. Why, saith the Lord of Hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your rvays. Go up to the mountain, and bring wood, and build the house: and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the Lord. Consider now from this day and upward, from the four and twentieth day of the ninth month, even from the day that the foundation of the Lord's temple was laid, consider it. Is the seed yet in the barn? yea, as yet the vine, and the fig-tree, and the pomegranate, and the olive-tree, hath not brought forth: from, this day will I bless you."

Lastly. *Gratitude* requires it. Fear does something in a Christian; hope does more; but love does most of all: and love seeketh not her own. When Achilles was asked, what were the most pleasing services in which he ever engaged, he replied, "What I do for my friends." "Nothing," says Augustine, "is irksome or difficult to love." "Love," says Solomon, "is strong as death. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. If a man would give all the substance of his house for

275

love, it would be utterly contemned." But there is no love like that which a redeemed sinner bears to his Redeemer: and there ought to be no love like it. He whom you are required to serve, has always been serving you. His mercies have been new every morning, and every moment. He has never been weary in doing you good, notwithstanding all your unworthiness and perverseness. He for whose things you are required to care, has incessantly cared for you. He has cared for your condition, cared for your family, cared for your bodies, cared for your souls. He remembers you now He is in his kingdom; and is making all things to work together for your good. What has he not insured to you by promise? What has He not done for you already? He met you when going astray, and turned your feet into the path of peace. He opened your blind eyes. He relieved your burdened consciences. He delivered you from the bondage of corruption. He brought you into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

And *how* did He all this? You sometimes talk of your benevolence; but how little of it will bear examination? How much of it is merely casual? How much of it is selfish, originating in some reference to your reputation or advantage? How little of it has been attended with anything like self-denial, ox-sacrifice? Perhaps, you have never lost a night's rest, or walked a few miles in a warm day, to help a fellow-creature in your lives. And yet, because you have now and then given a trifle of what you could not expend upon yourselves, you are forsooth generous. You look after returns of gratitude, and, if you meet with no suitable acknowledgment, you are filled with resentment, and discontinue your kindness. O call, this

276

morning—call to remembrance *Him* who, when He was rich, for our sakes became poor; who laid aside the sovereign, and took upon Him the form of a servant; who for three and thirty years “was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and died that you might live. View Him in the manger, view Him in the garden, view Him on the cross—

“See from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?”

—And surely every feeling of the heart must constrain you to exclaim—

“To Thee, to Thee, Almighty Love,
Our souls, ourselves, our all, we pay;
Millions of tongues shall sound thy praise,
On the bright hills of heavenly day.”

We have now, in the

IVth place. TO PARTICULARIZE WHAT HAS BEEN GENERAL IN OUR REFLECTIONS, AND TO COMMEND TO EVERY MAN'S CONSCIENCE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD, THE INSTITUTION WHICH HAS ASSEMBLED US TOGETHER. It is the HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY. And here I cannot but remark, that the very title is auspicious, and auspicious not only in its reference, as we shall presently evince, but even in its implication. For the word HOME Mission naturally leads us to think of a FOREIGN: and a Society for sending the Gospel abroad has been now established for many years: and none can rejoice in its operations and success more than ourselves.*

* There are several Societies now for sending the Gospel to the heathen: there is one in almost every denomination. But the preacher adverts only to the London Missionary Society: not from illiberality, but because the persons he ad-

277

But we request a patient and candid hearing, while *we* mildly, but firmly contend, that as the Foreign Missionary Society does not supersede the Home Missionary Society; so the latter does not interfere with the former. The one, therefore, should not awaken the jealousy, or occasion the distance of the other. We go further, and are not afraid to affirm, that the one is entitled to the respect and co-operation of the other. It has a three-fold claim. First, the claim of a sister. The one is of the same family with the other; and engaged in the same glorious cause of doing good, though not in the same department. Secondly, The claim of a child. It would be very easy to prove that the one grew out of the other. And the effect was natural and unavoidable. Such a number of preachers and people could not be called together, and urged to think of the danger of those who were perishing for lack of knowledge abroad, without being led to reflect also upon the condition of those in the same state, *as to effect*, nearer home. They could not but say, "We must feel and act consistently: and not expose ourselves to the reflection, Physician, heal thyself: what we have heard done in Capernaum, do also in thy own country." Hence from those annual convocations, ministers returned determined to explore the villages around them. Hence new county associations were formed, and the old ones acquired an ardour unknown before; and instead of these half-yearly meetings being made days of smoking and preaching, they were converted into days of public excitement and private inquiry,

dressed were principally connected with it. Yet what is advanced will apply to the friends of every other Foreign Missionary Society, and tend to conciliate them to home-efforts.

278

in order to evangelize the respective districts. Hence sprang The Tract Society; hence The Bible Society, which from the beginning was called "British," as well as "Foreign;" hence arose The Hibernian Society; The Irish Evangelical Institution—and, to mention no more, last of all, The Home Missionary Society also. Thirdly, the claim of a friend. For not only is this society related to the other, and descended from it, but is designed and adapted to aid it too. Every *convert* made by its efforts, will become a lover of the Missionary Society—and will pray for it—and, if able, contribute to its support. Every new *interest* raised by its efforts, will be, according to its extent, a magazine of resources. Every *preacher* produced by its efforts, will become an official advocate, and be empowered to render it, by his sermons as well as his life, important service. And is even *this* an impossible, or an improbable result? It is not delicate for a speaker to refer to himself—otherwise, it might be observed, that your preacher this morning was the fruit of village preaching, and preaching of a very humble kind too. Three others also, by the same means, were called to labour in the word and doctrine, out of the same obscure vicinity.* Yea, not a few of the most acceptable and useful ministers of the day have been called forth by the very kind of exertion which your Society patronizes, employs, and excites: and these have been, and will be, the instruments of recommending the Missionary Society, and of collecting no inconsiderable sums for its use.

But your institution, my brethren, is to be viewed under other aspects.

* Mr. Toplady and Dr. Williams also were awakened by village preaching, and one of them in a barn.

279

It is enforced by *patriotism*. "As we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith." It cannot be pleaded, that the objects contemplated by your Society are, at present, of the household of faith: but the apostle's language sufficiently shews us that there is no incompatibility between public and universal benevolence, and private and particular regards. Indeed the one is the safest and the nearest road to the other. The best, the only way in which we can promote the welfare of the whole, is by benefiting the parts; for the aggregate is made up of individuals. Paul, therefore, would not blame us for feeling *peculiarly*, when an Institution invites us to go and bless, not our fellow-creatures only, but our fellow-subjects; not strangers only, but neighbours. Yea, he himself felt in like manner—"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel, is, that they might be saved. I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart: for I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my kinsmen, my brethren according to the flesh." I have nothing to do at present with the difficulty of this passage: I advert only to its patriotism; and this remains the same upon every principle of interpretation.

Abhorred, indeed, be the patriotism that would lead us to justify anything evil, because done in our own country; or render us blind to the excellences of any other nation; or make us envious of their improvements and advantages; or induce us to consider any of the human race our natural enemies, because they live on the other side of a mountain, or a sea—but it is in the order of morality, and in the very principles of our nature, to feel attachments arising

280

from the places of our birth; from the impressions of our infancy and youth; from the memory of a thousand pleasing associations; from the presence, the attentions, the claims, of all the near and touching connexions of life.

And surely, never was there a country so worthy of our regard, as this highly favoured isle in which we dwell. We have, indeed, much to lament, and much to censure: but "It is a good land which the Lord our God giveth us."

"England, with all thy faults,
I love thee still"—

But what is the best evidence we can give of our love to it? "He is worthy," said the Jews to our Lord, when speaking in favour of the centurion, "He is worthy for whom thou shouldst do this, for he loveth our nation, and hath built us a synagogue." "Righteousness," says Solomon, "exalteth a nation; but sin is the reproach of any people." He is therefore the best friend to his country, who promotes most its moral and religious improvement. To such endeavours it is always entitled, but the present period has peculiar claims upon our patriotism. It must here be confessed, that there is much infidelity and profligacy abounding: it is not to be denied or concealed, that there is prevailing much licentiousness of political opinion, much disaffection to government, much readiness, if not ripeness, for sedition and rebellion. among the lower classes. Is it not then desirable and necessary to bring them into fellowship with that Gospel, which will teach them to "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts to "fear God, and honour the king "to obey magistrates, and to be ready to every good work?"

281

The distress of the country also at this season is another powerful call to patriotic exertion. Many are not aware of the sufferings of the poor, unless in general rumour, which obtains slight credit, and produces little impression. But some of us, especially in the discharge of such duties as this Society intends, have opportunities to observe their extent and degree. How destitute of comfort, of attendance, of accommodation, of conveniences, of needful supplies, are many of the aged and the sick! How many infantile cries for relief pierce and agonize a father's, a mother's ear in vain! How many are there who never touch a morsel of meat of their own, from one month to another; yea, whose homely board is frequently spread with the most common vegetables, unaccompanied not only with meat, but even bread and salt! How many are there wretchedly appalled, as well as starvingly fed, and who by a sense of decency, stronger than their feeling of piety, are ashamed to appear at public worship! How many are there, who, when He sendeth abroad his ice like morsels, and *you* exclaim, "who can stand before his cold?" encounter the adversity in tattered garments, through paneless windows, and with scanty, casually collected, pilfered fuel! How many are heard begging—for what?—Labour, toil, drudgery! My God! what a state of society is that in which, what was originally pronounced as a curse—"In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread, till thou return to the dust is prized and implored as a *boon*—and implored too in vain! O my countrymen, if your complaints reach not the ears of the great, they shall, by our prayers for you, enter into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. We sympathize with you, and will

282

do whatever falls within, our power for your temporal relief: but the more despair we feel with regard to your secular comfort, the more will we be mindful of your higher welfare; the more will we be concerned to bring the kingdom of God nigh unto you; the more earnestly will we hasten to open to you, in your penury and wretchedness, the treasures of eternity, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost: and whatever be denied you, again shall it be said, "The poor have the Gospel preached unto them."

Facility is another argument we bring forward in favour of this society. We are far from intimating that we are to decline a duty to which we are called, because it is attended with difficulty: but who does not acknowledge that we must be peculiarly culpable, when, in a matter of importance, we omit to do what is easy in achievement, and refuse to gather what depends within our reach? If we are under obligation to accomplish all the good in our power, our rule of action, if not our motive, must often be derived from the preferableness of means, the favourableness of opportunity, the prospect of resources, and the probability of success.

It would be strange if an army were to go forward, leaving strong holds and encampments behind, endangering its communications and supplies, in order to begin at the greatest distance, and fight their way home. If you had to prepare a passage through a wood, you would hardly think of commencing at the remotest side, so as to reach the spot of action, continually, by taking a large circuit, or pressing through the bushes and the brambles: you would be aware of the advantage of beginning near, where access would be easy, and all the progress made would be

283

a preparation for more. "Doth he speak parables?" Christians embodied are the Lord's host. They are also his pioneers, to "make strait in the desert a highway for our God." Let us turn from analogy to fact. What was the order our Saviour gave to the twelve? "Go ye into all the world, preaching repentance and remission of sins, in my name, among *all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*" Here we have both a foreign and a home mission; and they are not considered inconsistent with each other: but, what is still more to our purpose—the one follows the other; and the distant is not to work towards the nearer, but the nearer is to extend into the distant. This order the apostles observed. They "testified *both* to Jews and Greeks," but to the Jews always "first." There are many worthy projects on foot—and may God succeed them! which *must* require *much* time and *vast* expense. But *your* instruments are comparatively cheap. Your object consumes not months to approach it. The fields white unto your harvest are within a day's journey, or an hour's walk; they wave their ripeness just beyond your garden hedge, and are full in view from the window of your closet, where, as you gaze, a Being cries, "Workwhile it is day, the night cometh wherein no man can work."

Much may be also urged on the ground of *necessity*. Of this, many of you, my London friends, shall I say, are happily incompetent to judge. You reside in a city where you are fed to the full, and have never been familiar with those places in which many are dying of spiritual want. I wish you could attend some of our public meetings in the country. I wish you could hear the reports of our holy informers. I wish you could witness the applications for assistance

284

which we are compelled to refuse, for want of means. I wish you could take a few rides with some of our ministers into the remoter parts of our districts, and see the state of our villages; the neglect of public worship; the profanation of the Sabbath; the carelessness, stupidity, ignorance, heathenism, of the cottagers; the neglect and barbarism, in which the children are rising up, to be the bane and the curse of society.

“But is there,” it will be said, “is there not provision made to remedy this evil?” “Are there not Bibles in abundance?” There are. But many are unable to peruse them—and must be taught to read, or the book is sealed. Many are careless about the Scripture, because they are not in a state to feel the importance of its grand subject—Jesus Christ and him crucified—and must be awakened and convinced, in order to bring them to the prophets and apostles, asking, “What must I do to be saved?”

“But there is the excellent Liturgy every where read?” It is excellent. But can any advocate for it, however partial he may be, deny that there are thousands to be found, who, though continually hearing it, are not only deplorably profligate, but ignorant too? It is not by the constant repetition of even a form of sound words, but by “the foolishness of preaching, that God saves them that believe ”

“The clergy, where are they?” Had this question been asked in the days of Isaiah, the reply would have been: “His watchmen are blind, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark: sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough; and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way,

285

every one for his gain, from his quarter." We are thankful that this is not generally our case. Yet too many who are paid by the state, are careless of their charge: while others, more willingly disposed, are fettered by forms, and are obliged to restrain the zeal, which would draw on them the reproach of innovation.

"But is not the meeting free?" Yes: and we may "call every man his neighbour, under his vine and under his fig tree: and none can make us afraid." But there are inward restraints where there are no external preventions. What can be expected from those who have denied the Lord that bought them, and have renounced in Christianity all that is vital and animating? There are not only impediments arising from error, but also from indolence, and indifference, and pride, even where the truth as it is in Jesus is professed. Some, I am afraid, even of our own ministers, find it more grateful to visit the rich than to preach to the needy. Some think it beneath them, or at least not so reputable, to preach in the barn, or in the cottage. Some prefer the elegance of the study to the rudeness of the village; and are polishing their periods when they should be going after that which is lost, until they find it.

"But of late there has been a great increase of evangelical and zealous dissenterism; and the establishment numbers a growing accession of pious and devoted ministers; and the Methodists have also spread far and wide." Admitted. Yet, could you compare all this varied system of agencies, with the wideness and work of the field, you would yet say, "The harvest truly is great, and the labourers are

286

few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into the harvest."

This state of things, so earnestly demanding increased exertion, had, for several years back, much impressed the minds of our ministers, and associations in the country: and without the least cooling of regard for foreign service, they were anxious in their inquiries what more could be done at home. Something had been effected for this purpose in the city of my residence. The united congregations there formed an establishment, called "The Bath British and Foreign Missionary Society;" dividing its income into three equal parts: one being appropriated to the heathen; one to Ireland; and one to our own neighbourhood. The rising up of your society, therefore, could not but be deemed seasonable, and hailed by thousands as desirable.

And I need not say that you have met with *encouragement*. Your beginning indeed was small, compared with the wishes and hopes of its friends; but it was not so small as the beginning of The Bible Society, or the beginning of Protestantism, or of Christianity itself. And the mustard seed shall become a mustard tree, and the birds of the air lodge in the branches of it.

As yet you have not many great names in your lists: but I see one name among you, which of itself is enough to confer dignity, and ensure success—a name above every name—the Lord of Life and Glory, who cries, "So will I save you, and ye shall be a blessing; fear not, but let your hands be strong."

The Institution is but a year old; and yet it has sent forth, and is supporting, no less than ten missionaries.

287

You are continually receiving expressions of approbation, and promises of co-operation from ministers, and churches, and combinations of both.

Your funds need replenishing and enlargement. But the supplies you have received have been encouraging; and they are increasing. And I am persuaded you will obtain no inconsiderable assistance from the collection which is going to be made in favour of your object, at the doors of this sanctuary. For more than thirty-two years I have been accustomed to appeal to the liberality of London congregations, and I have always had reason to approve and applaud. And I am sure you will not dissent from your own example this morning. I never recommended an object with more cordiality. In no case could you give with a greater likelihood of usefulness; and charity to the soul, is the soul of charity. The good you may be the means of accomplishing, you may never be informed of here: but you will make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness: and when ye fail, they will receive you into everlasting habitations; and you will hear them for ever adoring the God of all grace, who led you to pity them, when no man cared for their souls.

Complain not of the number of these applications. It foretells, it implies good. Would you wish there was no cause for such calls? Would you wish for the same state of religious dullness and death, which prevailed in this country ninety years ago, and which would, indeed, effectually preclude you from all these spiritual vexations? Have you not for years been praying that his kingdom may come, and that his word may have free course and be glorified? And are you displeased with God for hearkening to your

288

petitions? Or did you imagine He would fulfil your requests by miracles instead of means? Or did you indent with Him, that He should carry on the cause, but that you should be excused from the work?

You say "The times are trying, and we must economize." We have no objection to economy—we wish many had introduced it long ago—you cannot economize too much, if you run not into meanness and niggardliness. But we hope you will not *begin*, at least, with the part of your substance, which you have consecrated to beneficence. I hope you will see, what can be retrenched in attendance, and table, and furniture, and dress, before you think of refusing the applications of those who come to you in the behalf of perishing souls, and in the name of Him who loved us and gave himself for us.

NONE OF US LIVETH TO HIMSELF, AND NO ONE DIETH TO HIMSELF; BUT WHETHER WE LIVE, WE LIVE UNTO THE LORD, OR WHETHER WE DIE, WE DIE UNTO THE LORD: WHETHER, THEREFORE, WE LIVE OR DIE, AVE ARE THE LORD'S.

PRAYER
FOR
THE SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL:

A SERMON
PREACHED AT
TOTTENHAM COURT CHAPEL,
BEFORE
THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY
ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 12, 1796.

**PRAYER
FOR
THE SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL.**

“And let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.”

—PSALM lxxii. 19, 20.

IN reviewing the Scriptures at large, and the Book of Psalms in particular, we see good men exemplifying different views and dispositions, according to the various objects which excited and engaged their attention.

It is a happy frame of mind which converts every event and every contemplation into prayer—Such was the happy frame of David’s mind when he composed this Psalm. Surveying the grandeur of Solomon’s reign, he perceives “a greater than Solomon,” and by a beautiful transition passes to the reign of “Messiah the Prince, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and whose dominion endureth from generation to generation.” After a striking representation of the properties and advantages of the Saviour’s government, he breaks forth in these sublime and animated strains: “Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wonderous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen. The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.”

292

Behold the grand desire which actuated this man of God. He prays that "the whole earth may be filled with his glory." At present the earth is void of this glory. To a gracious mind nothing is more painful than to reflect upon the millions of mankind still "lying in wickedness," "having no hope, and without God in the world."

Who then does not unite in this request? Who does not pray that "the glory of the Lord may be revealed," and "that all flesh may see it together?" David not only prays, but prays with fervency:—and to draw your attention to a point with which I would animate this vast assembly—see how much his heart was set upon this object. For having expressed his desire, he exclaims, "Amen, and Amen,"—So be it, so be it. Again and again I say it, and let others say it too—Let men, let angels repeat it—Success to my prayers, and success to the prayers of all who breathe the same wishes.—With this he would "finish his course." "The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended." Was this the last Psalm he ever composed? Did he write it on his dying bed? The last words of dying men, especially if they have been men of illustrious character, have peculiar weight in them. Let, says David, resigning his spirit into the hand of God, let but the kingdom of Jesus Christ be established, and all the nations and the families of the earth be blessed in him, and I have enough: I desire no more;—"and now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word." "Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Was this fervor too great? My Brethren, here all the excellences of prayer are combined. Here devotion is wrought up to its highest perfection. And

293

at once to justify David's zeal, and excite your admiration of it—to lead you to adopt this prayer, and to adopt it with the glowing emotions of “the man after God's own heart,” let us examine five things:

I. What can be more important and interesting than the *subject matter* of this prayer? It is the diffusion of the divine glory. The word glory, when applied to God, denotes that manifestation of himself by which his rational creatures are capable of knowing him, for in himself he is incomprehensible, “dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen or can see.” This manifestation appears in various degrees.

His glory shines in the works of nature, and behold a universe starting into existence to teach us “his eternal power and Godhead.” David was no unaffected spectator of the wonders of creation. “O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! I consider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained.” “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.”

A watchful eye will perceive the glory of God shining through the dispensations of his Providence—in preserving the world which he has made—in supplying the wants of his creatures—in maintaining the vicissitudes of the seasons—in establishing such regulations in society as, notwithstanding the violence

294

of men's passions, and oppositions of their interests, enable us to live upon earth in tolerable peace and safety, enjoying a thousand comforts—in administering encouragements, supports, and rewards to the righteous—in restraining, disappointing, and punishing the wicked, especially when they become dangerous to community—in the connexion which is found to exist between moral and natural evil—in the pleasure which always attends the exercise of virtue, and the pain which always accompanies the practice of vice. Indeed, in the moral government of mankind, besides the general evidences of his wisdom, power, and goodness, we behold some traces of his righteous character, as the "Judge of the whole earth."

"He has magnified his word above all his name," and he peculiarly discovers himself in the Gospel, which we emphatically, and by way of distinction, call Revelation. All other displays of God are defective. They are comparatively partial, uninfluential, unintelligible, abstracted from the Scriptures. They are partial—they hold forth the Divine perfections separately; they teach us nothing of their harmony, extent, and limitations—so that, admitting we could prove that God was just and merciful, we could not determine where the exercise of justice would stop, and the operation of mercy would begin.—They are uninfluential. That they were never the means of bringing men to repentance and holiness, appears from an observation of the heathen world. Even their wise men, "when they knew God, glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves wise, they became

295

fools, and changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever." And what are our modern philosophers, who have rejected the Christian system to adore the idol of reason, and worship the goddess of nature?—They are unintelligible. Creation is a book, and its various works constitute the alphabet; but what connects the letters and teaches us to read? Without the Bible, it is utterly impossible to give a probable account of the origin of the world, or the appearances of nature, of the events that have already taken place, or of those which are every day presenting themselves to our view. "But when," to use the language of an author whose name I should mention were I not forbidden by his presence, "when reason kindles her feeble lamp with fire from God's altar, and supplies it continually with fresh oil from the sacred stores, what was dark becomes clear, what was perplexed becomes regular, and the dim and scattered fragments become legible and intelligible." And though we may in some measure discern what God is, by observing what he does, his glory is obscured by numberless difficulties; "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne but "clouds and darkness are round about him." "His way is in the sea, and his path in the deep waters, and his footsteps are not known." We love to assert the importance of the Gospel, especially at a time when "science, falsely so called," would depreciate its value, and more than question its necessity. The Gospel exhibits God in all his excellences. The entrance of sin is a dark ground on which God is displayed to advantage; it has given occasion for the exercise of the divine perfec-

296

tions in a manner which will eternally astonish the universe.

In the law given at Sinai, and “written in tables of stone,” we behold awful rays of the glory of God; but here we see that “law magnified and made honourable.” Jesus Christ is the law of God alive, the ten commandments incarnate.

In Jesus Christ we have a personal representation of Deity. Would you know what God is? Behold “the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.” It pleased him to assume human nature, and softening the effulgence of divinity by the veil of flesh, to appear in our world. Men are called to “behold a new thing in the earth”—a mind inhabiting a fleshly tabernacle like our own, unpolluted with any earthly defilement, unseduced by the objects of sense, unmoved by Satanic influence, adorned with the most lovely graces, all calmness and gentleness, full of pity to the miserable, all occupied in doing good, unprovoked by injuries, unsubdued by sufferings.—Ah, the infatuation of the world! They might have seen that “God was in very deed come down to dwell with men upon the earth.” I do not wonder that Jesus Christ should say, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” I do not wonder that the Apostle should say, “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.” And here it is that his glory shines forth with a lustre not only grand, but encouraging and inviting. How it dissolves my doubts, how it dissipates my fears, how it attracts me to “his throne for mercy, and grace to help in every time of need!”—God in Nature is God

297

above me, God in Providence is God beyond me, God in Law is God against me; but God in Christ is God with me and for me.

In the plan of salvation by a crucified Saviour, not only men, but angels, obtain the most glorious idea of Jehovah. We never read of their being naturalists or astronomers, but they are-Christian students: they mingle with us at the foot of the cross, "desiring to look into these things." For here all the divine perfections come forward and assert their claims, and here they are all satisfied and honoured in a supreme degree. Man's redemption is God's glory. Hence the exclamation of the Prophet, "Sing, O ye Heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into Singing, ye mountains, O forest and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." Hence the song of the "heavenly hosts praising God and saying. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men."

The Gospel displays the glory of God in "renewing us after his image in righteousness and true holiness." We remember the words of our Saviour at the grave of Lazarus, "Martha, said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest surely see the glory of God!" Hid the glory of God appear in the reanimation of a breathless body? And shall it not much more appear in the resurrection of a soul "dead in trespasses and sins?" Upon this principle God promises to "place salvation in Zion for Israel his glory."

I would not hastily pass over this part of our subject. Man was originally created in the likeness of

298

God; but he lost it by sin. The law still requires this resemblance; but it is the Gospel that effects it. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." "Beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord." Everything in the Gospel reflects honour upon God. Its doctrines, its precepts, its threatenings, its promises, are all worthy of God; but they are its effects which most clearly decide its superiority over every other system. Plato, with all his diligence, and with all the celebrity his philosophy acquired him, was unable to bring over the inhabitants of one city or one village to walk by his rules. The law only describes duty, and enforces obligation by proposing rewards and punishments. But "the spirit of life in Christ Jesus" makes us "free from the law of sin and death." The "Gospel is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth." By an admirable method of operation, God puts his word into the heart. The apostle James speaks of it under a very familiar allusion. You all know the process of grafting a tree. The scion inserted receives the juices, and changes them into its own quality, and causes the stock to bring forth new fruit—such is "the engrafted word which is able to save the soul." It produces an internal assimilation, evidenced by the "fruit of the spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." This changes the nature, and fills the understanding with right sentiments, and the heart with right dispositions. This by its all-powerful energy subdues deep-rooted prejudices, sensual passions, worldly interests. This by

299

its all-cheering consolation rescues the mind from despair, and makes us "joyful in tribulation," and triumphant in the hour of death.

Here we appeal to fact. In the first ages of the Church did not the Gospel make men wise, and holy, and happy, and useful? Did it not "teach them to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, and to look for that blessed hope and the glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ?" And does it not to this day produce the same effects when it is faithfully preached? The world cannot be ignorant of this, nor can the promoters of erroneous systems, amidst the unprofitableness of their ministry, be unacquainted with it. Blessed be God, notwithstanding every cause of complaint, we frequently see the drunkard becoming sober, the swearer learning to "fear an oath," and the covetous devising liberal things. Yes, there are living examples of persons who were once a burden to themselves, a curse to their families, a terror to their neighbours, delivered by the preaching of the cross from the anguish of a guilty conscience and the tyranny of vicious passions, becoming "peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits." "The wolf dwells with the lamb, and the leopard lies down with the kid, and the wolf, and the young lion, and the fading together, and a little child leads them." However unbelievers may suspect the truth of the Gospel, it would seem impossible for them to deny its utility. They may call it a fable, but this fable has been more efficacious in reforming the world than the most serious truths of philosophers, and the most severe laws of magistrates. "What they despise as a human in-

300

vention was more beneficial to mankind, in a few years, than all other boasted schemes through a succession of ages. No other collection of doctrine aims so high as the Christian dispensation. It affects nothing less than to turn fallen men into angels, and to form societies below like the "general assembly of just men made perfect in Heaven." Chasing away error, vice, enmity, discord, and all the malignity with which sin has filled the earth, it diffuses light, love, and harmony, and unites men first to God and then to each other in one divine and heavenly fraternity.

Imagine for a moment the Gospel universally diffused, and mankind at large living under its benign influence—what a lovely scene would this distracted earth exhibit compared with present prospects?—"Nations learning war no more"—"swords beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks"—"destructions come to a perpetual end"—men "living as brethren," and "loving one another out of a pure heart fervently." The prophets, delighted with the glorious change which they foresaw as the consequence of the Gospel dispensation, have described it in all the glowing style of eastern imagery. Sometimes they take the comparison from the human body, and behold, says Isaiah, a multitude of misery, the blind, the deaf, the lame, the dumb—but "then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing." Sometimes they take the image from the natural world, and behold, says the same prophet, a parched desert where no water is, where the thirsty traveller pants and dies, where cattle cannot live,

301

where grass cannot flourish; behold on a sudden the appearance reversed, waters springing out of the hills and murmuring along the valleys, the fields standing thick with corn, sheep covering the plains, and trees crowning the tops of the mountains. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them: and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing, the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God."

II. The prayer appears still more excellent if we consider *the principle* from which it proceeds. It is piety and benevolence; these are not two dispositions, but two references of the same disposition. We cannot separate what the Scripture has joined together; and if a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"

The prayer comes from a soul penetrated with love to God, and alive to his interest in the world. This concern divine grace always produces in the breasts of the godly. A Christian loves "God with all his heart, with all his mind, and with all his strength." Reason requires this supreme affection. We ought to regard objects in proportion to their real worth, and God is the perfection, the source of all excellency. We ought to love without bounds, an object infinitely lovely. And what is the language of all the mercies we have received from God—blessings of birth, of infancy, of youth, of mature age, blessings pertaining to this life, "spiritual blessings," wisdom, righteous-

302

ness, sanctification, redemption”—where shall I end?—all these surround us, and with one voice cry, “O love the Lord, all ye saints.” “By the mercies of God present your body a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.” He, at an expense which angels cannot compute, has served you; be all devotion in serving him. “Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

The Christian feels his obligations—he lives to God. He cannot be indifferent to his honour. See that man; “his eyes run down with tears.” Has he lost his fortune? Has he heard God saying, “Son of man, behold I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke?” No. He has heard a swearer, he has seen a Sabbath-breaker,—“his eyes run down with tears because men keep not God’s law.” Elijah is praying to die. What disappointments have embittered his life? “Lord, they have broken thy covenant, and digged down thine altars, and killed thy prophets and I cannot survive thine expiring cause. Behold the venerable Eli upon a seat by the way-side watching—while the messenger brings him heavy tidings. And first he tells him of the defeat of his countrymen by the Philistines: “Israel is fled.” Mournful intelligence! Next he tells him that his “two sons Hophni and Phineas are slain more awful still!—But “his heart trembles for the ark of God,” and when he hears that the ark of God is taken, he falls backward and dies. The charge of enthusiasm has been frequently brought against Christians, for want of distinguishing properly between the abuse of truth in certain instances, and its genuine influence and effects. It is impossible for us to believe the Gospel

303

as we ought without being zealous for the Lord of Hosts; and zeal for God is charity towards men.

The prayer before us springs from benevolence. To pray for ourselves is a duty—a duty which, perhaps, some of you never performed—of some of you, perhaps, God never said, “Behold he prayeth.” But it requires no great degree of virtue to be desirous of our own welfare. To be solicitous for the good of others argues disinterested affection. That this is highly pleasing to God appears, not only from his enjoining us to remember others at his throne, but from the peculiar reward with which he honoured the exercise in the experience of Job. Job was a man of sorrows. Trials drive us to prayer: this afflicted saint had, no doubt, under his calamities, frequently-made supplication unto God; but the prayer which achieved his deliverance was not a prayer for himself—“The Lord turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends.”

That we do not love our neighbours as ourselves appears from the disproportionate share we devote to our own concerns in our petitions. There is a visible want of warmth in spreading the cases of others before the Lord. In the formality of worship the condition of the heathens has been generally mentioned; but not with that feeling becoming the solemn thought that multitudes are “perishing for lack of knowledge.”

The person who confines all his attention to himself deserves not the name of a man—by what means he persuades himself that he is a Christian it is difficult to conceive. The Christian religion is founded in the compassions of God, and it must fill us with compassion. It must destroy the selfishness common

304

to our depraved nature. It must produce a unity of interest with our fellow-creatures, and teach us to "look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

What a lovely, what a noble disposition does the religion of Jesus Christ require and produce! Does the Christian weep? It is not only for the sins which he commits and the troubles he endures. Does he rejoice? It is in another's prosperity as well as in his own. Does he pray? See how he expands beyond himself. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved." "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth." "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written."

III. Consider the *universal extent* of this request. Little minds confine their zeal within a contracted circle, which excludes all but the adherents of their own class. For a party they labour, and in the success of a party they rejoice. If they pray for rain, it is only to refresh and fructify their own gardens. They are strangers to the sublime and diffusive spirit of the Gospel.—Wretched bigotry!—allow me a figure of speech, allow me to suppose for a moment *that* Being in existence whose death we have professedly attended, and whose epitaph we have sung—wretched bigotry, what is thy language?—Let the established

305

church prosper—Let the dissenting interest prevail—Let the Independents multiply—Let the Baptists swell their annual lists with numbers—Let the Methodists spread on every side—Let Tottenham-court Chapel be “filled with his glory.”—Nay, but give me the language of the text, “and let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.” I love to see an expansion of soul, which, free from the shackles of party rage, includes all in its embrace, like the goodness of God.

I pass from religious denominations to countries.—It should not satisfy us to say, let England “be filled with his glory.” It has frequently been charged upon the Scripture as a defect that it does not sufficiently inculcate patriotism, or a love to a particular country; a virtue celebrated among all nations of the globe; a virtue which so long secured Greece, and so highly exalted Rome; a virtue practised in former times and professed in our own; a virtue of which, among many, nothing is left “but loaves and fishes.”—The charge is partly false and partly true, and as far as it is true it will be found not a reproach, but an honour to the Gospel. If we look into the Old Testament we shall find this sacred injunction; “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee.” Never was love more sincere and ardent than that which the Jews exercised towards their native land. Jerusalem was the centre of their happiness, the seat of all the endearments of life. To adorn it they esteemed nothing too costly; to defend it they cheerfully shed their blood. Its prosperity satisfied them; its welfare made them forget their sorrows. When they saw it destroyed by the hands of the Babylonians, they abandoned themselves to grief, and found life a burden; they “hung

306

their harps upon the willows," "the voice of mirth was heard no more, and all the daughters of music were brought low." But even in its reduced state they retained the same affection, prizing its ruins above the superb palaces of Babylon: they "took pleasure in her stones, and favoured the dust thereof," each saying, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." And where does the New Testament enforce the wild idea that the whole world is to be our country, and mankind our fellow-citizens? Jesus Christ was a patriot. He loved his country, notwithstanding the ingratitude and cruelty of his countrymen. He first went "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." As he drew near the devoted metropolis, "he wept over it." He commanded his Apostles "to preach repentance and remission of sins to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." The Gospel does not destroy the useful feelings of nature, but corrects and sanctifies them; it inspires us with sentiments becoming our condition, and never forgets that we are creatures of limited faculties.

But, after all, what is patriotism? Is it such a partial attachment to a particular country as leads us to disregard the liberty and happiness of every other-nation? Is it such an exclusive attachment as would lead us to oppress every other country for the sake of our own, and destroy thousands who would not acquiesce in our opinion, avarice, and ambition?—What was a Roman? A proud, unfeeling tyrant, who placed right in power, who triumphed remorselessly over undefended weakness, who gloried in proportion to the number of cities and provinces he had taken or destroyed.—What was the patriotism of a Roman?

307

A false virtue, the destruction of all justice and benevolence—and this false virtue has always been admired because it conceals self-interest under the mask of public spirit, and gives licence to inflict injuries not only with impunity, but with applause. It is the glory of the Gospel to say nothing of such patriotism. It is the glory of the Gospel to set us above the prejudices which have so long and so unhappily kept men at variance—and to teach us that God has made of one blood all the nations of the earth,—that men are not our enemies because they live at the other side of a channel or a mountain—that they are not to be bought and sold as slaves because the sun has jetted their complexions—that we are “debtors to Jews and Greeks,”—and that “as we have opportunity,” without any exceptions, “we are to do good unto all men.” Christianity commands us to love all the human race, and to regard as our neighbours the inhabitants of the remotest regions, when their distresses require our aid, and it is in “the power of our hand to give it.”

IV. We observe the *Divine resemblance* of this prayer—God feels the same desire, and has the same object in view—we are acting according to his pleasure—“we are workers together with him.” This appears from the precepts he has given, and the promises which he has made.

God’s authority is interposed, and there are two injunctions in particular which deserve more attention than we have hitherto given them. Our duty appears from the words of the Apostle to the Thessalonians. “Brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified.” The allusion is

308

beautiful, whether it respects a conquering army bearing down all opposition, marching from victory to victory; or an unobstructed river, fertilizing its banks, spreading plenty over the country through which it passes, and augmenting as it rolls along till it becomes sea. Hear the language of God by the Prophet; "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, o Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord keep not silence; and give him no rest till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." What importunity is here expressed!

The promises respecting this subject are "exceeding great and precious." I would repeat a few of them. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." "And it shall be in that day that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem: half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one." "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." I might enlarge quotation, but it will be of more importance to remove an objection taken from the supposition that these prospects have been already realized. This, if admitted, would damp our zeal, and weaken our hands. We contend, therefore, that nothing has taken place in any past experience of the Church, whether Jewish or Christian, to substantiate these pleasing descriptions; that there has been no-

309

thing in the conduct of God to this day sufficient in extent, in duration, in power, in glory, to embody the hopes which his word has excited. When have these promises been accomplished?—In vain we look into the Jewish nation for a fulfilment. Much of their prosperity was diminished before many of these prophecies were given—they were in a distracted and suffering state under the reign of the kings of Judah and Israel—their City and Temple were destroyed by the Chaldeans—though they returned from captivity, and rebuilt their City and Temple, they continued a dependent people, and were tributaries to the Persian, Macedonian, and Roman power. Rejecting the Messiah, and imprecating his blood upon themselves and their children, they were “destroyed with a very sore destruction,” and to this hour they remain “scattered and peeled;” unable, by their situation and circumstances, to perform the ceremonies of their own ritual.

In vain we look into the Christian Church for a fulfilment. Since the Apostle’s days the boundaries of Zion have been altered, but hardly enlarged. Is not the greatest part of the earth to this day unacquainted with the name of God our Saviour? What is Christendom itself compared with the globe? A considerable part of Europe, almost the whole of the other three continents, with the numerous Isles in the Eastern and Southern Oceans, are covered with “gross darkness.” Is it thus that “all men shall be blessed in him, all nations shall call him blessed?” Is it thus that “from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, his name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered to him and a pure offering?” The extent

310

of God's cause, therefore, has never as yet been adequate to prediction.—And what has been the duration of its peace and prosperity? Sometimes the influences of Divine grace attending the preaching of the word have been remarkable. The Church of Christ has had blessed revivals, but they have never been of long continuance.—“The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.” But faith assures us that “there shall be abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth “that Zion shall be an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations.” “Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall the moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thy everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.” A glory is spoken of which has never been realized. “For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and for stones iron; I will also make thine officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee, but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy people shall be all righteous.”

The more minutely we examine prophecy, the stronger is the confirmation of our hope, that a day will come when “wars shall cease to the ends of the earth;” when the animosities which have so long prevailed amongst Christians shall subside; when Idolatry and Superstition shall vanish; when Truth and Holiness and the pure Worship of God shall

311

abound.—We are authorised to expect that a period will come, when not only individuals in different nations of men shall be devoted to Christ, but also potentates of every state whose example is influential, and whose authority gives them a peculiar advantage, shall own their subordination to him, and make their dominion subservient to his. Considering themselves in their different departments as delegated to rule by him, they will rule for him. Viewing themselves as subjects of his sovereign sway, “all kings shall fall down before him,” and far from being distressed at any inquiries concerning his kingdom, they shall rejoice and “praise him.” In all things shall He have the pre-eminence who, amongst other titles, will be acknowledged “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.” Has all this been verified? How readest thou? These days are to come, the prospect is before us. And this prayer,

V. *Is certain in its success.* It must be accomplished. The world was made for the Son of God, and “he shall have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.” The enlargement of his kingdom is the uniform design of all the events of Providence. To this all the commotions and changes which are taking place in the nations of the earth, and which so exceedingly perplex and confound the views of politicians, are tending; to this, a future day will shew us, they were all subservient. These agitations are “shaking, not the earth only, but also Heaven,” and will continue till “the removal of those things that are shaken as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.” “I will overturn,

312

overturn, overturn it—until He come whose right it is, and I will give it him.”

Nothing comes to pass by chance, and God never acts without a design worthy of himself. In the midst of apparent confusion and uproar he guides the whole movement; “he makes the wrath of man to praise him.” Things which we in our ignorance and rashness imagine unfavourable, may be the most proper means which Supreme Wisdom could employ. Whatever our opinion may be respecting present occurrences, his plan is fixed, “his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.” The word is gone out of his mouth, and “hath he spoken and shall he not do it?” What he has promised he is able to perform. Impediments are nothing to him; “before Zerubbabel every mountain shall become a plain.” Do we stagger at the promise of God through unbelief? Let us remember we have a sufficient pledge of the whole in what he has already done. The joyful sound has already extended far, notwithstanding all the attempts of its enemies to restrain it. Multitudes from age to age have heard the glad tidings, and obtained salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. What a happy change has this highly-favoured island experienced since the invasion of Julius Cæsar! Suppose a Christian had landed with the Homan army, and, after examining the state of the country, had heard a prophet predicting all the advantages we have long enjoyed.—Are we attempting anything more improbable?—But what is every instance of conversion?—Some of you are not strangers to “the day of God’s power.” You know that “the exceeding greatness of his mighty power,” which has been exerted in you, is sufficient to insure success to

313

our labours amongst the heathens.—We consider every unconverted sinner as a little pagan world in himself; and the grace which renews him, is all the encouragement we desire.

Draw no improper inference from this reasoning. Say not God will support his own cause, and execute his own purposes, and therefore we may sit down at our ease; we have nothing to do—He will maintain his own cause, and he will accomplish his own designs; but if you are properly affected, you will be desirous of becoming instruments in his hands. The certainty of the event, instead of relaxing diligence, should increase it; instead of preventing the use of means, should encourage us in the use of them.

If David's prayer be the prayer of your hearts, it will excite activity, it will lead you in proportion to its warmth to exert yourselves according to your stations, your talents, your opportunities. Without this our prayer is hypocrisy, and our pity resembles the charity of those verbal philanthropists who say, "be ye warmed and be ye clothed, when they never give those things that are needful."

We ought to lament that we have done so little to prove, I will not say the fervency, but even the sincerity of our prayers; and, upon such an occasion as this, rather than embarrassing our minds with the conduct of God in the contracted limits of the Gospel, it becomes us to examine ourselves to see whether we are not verily guilty. The Church of Christ should have burned with zeal while there was one heathen nation or town to convert. The Friend of Sinners said to his Apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." They were not to desist till they had fulfilled their- extensive

314

commission. The Apostles understood this; they flew like angels, "having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell upon the earth." The Disciples dispersed; the Gospel spread in every direction, and "mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." Pious men after them followed the noble example; carrying the Gospel from city to city, and from province to province. This course should have been continued—but successors forgot the common object, stopped without endeavouring to make further progress, divided into parties, and contended with acrimony for their respective peculiarities.

How little of the knowledge of the Gospel have the heathens for ages derived from their connexion with evangelized nations! It has been justly observed, that this is the crying sin of Christian lands; a sin, too, of which they have been quite insensible; a sin never lamented in our sermons for national humiliation. Without using the means to save men, are we not chargeable with their blood? Is it not owing to our criminal indifference that millions are "sitting in darkness and in the region of the shadow of death?"—Viewing ourselves in a national capacity, as Englishmen, the Providence of God has furnished us with peculiar advantages for this service. Our arms and commerce have opened us a passage to the most distant parts of the globe—but our designs have not been formed with a view to benefit the heathens, while our conduct has commonly left a sad impression of the Christian name. We have all been culpable; too long have we stood idle; we have not sought occasions, we have neglected opportunities. May our repentance obtain forgiveness, and produce diligence! Let us with one heart and voice pray that

315

the whole earth may be filled with the glory of our God. Let us spend our days and end our lives in this blessed service. It is better that it be in our heart to attempt the work, should our endeavours fail of success, than that we should be as indifferent to it as the supine Jews were to the rebuilding of the House of the Lord, which had long lain in ruins, under the notion that "the time is not come, the time that the Lord's House should be built."

We rejoice that a considerable number is formed into a Society to make proof of the will of God respecting the conversion of the heathens. We rejoice that the well-formed plan receives such general countenance and assistance. We rejoice in the harmony, liberality, prudence, and vigour which have been displayed. We rejoice that there are those whose zeal for the Lord of Hosts disposes them to renounce the comforts of civilized life to devote themselves to the service of savage tribes. We rejoice that there are those whose hearts have inclined them to engage in conducting them to the place of their destination—Give commandment, O God, concerning their bones—say to the roaring winds and waves, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."—We rejoice that in a business of such moment so many favourable circumstances concur to strengthen our hands and enliven our hopes. We will treat our discouragements with neglect, and our encouragements with gratitude. We have begun in the strength of the Lord, and, Iris Spirit enabling us, we will patiently endure. While others "despise the day of small things," we will get our faith strengthened by the testimony of Jesus, and expect that "the little one shall become a thousand," and that the cloud, no

316

bigger than a man's hand, shall increase, and pour down showers upon desert lands.—And thou, O God, whose mercies are over all thy works, and who hatest nothing that thou hast made, O thou that hearest prayer, receive and answer our united supplications. “Be merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause thy face to shine upon us. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God: let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad, and sing for joy for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. Let the people praise thee, O God: let all the people praise thee. Then shall the earth yield her increase: and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear him.”

THE SAVIOUR GLORIFIED IN HIS PEOPLE:

A SERMON

PREACHED

AT ST. IVE'S, HUNTINGDONSHIRE, OCTOBER 8, 1812,

BEFORE

THE BEDFORD UNION.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE author of the annexed Sermon is not a member of the Association before whom it was delivered. But his coalition is prevented by distance only. Were he contiguously situated, he should esteem co-operation his duty and his privilege: for nothing can be more consistent with his convictions than the importance of the object; or more congenial to his feelings than the liberality of the plan, by which this union is distinguished. Hence, being invited to preach at one of its meetings, he most readily complied.

The author hopes the Sermon will appear to possess one claim—*It bears much on the state of modern profession.* And from letters he received after the delivery, the preacher had the satisfaction to find that it had displeased a class of hearers who, however evangelical a minister's doctrine may be, will be sure to condemn him as soon as ever he attempts to advance principles from the creed into the conscience, and to bring down religion from speculation into practice. A sermon must be wanting in fitness or application, that awakens no feelings in the auditor either against the preacher or against himself. Happy are they who come to the house of God, and return from it in the spirit of Elihu and of David. "*That which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity I will do no more. Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*" Amen.

319

As the following discourse may fall into the hands of some who may desire additional information concerning the Union, it maybe eligible to insert a brief account, published on a former occasion, and furnished on its behalf by the Secretary to the Society, the Bev. Samuel Hillyard, of Bedford.

“This religious Association was formed at Bedford, October 31, 1797, under the title of THE UNION OF CHRISTIANS.

“In common with various religious Associations in this country, it has solely for its object the advancement of Christianity. It endeavours to attain this end by the means of preaching, and the circulation of plain practical tracts on religious subjects; and by cherishing, among pious people of different denominations, that mutual affection which is powerfully inculcated by the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“It differs, however, from most religious Associations in *this* respect—that it excludes from co-operation in its measures no person, of what denomination soever, who professes to receive the Bible as the revealed will of God, and agrees with the members in his views of such doctrines as *they* believe to be *essential to salvation*, if his moral and religious conduct proves the sincerity of his profession.

“The Ministers and private Christians who thus associate, neither renounce nor conceal those sentiments in which they differ one from another; but they limit their united measures to the purpose of promoting the knowledge and the practical effect of those important doctrines in which they heartily agree. Such are—the proper Deity of the Son and of the Spirit of God; with the necessity of atonement for sin by the sacrifice of Christ, and of holiness in heart and

320

life through the operation of the Holy Ghost for the salvation of man.

“Hence it is evident, that this Christian Union is neither designed to advance the interests of any sect or party of religious people in particular, nor to oppose anything among those who agree in the belief of the doctrines that have been specified. They avoid accordingly to interfere with congregations to whom these truths are stately preached; and they prefer those seasons for imparting religious instruction when there would not otherwise be any public worship in the vicinity.

“With the propagation or the support of any system of *politics*, the Union of Christians has nothing to do. The injunction of the sacred Scriptures to ‘pray for Kings and for all who are in Authority, that we may live quietly and peaceably, in all godliness and honesty,’ is conscientiously fulfilled by its members. If any of them should be found to teach or practise the contrary, he would be excluded from further connexion with them.

“Consistently with such principles and conduct, they have hitherto been favoured with the approbation of pious and benevolent persons of every denomination in their own neighbourhood; and even with the friendly assistance of others in more distant situations. It is also incumbent upon them to acknowledge, with gratitude and humility, that it has pleased God to prosper their endeavours to serve Him. Many profligate sinners have been reclaimed; and, especially among the poor, an increasing attention to the knowledge and the practice of the Gospel has been excited.”

Bath, Oct. 13, 1812.

**THE
SAVIOUR GLORIFIED IN HIS PEOPLE.**

"I am glorified in them."—JOHN xvii. 10.

WHO in this congregation lives without prayer?— This is a question which it is impossible for your preacher to determine. But, in so large an assembly, there are probably some, if not many, of this unhappy description: and if he knew where you were sitting he would look towards you, not with anger but with pity, and say—"My dear hearers, you may be respectable in your character; you may be caressed by your connexions; you may be prosperous in your secular concerns"—but you are living without God in the world; you are strangers to your duty, your honour, your happiness; you are wholly unlike HIM whom as Christians we profess to resemble, and ivho is perpetually calling upon us to follow his example."

If *you* can live without prayer. *He* could not.

"In the days of his flesh he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."

In the sacred history we often read of his praying: but the Holy Ghost has more fully recorded and signalized the prayer contained in the chapter before us. It was delivered in the open air just as he was going to suffer. He had left the communion chamber: and was approaching the garden of Gethsemane. He paused near Cedron. The hum of the adjoining metropolis was diminished. It was towards midnight.

322

The moon was walking in brightness; it was at full. He was now to take an affectionate farewell of his immediate disciples, who stood around him weeping. He considered them as the depositaries of his truth, and the representatives of his church in all ages; and *lifting up his eyes to heaven* he commends them to the blessing of his Father, and our Father, his God, and our God. And behold the principal argument on which his intercession rests. "All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them." "Whatever is done for my people is done for ME. It will advance my HONOUR." I AM GLORIFIED IN THEM.

Let us endeavour to exemplify the truth of this sentiment, and shew, in six ways, how CHRIST IS GLORIFIED IN CHRISTIANS,

I. He is glorified in them BY THE DERIVATION OF ALL THEIR EXCELLENCES FROM HIM.

What a change do we annually witness in nature! After a few months of wintry dreariness and desolation, the enlivening spring returns. The ground is decked in green. The flowers appear on the earth. The trees assume their foliage. The leaves guard the buds; the blossoms are succeeded by fruit; and the fruit swells, and ripens against the perfect day. All this is owing to the influence of the sun; and—the sun is glorified in our fields and gardens. An architect rears an edifice. It is admired for its beauty or its grandeur by all who inspect it. But the praise, belongs to the builder, not to the building; and—the workman is glorified in the work. A benefactor takes a youth in all the rudeness of ignorance. He awakens and cultivates his powers. He adorns

323

him with science; he forms him into character; and sends him forth to serve his generation; and—the tutor is glorified in the pupil. The Saviour of sinners is the maker of all things; “all things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made.” And he is glorified in all. Impressions of his power, wisdom, and goodness are left, upon the largest and the least: “All his works praise him.” And is he less glorified in the new creation than in the old? Has he not said, “Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered nor come into mind?” If believers were once darkness, and *He* opened the eyes of their understanding: if they were once in the bondage of corruption, and *He* made them free: if they were once degraded and perishing in all the ruins of the fall, and *He* made them an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations—it undeniably follows that he is glorified in them. Hence it is said, “This people have I formed for myself, they shall shew forth my praise. They shall be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he may be glorified. I will place salvation in Jacob for Israel my glory.”

All the subjects of divine grace are made sensible of this truth. In *his* name they rejoice. In *his* righteousness they are exalted. They know that by *his* stripes they are healed. They know that from *his* fulness they receive grace for grace. And as Joab, when Kabbah was ready to fall, sends to David his sovereign to assume the honour, *least*, says he, *the city be taken and be called after my name*; so the Christian is concerned that his Lord and Saviour should wear the glory of all his attainments and

324

achievements: "If I have performed a "duty properly, *He* enabled me to discharge it. If I have borne a trial becomingly, *He* enabled me to endure it. If I have vanquished an enemy, *He* enabled me to overcome it. We are more than conquerors through *him that loved us*. Not unto *us*, O Lord, not unto *us*, but unto *thy* name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and to his Father, be glory and dominion for ever and ever,—Amen."

Here it may be proper to observe that as Christians you should never deny what he has done for your souls. Though you ought to be humble, you ought equally to be thankful: but you cannot thank him for a blessing he has never conferred, or a work he has never accomplished. And why should you be unwilling to acknowledge it? If you can say, Whereas I was once blind I now see: and whereas I was once dead in trespasses and sins I am now walking in newness of life—You are not praising the subject, but the author; and he is glorified in you.

II. He is glorified IN THEIR HOLY WALK.

Dr. Watts has well observed—

Thus shall we best proclaim abroad
The honours of our Saviour God;
When the salvation reigns within,
And grace subdues the power of sin.

These lines refer to the address of Paul to Titus: "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of

325

God our Saviour in all tilings." I wish you to notice this address the more, because of the character adduced. It is observable that in the illustration of his subject, the Apostle does not bring forward a prince, or a nobleman. He does not mention even a master—but a servant. How easily and commonly men deceive themselves! How many are ready to imagine, that they should do wonders if they were placed in higher stations, or were possessed of greater talents! But they forget that he who is not faithful in little will never be faithful in much—that every individual, however situated or endowed, has some influence—that even *a servant* may roll away reproach, and recommend the Gospel by its amiable and moral operation in social life—even *a servant* may *adorn* the doctrine of God our Saviour *in all things*.

Upon the same principle speaks the Apostle Peter. He supposes a case by no means an unusual one. The wife is called by divine grace while the husband remains unconverted. She naturally feels a concern for his salvation. Her first endeavour is to bring him under those instructions which have proved useful to herself. But he refuses to hear. *Pie will not obey the word*. Is there then no other expedient? Says the Apostle, you may *win him without the word* while he beholds *your chaste conversation coupled with fear*, and sees that you are less attentive to the decoration of your persons than to the cultivation of Christian tempers, and especially that *ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price*.

Let us not hastily pass over this part of our subject. Professors of religion! Be harmless and blameless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of

326

a wicked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world *holding forth the word of life*. The eyes of many are upon you, anxious to find something, not to remove their unhappy prejudices, but to confirm them. They judge of your religion by you. You say this is wrong. It is. *You* appeal to the Scripture; but *they* appeal to you: and the only estimate they form will be taken from the representations you give, and the impressions you make. And should not these representations be accurate? Should not these impressions be favourable? Should not the picture do some justice to the features of the original it is intended to hold forth and make known?

You well know that the doctrines we preach are often supposed to lead to licentiousness, or at least that they are not very friendly to holiness and good works. If the supposition was true, we should deserve, for inculcating them, all the reprobation we sometimes meet with. But we affirm it is not true. We contend from Sabbath to Sabbath that these are doctrines *according to godliness*. But after all, we must come to you for our most striking proofs. "Ye are our epistles known and read of all men." When we can address such cavillers and say—"Come with us, and you shall see these principles in practice. Behold these advocates for evangelical truth. See how humble they are under applause. See how forgiving they are under provocation. See, when riches increase, how little they set their hearts upon them. Enter their shops and warehouses—see what justice and fairness distinguish all their dealings. Enter their houses—see what cleanliness, decency, order, and harmony prevail there. See how the wife reverences her husband; see how the

327

husband loves his wife even as himself. See how the parents provoke not their children to wrath, but train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; see how the children obey their parents in all things. See how masters give unto their own servants that which is just and equal, knowing that they also have a master in heaven: see how servants obey, in all things, their masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God"—When we can appeal to facts like these, we put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Our hearts are encouraged, and our hands are strengthened. We live, if ye stand fast, in the Lord: and Jesus Christ looking down from heaven says, I am glorified in them.

What then are we to think—excuse the association of terms—of these religious pretenders whose tempers and conduct are always at variance with their pretensions? *One sinner destroyeth much good.* An unholy professor of religion is a judgment upon the place in which he lives. If I had such characters to address, I would say—"By your means the way of truth is evil spoken of, and the worthy name blasphemed by which you are called. You perplex the weak, and you distress the strong. You strike your preachers dumb. You justify and harden the wicked in their iniquity. You lead many to think that all religion is but a system of hypocrisy. The destruction of thousands will lie at your door. They would long ago have attended the Gospel, but they saw that *you* were not the better for your boasted doctrines and privileges. Your servants and children see in you the same pride and passion as in others; and witness the same mixture of family

328

prayers and quarrels. Your neighbours see that you are as hard-hearted and as close-fisted as any around you; and that while you are talking of another world you are keeping a keen look-out after this, and are largely endowed with what an old divine calls 'Saving knowledge.' O that we could exclude you from our assemblies—or, as God may give you repentance, O that you had invisible bodies, and could enter our places and withdraw unseen—that no one might ever imagine you had the least connexion with us."

III. He is glorified in them by THE CHEERFULNESS OF THEIR LIVES.

All men seek happiness; and if they perceive that you find what they seek after in vain; though they turn from pleasure to wealth, from wealth to fame, from fame to friendship, from friendship to science—this is likely to awaken their attention, to conciliate their regard, and to induce them to take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.

It is commonly supposed that religion is a mopish and melancholy thing; that it genders a constant dread; that it requires us to walk in a way which, though it may end in everlasting life, is full of thorns and briars, and scorpions. Such a prospect must naturally and unavoidably terrify and disgust. And hence this prejudice will be found to be as injurious as it is common. For present feelings are the most powerful. The constitution of man is such that he must have present gratification. He is thirsty, and must drink: and if there be no fountain near, he will kneel clown to the puddle. Now, would you

329

confirm a prejudice so general and so fatal as this by long, demure faces; by sighs and groans as if you were always at a funeral; by your insensibility to the beauties of nature, and indifference to the bounties of Providence; by indulging those peevish, fretful tempers which make you *a continual dropping in a rainy day*; by your sinking in the day of adversity, and drawing upon yourself the reflection of many an Eliphaz, "Behold thou' hast instructed many, and thou hast strengthened the weak hands; thy words have upholden him that was falling, and thou hast strengthened the feeble knees—but now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled. Is not this thy fear, thy confidence, thy hope, and the uprightness of thy way?" Would you lead people to think that your master is a tyrant, and his service bondage? Would you appear to be less happy in serving the Lord than in serving sin? Would you shew that in exchanging the world for the church you fell from liberty into a dungeon, and left a fruitful field for a barren land, or a wilderness of drought? It must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh! Be alive, my brethren, to your duty, if not to your privileges: and render your religion as attractive as it is important!

I go back to the primitive Christians—*They* learned in whatsoever state they were therewith to be content. In everything they gave thanks. If sorrowful, they were always rejoicing. They did not think it necessary to wade through a sea of soul-trouble to authorize them to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. They did not suffer a sense of their unworthiness and imperfections, though it kept them hum-

330

ble, to make them miserable or to deprive them of hope. They did not torment themselves about futurity, but cast all their care on one who cared for them. They did not view death as the king of terrors, but as their deliverer and their friend. The day of judgment did not keep them aghast; they waited for it, and loved his appearing. Here I see every thing as it ought to be. After this I turn to modern professors, and here I behold a difference which can only be accounted for on one of these two principles; either that Christianity is changed since; or, we do not understand it, and receive it properly. The former solution is inadmissible. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. There is the same efficacy in his blood. There is the same power in his arm. There is the same love in his heart. The promises are the same. The throne of grace is the same. Heaven is the same. Providence is the same. No, Christians; the difference is to be sought, not in your system, but in yourselves. Seriously therefore examine your experience. Pray that you may know what is the hope of your calling, and what is the glory of the riches of his inheritance in the saints. Be concerned to face a reproaching world, and with boldness to tell them.

The men of grace have found
Glory begun below,
And heavenly fruits on earthly ground
From faith and hope will grow—

Shew that no danger can terrify you; that no loss can impoverish you. Shew that if the reed fails, the rock remains; if the cistern be dried up, the fountain of living water flows on. Say with the church, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither

331

shall fruit be in the vine; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, and the flocks shall be cut off from the fold and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice.

IV. He is glorified in them BY THEIR READINESS TO SUFFER FOR HIS SAKE.

It was to the honour of Rachael that Jacob served for her seven years, and that his regard was sufficient to turn the toil into pleasure. It always tends to the praise of an individual, when those who best know him are ready to make any sacrifices or endure any hardships in his service. The strength of wise attachment implies great excellency. The impressions made by character are always the most deep and wonderful. Scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. It is easy to apply this to the subject before us. It reflects comparatively but little honour upon the Redeemer to follow him when all is peaceful and inviting: but when we are called to deny ourselves and take up our cross; to go forth to him without the camp, bearing his reproach; to regard father and mother and wife and children as nothing when valued against him: to leave all, and lose all for his sake—Then a Christian has an opportunity to evince the sincerity and fervency of his love to the Lord Jesus; and to say practically—and people will believe him—“He is so glorious in himself, he is so dear to my affections, he is so essential to every particle of my happiness, that whatever be the consequence I cannot return from following after him.”

332

What did Peter and John when they were dismissed with ignominy from the council? They went away *rejoicing that they zoere counted worthy to suffer shame for his name*. Hear Paul's account of his sufferings. "In labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in death oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." Ah, Paul, thy religion cost thee dear! And dost thou not repent of thy engagement to a master, whose service—month after month, and year after year—is but a succession of privations and trials?—Repent!—"I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. The love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but to him that died for them and rose again."

Love—Love is strong as death; many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. You do not so strikingly see the amazing vigour of this principle in religion, because Christians are not called in our day to pass through the same scenes as they were in the beginning of the Gospel. Otherwise

333

you would. The principle is the same in every age. It has been exemplified long since the apostolical era. Persecution has formerly reigned and ravaged in our own country. Many suffered and died privately, a spectacle to angels, though not to men. But we have a large Book of Martyrs. I enter the prisons, and survey the victims. Here I see the old, of whom it is said, "They shall be afraid of that which is nigh, and fear shall be in the way, and the grasshopper shall be a burden." Here I see females distinguished by the delicacy and timorousness of their sex. Here I see children, tender and impressible,—but all are heroes. What makes them so? They are offered promotion, liberty, and life. But none of these things move them. They are told of tortures; they are led forth and pointed to the stake—and they embrace it, crying, "None but Christ; none but Christ." How is He glorified here!—We ourselves have frequently seen a little of this principle, even in our own day. We have seen the young man resolved to follow his religious convictions, though mocked of his neighbours, lampooned by his companions, and threatened by his superiors. We have seen the servant resigning her place: we have seen the workman foregoing his labour and seeking employment, rather than give up an apprehended duty. We have seen the daughter regardless of entreaties and tears—even a mother's entreaties and tears—the most trying and terrible of all persecutions to an ingenuous and filial mind—rather than renounce the communion of saints, and turn her back on the *glorious Gospel of the blessed God*. The disposition which carries persons so far, would, if events required it, carry them farther; carry them to any length. They have

334

the spirit of martyrs, and, says Christ, I am glorified in them.

V. He is glorified IN THEIR PROFESSION OF HIS NAME.

If it were only necessary to *be* a Christian, there never would have been a martyr—he could have hid his religion in his heart. Daniel might have prayed without the place and the posture he chose; and have escaped the lions' den. But if we examine the Scripture we shall find that an obligation lies upon us, not only to *be* Christians, but to *appear* such; not only to believe with the heart, but to confess with the tongue; not only to hold fast the reality, but the profession of our faith without wavering. It is asked, "Who will rise up for me against the evil doers? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?" It is said, "They that are in darkness shall shew themselves." They are enlightened for this very purpose: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." A Christian is compared to a candle; and our Saviour tells us, "A man does not light a candle to put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house and adds, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." So little countenance does the Scripture give to the practice of those who renounce business, detach themselves from the community, run into the cells of solitude, and bury their religion alive.

A profession of godliness not only requires that you should live in civil society, but also that you should join yourselves to some body of Christians,

335

according to the order of the Gospel. If all were like-minded with some, there would be no such thing as a *church-state* any where to be maintained. They never became members of a Society. They live unconnectedly. Excuse the roughness of the comparison, they may be considered as a kind of religious gypsies. They have no spiritual home—They wander from place to place—pilfering as they go—eluding all parochial offices—declining all the king's taxes—and never contributing to the support of any of the advantages they enjoy. Whereas Christians are called *fellow-citizens with the saints*. They belong to a holy state of laws and immunities. They join in communion as to the privileges of religion; in co-operation as to its duties; in sympathy as to its conditions. To vary the image—as the pupils of Christ, they enter his school; as soldiers of Christ, they enter his army. Stragglers can do little—they are liable to be cut off. It is not the will of the Commander in Chief that we should fight alone—he calls us to be embodied; and when we are enrolled and stationed—it is not his pleasure that we should run from one corps to another, according to our humour, but abide with God in our own rank and place.

This profession also includes our bearing, as we have opportunity, a verbal testimony in favour of religion. *Ye are my witnesses*, says God: and woe to us—for we are subpœnaed—if when we are called upon to depose, we are either absent or silent. Some persons are godly with the godly, but temporize in the presence of the wicked and the worldly. When they hear the truth of Christ denied, his ways misrepresented, his people vilified, they sit *as men in whose mouth there is no reproof*. Is this to act the

336

part of a good subject, or of a traitor? "He that is not for me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." If you are ashamed of the Redeemer's interest, abandon it at once: but if you believe it to be, what it really is, infinitely important and excellent, never shrink from an avowal of it, in whatever circumstances or company you are found.

We know that wisdom is profitable to direct.— Everything is beautiful in its season. A word fitly spoken, how good is it? But we are often more in danger of erring on the side of caution and prudence, than on the side of forwardness and zeal; and to avoid rashness many go and shelter themselves under the chilling influence of fear and shame.

There is one case in which it is hardly possible to err. It is when you are invited by people to places, and parties, and practices, which your principles lead you to condemn. When this occurs, you have an opportunity, *furnished by themselves*, of stating the grounds of your conduct, and the reasons of your refusal. They cannot surely be offended at the delivery of your creed, when they themselves call for your sentiments. But, alas! there are many who, instead of seizing such fine opportunities to *testify*, are not only speechless, but—even yield and conform. They are *overcome of evil* instead of *overcoming evil with good*.

VI. He is glorified in them BY THEIR EXERTIONS TO PROMOTE HIS CAUSE.

The cause of Christ is very extensive. It takes in everything that is true, and righteous, and good, and noble in the whole universe. But we particu-

337

larly refer to the cause of pure and undefiled religion. This is advanced by establishing schools, building places of worship, the diffusing of the Scriptures, the sending forth of missionaries, the supporting of ministers; by instructing the ignorant and reclaiming the vicious; teaching transgressors his ways, and converting sinners unto God.

In doing all this Christ is glorified. He condescends to consider *you* as workers together with *him*. He gives you his own names; and what he is called efficiently you are allowed to be called instrumentally. "Brethren," says the apostle James, "if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." What! Can you *convert*? Can you *save*? Can you *pardon*?—It can intend only that you may be the means of doing it. But even this is an infinite honour conferred upon you; and the inspired writer, knowing the disposition of Christians, makes the work its own reward. And if there was only a probability; if there was only a possibility of success but in one instance, it ought to be enough—and if we were in a proper state of mind, it would be enough, to lead us to call into action all our resources, and to exert all our influences through life to attain it!

Pleasure and praise run through God's host,

To see a sinner turn;

Thou, Satan, hast a captive lost,

And Christ a subject horn.

And *can* you do nothing to glorify the Redeemer? Are you a parent? Cannot you recommend Him to your children? Are you a master? Cannot you

338

preach Him to your servants? Are you the head of a family? Cannot you say with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord?" Are you a neighbour? Cannot you invite your acquaintances to come and hear the word of life? Are you a tradesman? Cannot you fulfil the prophecy: "Her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord; it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall he for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently and for durable clothing." Are you rich? Cannot you "honour the Lord with your substance, and with the first fruits of your increase?" Indeed there is nothing by which you may be so useful in the cause of Christ, as property, since it enables you to employ every kind of instrumentality.

Every one, therefore, may do something; and all may do much more than fear or sloth will allow them to imagine. This being admitted, it is hoped that no one will suffer his exertions to be chilled by the misapplication of acknowledged truth. "The Lord has promised to carry on his own cause. He is able to do it; and he will do it." He will—but he works by means; these means display his wisdom as well as his power; and those who love his name will desire to become instruments in his hand.

It is needless to remark how forcibly this subject bears upon the Union which you have so nobly established and maintained; and the success of which, if it has not been answerable to your wishes, has been sufficient to encourage your hopes and reward your exertions.

Temporal beneficence is not to be undervalued. While we are in this vale of tears we shall be perpetually called to the exercise of it. Who is not

339

ready to bless the man who feeds the hungry, and clothes the naked, and heals the sick?

But after all, charity is to be estimated by the grandeur, the capacity, and the duration of its object.

No zeal therefore can equal that which regards the salvation of the soul. Men are perishing for lack of knowledge. The Gospel is the only remedy. There is no alternative between our belief of the truth of the Gospel, and the importance of it; between our belief of its importance, and our owning an obligation to receive it ourselves and extend it to others.

How consistently, therefore, my UNITED BRETHREN, are you engaged while attempting to diffuse it! And this is your aim—your only aim. Your object is not to make proselytes, but converts. What bigots magnify, you overlook. While you hold your convictions upon subordinate subjects, your conduct asks, “What is the chaff to the wheat?” You consider every thing as trifling compared with the everlasting salvation of the souls of men. You practically acknowledge that the “Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost: that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.”

“And as many as walk by this rule, peace be on them and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.” May your zeal provoke numbers more; and still discovering the same spirit, and minding the same thing, may you at last obtain the approving sentence, THOU HAST LABOURED AND HAST NOT FAINTED. Let me therefore conclude by observing—

First, that Christians ought not to think meanly of

340

themselves. This remark is liable to abuse, and needs explanation. The thing does not stand opposed to humbleness of mind, but to thoughtlessness and levity. There is a personal self-valuation which is censurable; but there is a relative self-valuation that is not only allowable, but commendable. For instance. A mother ought not to feel an indifference to herself: she ought to know that her life is of importance to her little rising charge. For who can fill her place? Who can feel for an infant like her who bore it?—And this consciousness, instead of inflaming her pride, will be a source of gratitude, self-preservation, and duty. A minister may be humble and heavenly-minded, and long to depart to be with Christ, which is far better; but when he looks around upon his people, he may feel that his labours are desirable, and say, To abide in the flesh is more needful for you. But there is no relation so momentous as that which subsists between Christ and Christians. And if *He* be disgraced or glorified in *us*—O! how we ought to feel the value of our character, the sacredness of our condition, the awfulness of our destination, the necessity of self-attention, of vigilance, and of prayer!

Secondly. If He is glorified in us, let us be his servants, attending continually upon this very thing. Let it be the grand and pleasing business of our lives. O, my dear brethren in the ministry, and my Christian friends, let us mourn over the little honour we have brought to our Lord and Saviour. Let his fame be dear to our hearts. Let us never be satisfied with, the thought that we have not disgraced him—though this is a mercy; but let us be concerned to honour him; to honour him in all our words and works, in

34¹

our conversation and conduct, in our bodies and spirits.

Need I say how much He deserves it? You know what he is. You know what he has done. You know what he is doing. You know his promises. You know his sufferings.—See him who Was rich, for your sakes becoming poor. See him a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. See him in the manger; in the garden; on the cross.

See from his head, his hands, his feet
 Sorrow and love flow mingled down:
 Did e'er such love and sorrow meet.
 Or thorns compose so rich a crown?
 —Were the whole realm of nature mine,
 That were a present far too small;
 Love so amazing, so divine,
 Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Thirdly. If Christ is glorified in his people here, how will he be glorified in them hereafter! In the vastness of their number; in the completeness of their deliverance; in the grandeur of their elevation; in the beauty of their residence; in the eternity of their joys—“Then shall he come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day.”

Fourthly. Let the wicked remember that Christ will be glorified in them. He will display his wisdom and power in making them instruments to accomplish his providential purposes; in turning their designs and actions from their natural currents, into secret channels prepared to receive them, and in which they will flow into the fulness of him that filleth all in all. The wrath of man shall praise him,

342

and the remainder of wrath will he restrain. Nebuchadnezzar is called his servant as well as Moses.

He will glorify his truth and his righteousness in punishing them.

Either in a way of mercy or in a way of justice he has sworn by himself, the word is gone out of his mouth, that to him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess.

“Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.” Amen.

THE JUBILEE:

A SERMON

IN REFERENCE TO THE COMPLETION OF THE
FIFTIETH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HIS
MAJESTY GEORGE III.

DELIVERED IN

ARGYLE CHAPEL, BATH,

OCTOBER 22ND, 1809.

THE JUBILEE.

"It shall be a Jubilee unto you."—Lev. xxv. 10.

“**H**E that winneth souls is wise.” This wisdom is from above, and is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. No person ever possessed more of this excellency than Paul. His prudence appears in the selection and variation of the means he employed to accomplish his end. He considered the circumstances, the tempers, the prejudices of his hearers. He addressed every principle, and every passion of human nature. He reasoned; he declaimed. He reprov'd; he admonish'd; he warn'd; he encouraged. He compassed sea and land to furnish himself with illustrations and assistance. He borrowed from the institutions of Judaism. He borrowed from the usages of Heathenism. He borrowed from the manners of the age. He borrowed from the festive games.—Not a wrestlirig or a race passed by unnoticed, or unimproved.—Any occurrence, however accidental or transitory, he seized, to guide the attention which it awakened, to some wise and important purpose—

“And as a bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt its new-fledg'd offspring to the skies;
He tried each art, reprov'd each dull delay,
Allur'd to brighter worlds, and led the way.”

Hear his own language—“Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I may gain the more. And unto the Jews I became

346

as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.”

My brethren, your preacher does not intend a comparison so high; but he wishes to feel the stimulus of an example so excellent. He does not challenge praise; but he hopes for approbation. If Paul be worthy of imitation, he is more than justified in the choice of his subject this evening. As our venerable and virtuous Sovereign enters the fiftieth year of his reign on Wednesday next, an observance is intended—called Jubilee; and your preacher is going to lead back your minds to the origin of the name. His design is not to indulge in applauding or censuring the appointed festivity, but to enable you to improve it, especially by aiding religious reflection.

Let me explain the nature of the Jubilee—make some remarks on the design of it—and examine what there is in the Gospel to correspond with it. Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

I. It is hardly necessary to take up any of your time by inquiring after the etymology of the word Jubilee; in Hebrew, *Jobel*. It signifies, according to some Rabbins, a ram's horn, with which the festival was proclaimed. But how, asks the learned Calmet, could a ram's horn, which is crooked, solid,

347

and not hollow, be used as a trumpet? It was therefore probably, says he, a trumpet in the form of a ram's horn. Others derive *Jobel* from *Jubal*, who was the inventor of musical instruments; and suppose that the year was named after him, because, it was a year of rejoicing, of which music is commonly an emblem: or because it was ushered in with the sound of music through the whole land. Hottinger is of opinion, that *Jobel* does not signify the instrument, but the noise it made; and that the word is invented to imitate the sound. Patrick espouses this sentiment; and justifies it by a reference to the pass-over, which was called *Pesach*, from the angel's passing over the Israelites, when he slew the Egyptians. There is another conjecture, says Jennings, much more probable, and which supposes that it comes from the verb *Hobil*, to bring or call back, because then every thing was restored. Accordingly, the Septuagint renders it remission;* and Josephus says it signifies liberty.†

The learned are not more agreed concerning the period in which the Jubilee was celebrated. Whether it was observed every forty-ninth or fiftieth year, is a question on each side of which the advocates seem equally numerous and eminent. I shall not trouble you with their respective arguments; but only remark, that the authors of the *Universal History* have endeavoured to reconcile these two opinions, by observing, that as the Jubilee began in the first month of the civil year, which was the seventh month of the ecclesiastical, it might be said to be either the forty-ninth or the fiftieth, according as the one or the other of these computations is followed.

* αφεσις. † ελευθριαν.

348

For a general account of this ordinance I refer you to the charge which God gave to Moses at the institution. "And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound, on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a Jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A Jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you; ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the Jubilee; it shall be holy unto you: ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. In the year of this Jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession." Let us arrange and explain the contents of this statement.

The Jubilee was a season of relaxation, repose, and pleasure. The first nine days were spent in festivity. The people indulged in every kind of lawful mirth. They wore crowns on their heads, and decorated their garments with flowers. During the remainder of the season no servile work was done. There was no ploughing, or sowing. The earth spontaneously yielded her increase, and of the produce all were allowed to partake. The proprietor of a field, or a vineyard, had no more claim to the grapes or the corn than his poor neighbour. They had all things common.

349

The Jubilee announced, release from bondage. All slaves were free, with their wives and children. They who had renounced the privilege given to them by the sabbatical year, of recovering their liberty, and whose ears had been bored in token of perpetual servitude, were emancipated from their masters. Even all foreign slaves enjoyed the same privilege of exemption, and could not be detained another moment in vassalage.

The Jubilee proclaimed the remission of debts, whether small or great, lately contracted or of long standing. It arrested the arm of the merciless creditor, who was taking his fellow by the throat, saying. Pay me that thou owest. It hastily opened the door of the dungeon, and permitted the light of heaven to visit the wretch immured in the cold and gloomy prison; struck off his fetters; and led him forth to his relations and friends, anxious to hail him on his release.

The Jubilee caused the lost inheritance to revert to the original owner. The sale of his estate could only extend to the arrival of this period: but there was no wrong done in this case to the purchaser, because the time of restitution was fixed and known, and he bought accordingly. The joy of recovery is more lively and intense than the calm satisfaction resulting from uninterrupted possession. Things most powerfully strike us when they are viewed and felt in contrast. It is the want that teaches us the worth of our enjoyments. Behold an Israelite, who had been reduced to the condition of a stranger even in his own land; who had walked like an alien in sight of a house, and by the side of a field and a vineyard which he once called his own—with what pleasure would he feel himself reinstated into his patrimonial

350

heritage! Lectured and prepared by all the trials of indigence, and exile, and uncertainty; with what gratitude would he exult, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage!"

There is another circumstance which must by no means be omitted. It is the solemnity that immediately preceded the Jubilee. For you will remember that the proclamation was made on the day of atonement. As soon as the victim of expiation was offered, and reconciliation was made for the sins of the people—then, and not before, was the command given to the priests to blow. They stood ready with the trumpets in their hands, and their faces turned towards the east and the west, the north and the south, waiting the signal: and no sooner was it given, than their sound went into all the land, and the joyful intelligence was published in every region, and in every village.

From this representation it appears that the Jubilee must have been an event of peculiar interest to the Jews: and we proceed,

II. To make a few remarks upon the design of it. Our ignorance of a period so remote, and of a people so peculiar, will not allow of our appreciating the importance of such an institution in every instance. We do not therefore pretend to develop all the advantages attached to it: but it is easy to see that, whether it be examined with regard to humanity, policy, or religion, it will be found to possess no small degree of utility.

First. Considered *humanely*, it was important. It had a merciful and kind aspect on the lower ranks of life, and would tend to keep their spirits from

351

being broken, depressed, degraded. Who can bear everlasting application, or hopeless fatigue? Incessant and unvaried toil from day to day, from year to year, annihilates all sense of personal dignity. It brutalizes the mind by a constancy and uniformity of low impressions. Nothing occurs to remind the man that he is a rational and immortal being. Every moment being necessarily demanded for the cravings of the body, the soul is neglected till it is forgotten. Habits are generated so perfectly material, that he becomes incapable of every mental effort, and dead to every glowing purpose: at best he is the subject of a sullen quietude, or a cheerless contentment. There is nothing so provoking to God, who is the lovely Father of all mankind, as the oppression and misery of the poor and needy: "For the sighing of the poor, for the crying of the needy, now will I arise, saith the Lord, now will I shew myself." "It is not of the Lord that the people labour in the fire, and weary themselves for very vanity." It *is* the pleasure of the Almighty that man should have some active employment. It is the law of his creation. A particular necessity indeed falls on him as the consequence of sin: "Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat of the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." But he who pronounced this curse is a father as well as a sovereign. In the midst of judgment he remembers mercy. He renders the obligation to which we have subjected ourselves, a physical and a moral blessing: and he limits the degree, and the extent of the obligation itself. He or-

352

dains labour, but never designed that absolute drudgery should be necessary to acquire a pitiful subsistence. He has prepared of his goodness for the poor; and his designs are gracious, though men pervert them. Thus,—He gave the Jews occasional relaxation and ease. He allowed them time for rest, and reflection. He resigned them one day in every seven days, one year in every seven years; and one year in every fifty years, in addition to both—during which, they could wipe their brows, unload their heavy burdens, and attend to their persons, their children, and the book of God.

Secondly. Considered *politically*, it was important.

Slaves for certain reasons were allowed under the Jewish dispensation; but, by this law, what was tolerated was qualified, and *perpetual* slavery was prevented.

In every well-ordered state it will be an object to fix those who reside in it, not by necessity, but choice and preference. The secret to prevent at once emigration and disaffection, is to cause some flowers to spring up around the cottage, however humble; to keep the soil from becoming barren and dreary; to secure some enjoyments, some advantages that will render the idea of home estimable and attractive; and make the individual feel an interest which he is unwilling to resign, and determined to defend. That which we have a propriety in, we seldom disregard.—This was the case with the Jews. The provision of Jubilee attached them to their own country, and their native soil. They viewed with veneration and affection the estates that had descended from their ancestors, and were to be continued to their posterity.

353

Even when they had no share in possession, they had one in remembrance; they had one in hope; and could never feel detached from the commonwealth of Israel.

The levelling of property is impossible and absurd. Yet a state is never in a prosperous condition when the community is divided between two classes only, the *very* rich, and the *very* poor: and the various intermediate degrees that constitute the strength, the happiness, the glory of a country disappear. The law of Jubilee prevented at once abject poverty and excessive accumulation of wealth. It was impossible for any to gain very large possessions, either by usurpation, mortgage, purchase, or heirship. The tendency to departure from the original medium of estate, both in deficiency and excess, was seasonably checked, and the balance restored. We read that something like this was established among the Lacedaemonians by their famous legislator Lycurgus. He not only banished slavery, but instituted a kind of equality, or rather mediocrity of fortune. His endeavour was, as far as he was able, to hinder any one from becoming too powerful, or too rich. Such was the design of the ostracism which he introduced. It consisted in expelling citizens whose wealth and influence rendered their aggrandizement prejudicial to the state. A similar plan also was proposed by Stolo. To repress the avarice of the old Romans, he made a law which forbade any particular person from having more than five hundred acres of land. Fraudulence soon destroyed this wise constitution; and he himself was condemned for violating his own statute.

But to return. Never was there a people upon earth so secure of their liberty and property as the

354

Israelites were; for while they were protected from the invasion of their enemies by the promise and providence of God, by the Jubilee they were not suffered to lose these privileges, even by their own follies and vices, unless partially and for a time.

Thirdly. Considered *religiously*, it was important. It established the divine authority of Moses—it verified the prophecies with regard to the descent of the Messiah—it was typical of the Christian dispensation.

It established the divine authority of Moses. For we may boldly affirm that no legislator, unless conscious of being divinely inspired, would ever have committed himself by enacting such a law. It was founded on a standing miracle. It forbade all agricultural process, on the assurance that the year preceding should render it needless, by yielding an abundance sufficient to answer its demands without tillage. For this double produce in one season he pledged himself. Would an impostor have done this? How easily would he have been detected! Had his assertion been false, a people so prone to rebel, and so governed by present appearances, would never have submitted to the loss of a year's produce, neither would the possessors of acquired estates have resigned them. Their obedience in such circumstances abundantly proves the truth of his claims.

It verified the prophecies with regard to the descent of the Messiah. It rendered necessary the continuance of the distinction of every tribe and family; this preserved their genealogies secure and clear, and thus ultimately, and no doubt intentionally, it served to ascertain the birth of our Lord and

355

Saviour from the tribe of Judah, and the family of David. Indeed, every dispensation of divine Providence or grace from the beginning of the world, regarded the coming of the Messiah, and issued in "the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

Finally, it was a type of the Christian dispensation. Observe, my brethren, the words of the Apostle to the Hebrews—"God," says he, "has provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." Here he compares the law with the Gospel, and reminds us that the one is superior to the other, yea, that the one is the completion of the other. Judaism without Christianity would have been defective—as a dawn without the day; and it would have been uninteresting and unintelligible—like an allegory without the clue, or a prefiguration without the reality. The various usages and institutions of the ceremonial economy derive their significancy, their value, their *perfection* from reference—they were all "shadows of good things to come, but the body is Christ." This renders the Old Testament so delightful and edifying to a Christian. By means of the subsequent explanations of the New Testament writers, he can go back and compare promise with accomplishment, the figure with the substance. He can read the glory of his Redeemer in the patriarchal dignity, in the prophetic wisdom, in the priestly sanctity, in the kingly dominion. He can find him in the sufferings and elevation of Joseph, in the splendour of Solomon, in the burial and resurrection of Jonah. He can see him as the bread that came down from heaven in the manna; as the water of life in the streams that flowed from the rock in the wilderness; as an offering for sin in the slaughtered

356

bullock or bleeding lamb. In the brazen serpent he beholds him as dying on the cross, "that who ever believeth on him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." He meets him, he hears him in the Jubilee. It is in allusion to this season that our Lord expresses himself, in the words of Isaiah—"The spirit of the Lord God is upon me: because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; TO PROCLAIM THE ACCEPTABLE YEAR OF THE LORD."

Let us therefore

III. Inquire what there is in the Gospel to correspond with the Jubilee. I am sorry to be obliged to remark, that the figurative language of divine revelation has been frequently abused by violence and debased by littleness. Expositors and preachers have too commonly supposed that a conformity was to be sought for in every attribute, and in every circumstance of the subject. Whereas, a real and striking degree of similitude is all that is required in any writer; and the same will hold with regard to the metaphors, parables, and types of the Scripture. This being premised, we are not afraid to bring the Jubilee and the Gospel together. A very superficial examination will decide that there is a wonderful analogy between them.

Did the Jubilee afford rest? *This* the Gospel realizes. It calls us to cease from Jewish ceremonies, from superstitious rites, from slavish fears, from perplexing anxieties, from worldly disquietudes. It tells us that all things are now ready, and that we are

357

welcome to partake of the common salvation of God's people. The Christian thus finds himself blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, and by believing enters into rest. He confides also in his providence. He knows from the love, the power, and the promise of his heavenly Father, that though the young lions may lack and suffer hunger, they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. He is therefore careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving he makes known his requests unto God, and the peace of God that passeth all understanding keeps his heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

Did the Jubilee confer liberty? *This* the Gospel realizes. We had sold ourselves for nought. We were led captive by the devil at his will. We were the slaves of sin. We served divers lusts and pleasures. But "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free; and if the Son make you free ye shall be free *indeed*." No longer unable to hearken to the voice of conscience, or follow the dictates of our understandings; no longer the vassals of pride, of avarice, of envy, of malice; no longer under the tyranny of our passions, our appetites, our senses—we are the Lord's free *men*, we are brought into the glorious liberty of the *Sons* of God.

Did the Jubilee insure remission of debts? *This* the Gospel realizes. Did we owe much, and were we able to pay nothing? Had our iniquities increased over our heads, and become a burden too heavy for us to bear? Was the adversary ready to deliver us to the judge, and the judge to the officer? "Deli-

358

ver," said the voice, "from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom. With the Lord there is mercy, and with him there is plenteous redemption. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my own name sake, and will not remember thy sins." "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Did the Jubilee restore alienated estates? *This* the Gospel realizes. Heaven was to have been our possession—we were originally heirs of it. We forfeited our title, and were left without hope— But behold the poor and the needy enriched. Behold the treasures of eternity promised them. See them not only "justified by his grace," but "made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

Was the Jubilee proclaimed on the day of expiation, and as soon as the atonement was offered? *This* the Gospel realizes. No sooner had our Saviour given himself "an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet smelling savour," than the heavens smiled and the earth rejoiced. The messengers of reconciliation were sent forth to "preach the Gospel to every creature." They began in Jerusalem; but the good news was published in every country: and the mes-

359

sage shall continue to spread till it has reached "the ends of the earth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of our God together."

Let us not hastily pass over this part of our subject: We wish you never to forget, that, as the Jewish Jubilee began in the typical atonement of Aaron, so the Christian Jubilee is founded in the real atonement of Christ. We read of a purpose of grace before the world began, but it was given us "in him," We hear of eternal life, but it is "in him." We say we have righteousness and strength, but it is "in him." Examine the scheme of salvation in all its parts, and in all its progress, and the necessity of a mediator is *never* left out. And *how* was he a mediator? Precisely in the same way as the high priest who typified him. It was by sacrifice that Aaron, on the behalf of the people, interposed, interceded, blessed. And when Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost, he "gave his life a ransom for many." When he returned, "he entered with his own blood into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Hence it is said, "in him we have redemption *through his blood*, even the forgiveness of sins we "have boldness to enter into the holiest of all *by the blood of Jesus:*" they who are before the throne "have washed their robes, and made them white *in the blood* of the Lamb."

We learn from hence that the atonement of Christ is an essential blessing, a comprehensive blessing; that every thing else depends upon it, and results from it; that to this we owe all our deliverance and all our hope. Ho wonder therefore that the Apostle should make it a leading object, and even among the polite and learned Corinthians *begin* with it—"I de-

360

livered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." No wonder he should make it his last as well as his first concern—no wonder he should make it his *only* one—"I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." No wonder he abhorred the thought of exulting in any thing beside, and exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." No wonder the church of God in all ages have found their happiest moments to have been those in which they could say, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, be glory and dominion for ever and ever." No wonder that those who have finished their course with joy, and no longer see through a glass darkly, should sing a new song, saying, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." No wonder the angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders, and whose number is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, should say with "a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

What then can we think of those who conceal, who deny, who insult the atoning death of our Lord and Saviour?

What are your sentiments and dispositions with regard to this important event?

Ah, my brethren, this event becomes a test—a test to try our schemes, our character, our destiny—a

361

test the most awful—a test established by an authority from which there lies no appeal. “We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace!”

To conclude. Having discovered the nature and excellency of the Gospel, we learn, my brethren, the way in which it is to be regarded by us. It demands joy and gladness. It is a Jubilee; and preachers and hearers should animate each other, and say, “O, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together.” “This is the day which the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.”

With what satisfaction and pleasure would *a Jewish priest* proclaim the arrival of the Jubilee! And shall *a Christian minister* be cold and senseless, who has “this grace given, to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ?” O what a privilege to go and publish, that God “has not spared his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, and that with him he will also freely give us all things; and that God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them!” I would rather be employed in announcing this intelligence to sinners, than be destined to blow the trump of the archangel that shall awake the dead. I would rather call

362

you to the feet of the Saviour, than to the tribunal of the Judge.

It is easy to imagine with what emotions the proclamation of Jubilee was heard by *the inhabitants* of Judea, and especially by those who were so *deeply interested* in the message. And what comparison is there between the concerns of time, and those of eternity? What is the relief of the body to the welfare of the soul? Will *you* not therefore, with a joy proportionably greater, exclaim, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" Thus the Gospel was originally embraced. The Thessalonians received it "in much affliction," yet "with joy of the Holy Ghost." When by the affecting ministry of the apostle "before the eyes of the Galatians, Jesus Christ was evidently set forth crucified among" them; they were "blessed," and "could have plucked out their own eyes, and have given them" to the messenger who brought them such welcome tidings. When Philip went down and "preached Christ in Samaria, there was great joy in that city." And is the nature of the Gospel changed? Is the importance of it diminished? Are the blessings it communicates, and the hopes it inspires, less valuable and necessary?

The Gospel, my brethren, is not a speculation. It is not a matter of idle curiosity. It is not the solution of a problem, or the decision of a point in debate, the knowledge of which can merely affect the judgment. It brings us "good tidings of great joy." It is not only wonderful, but interesting. It is not only "a faithful saying;" but "worthy of all accep-

363

tation." It is "all our salvation;" and it should be "all our desire." It is "our glory and should be "our joy."

There are some who have thus heard the Gospel, and whose condition is described by David in these words: "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." But it is to be feared there are those in this large assembly to whom the intelligence is a thing of nought. Ye make "light of it and go your way, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise." What shall we say to your folly, to your wickedness, to your danger, in refusing the advantages which the Gospel exhibits to your view, and presses upon your acceptance? Are these blessings unsuited to your condition? Are they of no value? Can the world indemnify you for the loss of them? Can you find a substitute for them—in the distress of conscience—in the season of affliction—in the hour of death—and in the day of judgment? Do you not defy the authority of God? Do you not despise the riches of his goodness? Do you not judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life? Are you not unspeakably criminal? Will you go unpunished? "How can you escape if you neglect so great salvation?"

"NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME: NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION." And will it last for ever? Will it last long? How know you but that He who has so often addressed you in vain, is ready "to shut to the door," saying "O that thou hadst known—even thou—at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace—but now—they are hid from thine eyes?"

364

It is time, it is high time, but, blessed be his name, it is not at present too late. O! seek him while he may be found; and call upon him while he is near.

From these solemn reflections, I must advert to the occasion of the subject that gave rise to them. And I hope it will not be deemed improper or unimportant, if I give you a few hints of admonition concerning it.

And first: While you shew your loyalty, beware of impiety. Many, it is to be feared, will sadly evince their regard to the king, by sinning against God; and thus augment our national transgression, which is heavy enough already to sink us beyond the hope of a political resurrection.—You glory in the moral example of your sovereign, “whose life’s a lesson to the land he sways”—why then—resemble him, and do not disgrace the event you commemorate, by indulging in every kind of dissipation and intemperance.

Secondly: “Rejoice with trembling.” You ought to rejoice in the virtuous character, the domestic excellencies, and the mild dominion of our long-spared monarch; but it is not to be denied, that through the awful destinations of Providence, his reign has been peculiarly trying and calamitous. You ought to rejoice in our exemptions and privileges; they are many and they are great, especially when compared with our desert, or the condition of neighbouring nations: but it is not, for any purpose, to be concealed, that we live in “a cloudy and a dark day;” that the complexion of our public affairs is gloomy rather than soothing; and that an impression of humiliation, rather than of exultation should be attempted: or at least that the one should qualify the

365

other. Without this, we may be reminded of the words of Isaiah, on the threatened invasion of Jewry by the Persians: "And in that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: and behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine: let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we shall die. And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of hosts, surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, saith the Lord God of hosts."

Thirdly: Blend prayer with your praises. While you give thanks to the God of our mercies for the long-continued profusion of blessings that has distinguished our national heritage; for our insular situation; for the temperature of our climate; for the fruitfulness of our soil and our seasons; for our admired constitution and code of laws; for our civil and religious freedom; for our numberless deliverances and preservations—while in particular you bless "the God in whose hand our breath is," for extending the reign of our beloved monarch to a period which so very few of his predecessors ever reached: Pray that with "long life he would satisfy him, and shew him his salvation." Pray that he would support and comfort him under the infirmities of years, and the cares of government. Pray that he would "give the king his judgments, and his righteousness unto the king's son." Pray that it may not be said of us as it was of Judea, "There is none to guide her of all the sons whom she has brought forth." Pray that He whose prerogative it is to make great would raise up wise and able ministers, "discerning the times, and knowing what Israel ought to do." Pray that our magis-

366

trates may be "men fearing God and hating covetousness;" that our "officers may be peace, and our exactors righteousness." Pray that dissension may not prevail in our councils, or "a perverse spirit" in our country. Pray, that, as all hearts and all events are under his control, he would open a way, and restore to us the blessedness of peace. Pray that his word may have free course and be glorified. Pray that he would be "merciful unto us, and bless us, and cause his face to shine upon us, that we may be saved." To this needful exercise let a portion of the day be sacred, in the sanctuary, in the family, in the closet.

I only add,

Fourthly: Let liberality accompany your festivity. Stretch out your hand to the poor. Visit the abode of misery. Contribute to the release of some unfortunate debtor. Cause some widow's heart to sing for joy. Let the blind hail a day they are forbidden to see. Let the aged feel themselves young again, and talk of the things they did in the old time, before many of us.* Some—many—ah! how many, eat nothing from day to day but "the bread of sorrows"—Let them taste comfort, and "forget their misery." "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

GOD SAVE THE KING; and let all the people say AMEN.

* Here the preacher had the pleasure to announce that a comfortable dinner would be provided for all the Children of the Sunday School, the Poor of the Church, and the Poor of the Congregation.

THE
IMPORTANCE
OF AN
EVANGELICAL MINISTRY:

A SERMON

DELIVERED AT THE

SETTLEMENT OF THE REV. ARTHUR TIDMAN,
AS PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATION OF PROTESTANT
DISSENTERS,
MEETING IN ENDLESS STREET CHAPEL, SALISBURY,
ON THURSDAY, APRIL 6TH, 1815.

TO THE
REV. ARTHUR TIDMAN,
THE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION UNDER HIS CARE,
AND ALL HIS BRETHREN IN THE MINISTRY,
WHO JOINED SO UNANIMOUSLY AND EARNESTLY IN
REQUESTING THE PUBLICATION,
THIS DISCOURSE IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY
THE AUTHOR.

BATH, APRIL, 1815.

THE IMPORTANCE OF AN EVANGELICAL MINISTRY.

“For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life.”—2 COR. ii. 15, 16.

THE appointment of an order of men to preach is an institution peculiar to Christianity. There was nothing like it in all the heathen world. Their leaders had no wish to inform the common people. Princes and priests were satisfied to take advantage of then-ignorance and superstition. Indeed, they had nothing of importance to communicate. They had not even a perfect code of morals. In what passed among them for virtue, there was no clearness, no certainty, no authority: they had no fixed rule to which they could appeal, no powerful sanctions by which they could enforce.

But “When, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe.” The Redeemer himself came and “preached peace to you that were far off, and to them that were near.” And “when he ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, he gave gifts unto men: and he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the per-

370

fecting 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 of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”

The office, therefore, is of perpetual obligation; and we have been indulged this morning with an encouraging instance of the continuance of it, in the public separation of our young and valued brother to labour among this people, in the word and doctrine.

—Yes, my friends of this church and congregation, “To you is the word of this salvation sent.” “Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which you see, and have not seen them; .and to hear those things which you hear, and have not heard them. But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.” “Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound.” Or, —shall I so soon change my voice, and exclaim— Cursed are the people that know the joyful sound! Cursed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear! Let me at once lay open the feelings of my mind, and tell you, That the privilege, by neglect or perversion, may become a penalty; and that your greatest danger grows by the side of your greatest mercy. I wish, therefore, in this service, not to abolish your pleasure, but to qualify it; not to forbid you to rejoice, but to call upon you to rejoice with trembling; and to record in your, consciences the admonition of the apostle, “Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.”

When Simeon had pressed Heaven to his bosom, and delivered back the anointed babe into his mo-

37¹

ther's arms, he said, "This child is set for the fall and the rising again of many in Israel." And such, in reality, is the pleasing and awful destiny of this young minister. The proceedings of this day, and the relation now subsisting between you, wear an eternal importance, and will be reviewed with joy or anguish for ever. "FOR WE ARE UNTO GOD A SWEET SAVOUR OF CHRIST, IN THEM THAT ARE SAVED, AND IN THEM THAT PERISH: TO THE ONE WE ARE THE SAVOUR OF DEATH UNTO DEATH, AND TO THE OTHER THE SAVOUR OF LIFE UNTO LIFE."

Let us simplify the passage. It contains only two things; or rather, it contains only one thing placed in two points of light. Ministers of the Gospel are A SAVOUR OF CHRIST: this is the first. Under this character they are VARIOUSLY RELATED: this is the second.

I. Ministers of the Gospel are A SAVOUR OF CHRIST.

How the expression is to be understood appears from the preceding words, where the Apostle says, "He maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." It shews us, that the knowledge of Christ is not a dry, speculative, unaffecting thing, but has a value, a richness, an attraction in it, that renders it infinitely delightful. Hence the Apostle says, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all tilings but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." And adds, after all his acquaintance with him, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."

The word savour signifies both odour and relish. It equally takes in what indulges the taste and the

372

smell; and we are called upon to "Taste that the Lord is gracious," and are told that "His name is as ointment poured forth."

This, then, my dear Brother, is the office to which you are called—it is to be a savour of Christ, by diffusing the knowledge of Christ. This you are to make your constant business—this you are to feel your supreme delight. Allow me to mention the way in which you may best subserve this honourable destination. It is by an attention to your PRACTICE, to your CONVERSATION, and to your PREACHING.

First. Be a savour of Christ in your PRACTICE. Paul says to Timothy, "Thou hast fully known" not only "my doctrine," but "manner of life." It was such as became the Gospel, and adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. He could appeal both to his hearers and to his master—"Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you." Allowing for those infirmities which are inseparable from this weak state of flesh and blood, there are modern ministers who could abide the same appeal. An accurate observer of character, now living, once said of the late excellent Cornelius Winter, "I am never in the company of that man without feeling a Paradisaical innocency." This was truly and finely said, yet it does not go far enough. Some of us, in the presence of God, had the unspeakable privilege of being placed beneath his care, and of enjoying, for years, constant and unrestrained intercourse with him. We know the full meaning of the eulogium I have quoted; but we know more—we know that it was impossible to be with him and not feel "a savour of Christ," and not secretly exclaim, Here is a Chris-

373

tian!—How lovely is a Christian!—O that I was a Christian! . He was an image of the Gospel he preached; and those who refused to hear his sermons were constrained to read them, for they were all legibly written in his life. In the neighbourhood in which he lived and died the savour still continues, and will live as long as the memories of those who knew him.

Example is instructive and impressive, even in private life; but how important is it in public stations, where it is more open to observation, and is required to give weight and sanction to useful endeavours! Official piety, unsustained and unenlivened by personal, leaves a man but as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal. I have heard of a minister of whom it was said—When in the pulpit, he preached so well, that it was a pity he ever left it; and when out of it, he lived so ill, that it was a pity he ever entered it. Even angelical preaching, connected with irreligious living, is infinitely more likely to prejudice and injure the cause of Christ than to serve it. “Thou knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? thou that makest thy boast of the

374

law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God?"

How lamentable is it when ministers are proud, and fall into the condemnation of the devil; when they are fierce and contentious, instead of being gentle towards all men; when they are eager to gain titles, and to be called Rabbi, instead of seeking the honour that cometh from God only; when they lord it over God's heritage, and are greedy of filthy lucre, instead of being ensamples to the flock—I need not say, "Thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Right the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." Cultivate, not only the essential but the ornamental parts of the Christian character. Think upon, and pursue, not only whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, but—whatsoever things are lovely, and—whatsoever things are of good report. Let not the commendation you acquire be made up of mere negatives. It is the affliction of the church, when all that can be said of her officers is, that they are not as other men are. Be not only blameless and harmless, but exemplary and impressive, holding forth the word of life. Let your temper and actions betray your intimacies, and lead people to take knowledge of you, that you have been with Jesus. Let the master be seen in the dispositions and conduct of the servant. Let the accurateness of the copy bring to mind the original, and serve to endear *Him*, who pleased not himself; who

375

was meek and lowly in heart; who went about doing good; who mourned with friends; who wept over enemies; and who could say, even of his obedience unto death, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." "Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Secondly, be a savour of Christ in your CONVERSATION. "All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power; to make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom. They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness." Is this to be verified in Christians only? And are ministers to be silent upon a subject, always important, always necessary, unless when they are declaiming in the sanctuary? How many opportunities of an occasional and private nature have they, to speak of "those things which concern the Lord Jesus;" when, though the audience be small, the instruction is more appropriate, and the impression is often more durable!

Will you permit me to remark, that there is room for improvement among us in this article. It is to be feared that there is frequently less serious conversation when some ministers are present than when they are absent. Our forefathers in the sacred office were grave and useful in their social intercourse; and men of God in the pulpit, they wore not buffoons in the parlour. They *laboured*, and we are entered into their labours. Think of their self-denial, their early risings, their strenuous diligence, their long and profound and exhausting applications. See their proficiencies. Look over the

376

catalogue of their works. Take down their quartos and folios. If such men had erred a little on the side of conversational freedom, candour might have derived some excuse from the necessity of unbending their minds, and indulging a flow of spirits in the family, and friendly circle when “’scaped from literary cares.” But few of our young ministers are likely to become martyrs to intellectual exertion. Their reading is often cursory, their preparations superficial, and the time spent in their study inconsiderable. *Tor such*, a great deal of mental relaxation is not surely necessary. To find *them* indulging in lengthened repose in the morning, stretching at length on the sofa, and compelled to have recourse to light and jocular conversation, to relieve *their minds* from the intensity of application, would, if the thing could be viewed abstractedly, create a smile. I am not pleading for dullness; I am no enemy to cheerfulness. I love a touch of fancy, and a stroke of wit, and a well-told anecdote, especially if some profit can be extracted from the entertainment it affords. But I would say to a young minister (here I am happy, my dear Brother, to avow, that I make you the occasion, and not the subject of address)—I would say to a young minister—Do not affect drollery. Attempt not incessantly to excite diversion. Utter nothing that tries the moral feelings of any who hear you. Especially beware of turning into ridicule the imperfections of some of your brethren, who are, perhaps, much worthier than yourself, though not so highly gifted, or so well educated. Delight not to satirize every infirmity of ignorant and illiterate people, before children and servants, who, not accurately distinguishing between the cir-

377

cumstances, and the substance of a thing, may infer you are not very friendly to religion itself. Remember that in moral soil, as well as in the material, some things must, for *a while*, be tolerated for the sake of- others; lest, in plucking up the tares, you root up also the wheat with them—every moment is not the time of harvest. Consider it, not as a commendation, but rather as a censure, to be celebrated for oddity and merriment. Be not the monkey and the fiddle of the' company. Remember, there is such a text, if you can never dare to preach from it, as "Foolish talking and jesting which is not convenient."

Let nothing degrade you into the trifler. Support in private the reputation you gain in public. Maintain cheerfulness without levity, and ease without familiarity. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good, to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. Take notice of seasons, of events, of the rumours of the day, of the circumstances of the place, to introduce the one thing needful; and resolve, that wherever you are found, and have opportunity to be heard. *He* shall not be forgotten, who died for you and rose again. Indeed, if the word of Christ dwells in you richly in all wisdom, and you have an affluence of Christian experience as well as knowledge, a remark which you will often apply to your people as a holy criterion of their state, will be exemplified in yourself, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Your ordinary discourse will not only correspond with your office, but co-operate with it: the social companion will be an assistant preacher to the pastor; and, like Paul, you will not only teach Jesus Christ in the temple, but from house to house.

378

Thirdly: Be a savour of CHRIST in your PREACHING. Are there none whose Discourses savour more of Plato, and Seneca, and Socrates, and Xenophon, than of the worthy name by which we are called? Are there none whose Sermons abound with worldly politics, angry controversies, curious criticisms, ingenious remarks, and *merely* moral reflections, rather than with the doctrine of salvation by the cross and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ? If ever He is referred to, is it not in a way of cold reserve, or indirect allusion?

We hear much in our day of Antinomians. Such I am persuaded there are. We frequently meet with those who have grown wanton in evangelical privileges, and use their liberty as a cloak of maliciousness, and not as the servants of God. Of such, we need not be afraid to speak, in scriptural language. They are *ungodly men* that turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness. We ought to shew our disapprobation of those whose sentiments professedly degrade the law of God as a rule of life; treat holiness and good works as no more the evidences and effects of salvation, than the cause of it; and not only deny, but ridicule the reality and progress of a work of grace in the heart. From such withdraw thyself.

But I dare not set down every one as deserving this reproach, who incurs the name. We ought to consider much from whom the charge comes: for it may so happen, that the censured are deemed excessive, because the censurers are themselves defective. And I cannot but fear lest some of our younger and less experienced brethren, in avoiding one extreme, run into another: and from a laudable concern to

379

guard the truths of the Gospel, impoverish them; and feed their flock in such poor and sparing pasture as to tempt them to break bounds, and enter the rank grasses of these pseudo-doctrinalists. Your admonisher this morning mentions this the more readily, because he remembers a time when he erred a little in this direction himself; and he is not ashamed to confess that there are, of his earlier sermons, such as he could not conscientiously preach again; not because they were not consistent with the "Truth as it is in Jesus," or did not even imply it, but because, according to his present views, they did not fully express it, and sufficiently make manifest the savour of his knowledge.

A young divine, says Manton, one day asked an old Christian, "What shall I preach?" He received for answer, "Preach Christ." "O, I have preached him," says he, "already." "Why then," added the sage, "preach him again: preach him always: and preach him only." This is advice which, however lightly some may treat it now, all these worthies would have sanctioned, whose works praise them in the gate. The time would fail me to tell of Leighton, and Hall, and Owen, and Baxter, and Reynolds, and Howe, and Charnock, and Polhill, and Bates, and Watts, and Doddridge, and numbers more, who were for nothing more remarkable than a rich, full, and consistent display of the Lord Jesus. They proclaimed him in the dignity of his person; in the glory of his character; in the condescension of his grace; in the wonders of his love; in the efficacy of his sufferings; in the prevalency of his intercession; in his ability to save to the uttermost them that come

380

unto God by him. They preached him as the only foundation of a sinner's hope; as the Lord our righteousness and strength; as the consolation of Israel, in whom they were to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: and, to use the expression of one of them, "Christ was the diamond in the bosom of all their sermons." And what was the practice of the Apostles? "*We* preach Christ crucified," says Paul, "to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the wisdom of God and the power of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." "I determined not to know anything among- you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified." "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Accordingly, he viewed and explained, and improved every thing in relation to *him*. If he spake of the glory of God, he represented it as "shining forth in the face of Jesus Christ." If he mentioned the promises of God, they were all "yea and amen in Christ Jesus." If he adverted to the duties and difficulties of the Christian life, he said, "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." He could not enforce even conjugal tenderness without a reference the most affecting: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." May we all follow an example so worthy of imitation; and whenever in our work we pause for reflection, may our consciences, bearing witness in the Holy Ghost, enable *us* also to say.

381

“Whom *we* preach, warning every man and teaching every man, in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

But, that you may be a savour of Christ, there must be a regard to the *manner*, as well as the *subject* of your preaching. The poet, in speaking of government, has said,

“Whate’er is best administer’d is best.”

The same may be nearly said with regard to sermons. There is not such a marvellous difference between the thoughts and arrangements of one preacher and another as some imagine. But who has not been struck with the difference of the impression and effect? One man shall speak; and how dry, and sapless, and uninteresting is he! Let another deliver the very same thing, and there is a savour that gives them freshness: the things seem perfectly new. To know how to acquire this, is a secret which I hope you are acquainted with. It is to live out of the spirit of the world, and to walk much with God alone; it is to keep conscience alive and awake; it is to maintain a deep sense of the value of the soul and the importance of eternal salvation; it is to keep the mind in the things of God by habitual meditation; it is to cherish the devotional affections; it is to speak from the heart, to speak experimentally, to speak under a mixture of solemn and tender feelings; it is to speak with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, in answer to strong cryings and tears.—When such a man, and under such an influence, engages in his work, he enters his congregation, as Aaron went into the tabernacle to minister, when the precious ointment had been poured upon his head, and ran down to the skirts of his garment—he is found, before he

382

is either seen or heard: and we think of our Christian bard—

“When one that holds communion with the skies
Has fill'd his urn, where these pure waters rise,
And once more mingles with us meaner things,
'Tis e'en as if an angel shook his wings.
Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide,
That tells us whence *his* treasures are supplied.
So when a ship well freighted with the stores
The sun matures on India's spicy shores,
Has dropp'd her anchor, and her canvas furl'd,
In some safe haven of our western world;
'Twere vain inquiring to what port she *went*,
The *gale* informs us, laden with the *scent*.”

Thus ministers of the Gospel are a SAVOUR OF CHRIST. But—

II. In this character they are VARIOUSLY RELATED. We may consider them as sustaining a three-fold relation. We may view them with regard to GOD: with regard to THOSE THAT PERISH; and with regard to THOSE THAT ARE SAVED. To God, they are A SWEET savour. To them that perish, they are a DEADLY savour. To them that are saved, they are a VITAL savour. “We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved and in them that perish: to the one, we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other, we are the savour of life unto life!” Let us reverse this order, and consider ministers.

First, In relation to them that are “saved.” To these they are the savour of LIFE UNTO LIFE. They are not only the instruments of quickening them, when dead in trespasses and sins, but of sustaining and increasing every vital principle, when produced. For such ministers appear in the name, and officiate on the behalf, of Him who said, “I am come that they

383

might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

Christianity in the soul is a progressive thing; and the dispensation of the word is the principal means by which believers “go from strength to strength and are “renewed day by day and are “changed from glory into glory.”

The grand subject of the ministry enlivens them in duty, revives them in depression, and supports them under all their trials. Dr. Watts has beautifully expressed it—

“The vital savour of his name
Restores their fainting breath”—

—When pressed down by a recollection of past guilt, and a sense of present unworthiness and imperfections, they are only kept from utter despondency by hearing that “we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.” The pollution of their holy things would deprive them of all peace and confidence in approaching God: but they “have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh.”

Harassed with the cares and worn down with the toils of the day, the poor labourer repairs in the evening to the house of God (and there ought to be a week-day lecture in every place, especially for the sake of those whose hearing is their chief religious resource)—he repairs to the sanctuary: and what can *refresh* him there? What can *interest* him? What can make him, for a moment, forget the low scenes of earth, and feel a new creature? What can make

384

him return home with delight, and enter again into his allotted course with cheerful resignation? It is "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though he was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich." Take the Christian in circumstances still more trying; and behold him after a week of penury, hardship, and trouble, hailing an *evangelical* Sabbath:

"Though pinch'd with poverty at home,
With sharp afflictions daily fed,
It makes amends if they can come
To God's own house for heavenly bread.

How happy, if their lot is cast
Where stately the *Gospel* sounds!
The word is honey to their taste,
Renews their strength, and heals their wounds.

With joy they hasten to the place
Where they their Saviour oft have met,
And while they feast upon his *grace*,
Their burdens and their griefs forget."

And, long as this quotation is, I cannot help adding;—

"This happy lot, my Friends, is ours;
May we the privilege improve.
And find these consecrated hours
Sweet earnest of the joys above."

—It is thus that "Christians are strengthened with all might by his Spirit in the inner man that "Christ dwells in their hearts by faith that, "being rooted and grounded in love, they are able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height: and to know the *love of Christ*, which passeth knowledge," and are "filled with *all the fulness of God*." Thus, they are led

385

from one degree of divine life to another; from the life of religious infancy, to the life of manhood; from the life of desire, to that of possession; from the life of hope, to that of the full assurance of hope; from the life of grace, to the life of glory.

For, at length, the minister is called to attend his charge in their last remove. The honour of religion, and the encouragement of others, as well as their own comfort, make him long, that those whom he has watched through this vale of tears may finish their course with joy! And what can make the saints joyful in glory, and enable them to shout aloud upon their dying bed? Does he draw a comparison in their favour between them and others? Does he tell them how inconsiderable their failings have been, if set against their excellences? Does he call upon them to look back upon a well-spent life?

This would only drive them to despair. Indeed, they are too well taught of God to accept of such consolation, if it were offered. If they feel a confidence, it is as humble as it is holy: it is derived from another source—"I cannot say I have so lived," said Marshall when dying, "that I am not afraid to die; but I can say, I have so learned Christ that I am not afraid to die."

And, this is the subject to which the minister of the Gospel turns the believer's attention amidst the decays of nature; and with which he animates him when "his heart and his flesh faileth." He does not run with the crucifix in his hand; but he shews him the cross. He cries, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He makes "mention of his righteousness only;" he talks of a Saviour who "died" that we may "sleep;" who has

386

undertaken to answer for us in the great day of account; who is gone before “to prepare a place for us,” and is engaged to “come again and receive us unto himself; that where he is, there we may be also.”

This is the glory that irradiates the dark valley. This is the odour that sheds a fragrance in a dying room, and in a dying soul. This is the sound, o Christian, that will answer the prayer you have so often sung—

“And may the music of his name
Refresh my soul in death.”

Let us consider ministers,

Secondly, In relation to them that “perish.” To these they are the savour of DEATH UNTO DEATH. The meaning is, that they not only find them dead, but leave them so—yea, leave them—more so. They are the occasion of adding to their spiritual death; and of enhancing their eternal.

Let me open a little this awful part of our subject. It would be easy to prove that punishment will be answerable to guilt: but guilt is aggravated by advantages neglected or abused. Upon this principle the Jews were more criminal than the surrounding nations, and therefore were more severely threatened: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore you will I punish.” “To him,” says the Apostle James, “that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin which means, not only or principally, that omission of duty is a sin, as really as positive transgression; but that the guilt of the one, as well as the other, is increased by knowledge. “If,” says our Saviour, “I had not come and spoken among them, they had not had sin *i. e.* com-

387

paratively; "but now have they no cloak for their sin *i.e.* they are left stripped of all excuse. "The servant which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." And again: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

Whom should the conclusion to be drawn from these premises, alarm?—If—as an old writer says—there are many mansions in hell as well as in heaven, "What shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?" You talk of Heathens: but they never heard the name of the Saviour, and, having had no testimony to reject, come not within the reach of the tremendous sentence, "He that believeth not shall be damned." Leave them, and think of yourselves. You have often heard with a shivering horror of the fate of Sodom. The inhabitants were "sinners above all men before the Lord:" and he would not suffer them to be buried, lest their wretched bodies should pollute the rottenness of the grave, but consumed them; and "They are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." But, perhaps, my dear Brother, some of your hearers may hereafter exclaim, O that I had been born in Sodom! O that I had perished three thousand years earlier! O that by a profusion of Divine, but unsanctified privileges, I had never drawn upon myself a far

388

more intolerable doom! Is this talking extravagance; or preaching up imaginary terror? What was the language of our Lord himself, to those that enjoyed, hut misimproved his preaching? "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be cast down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee."

Did you never observe the words of the Apostle to the Hebrews? He is not content to ask, "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" But mark his language—"He that despised Moses' law died *without mercy*:" observe the expression—*without mercy*! "under two or three witnesses: of how much *sorer* punishment" (what, sorer than dying without mercy!) "of how *much* sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace?" You have read of the devil and his angels. Did Christ take upon him their nature? Did he die for them? Was pardon, was holiness ever offered to them? No: and therefore they have never been rejected—by them. No: this super-Satanic guilt lies only at your door. Perhaps, my dear Brother, some of your hearers may hereafter exclaim, O that I had been a fallen angel! O that, before the creation of the world, I had been cast down to hell, and confined in chains of darkness against the judgment of the great day! Any chain had been a blessing that could have kept me from *that* place of

389

worship! Even hell would have proved a privilege had it prevented me from sitting under *that* minister!—

I long to leave this part of my subject; but I must remark, That nothing tends to confirm our faith in the Scriptures more than a comparison of what we see with what we read. How often do we find unholy attendants on the Gospel, after a while, falling into the greatest errors or the vilest crimes: sometimes they become persecutors; and instances are not wanting in which they have ended their wretched days in frenzy or desperation! But where they still retain a decency of character, and do not abandon the means of grace, they grow easy and insensible, and are rarely ever awakened. For what can impress those who have contrived to sit out the contents of the Bible a thousand times over? They are like birds, born and bred in a belfry, which start not, nor move a wing, at sounds which would stun strangers to the place. Some of this hopeless obduracy is, unquestionably, a natural effect; the consequence of long familiarity with divine things, trifling with convictions, and resisting conscience: but there is also a degree of penal judgment in it: for God can as really punish by withholding a salutary and necessary influence as by any positive infliction: and thus fulfil that tremendous declaration repeated no less than four times in the Scripture; “Go unto this people and say. Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: for the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed: lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be con-

390

verted, and I should heal them." But let us consider ministers,

Thirdly, In relation to God, who sends them, and to whom they are reponsible. To Him they are a SWEET SAVOUR OF CHRIST; and a sweet savour of Christ BOTH IN THEM THAT ARE SAVED, AND IN THEM THAT PERISH. He accepts them and delights in them, not only when a subject opens to their minds, but when (unless they have been negligent) it seems impenetrable to their attempt; not only when they preach with fluency and pleasure, but when (unless they have been inattentive to means) they are pained with embarrassment, and ashamed, as they come down, to look their hearers in the face: not only when they add to the church characters the most hopeful; but when, with bleeding hearts, they exclude disorderly members: not only when they approach God at the head of a list of converts, saying, "Behold, the children thou hast given me," but when they retire into their closets and at his feet exclaim, "Lord, who hath believed our report?" If the Physician has been skilful and attentive, he receives his fees as well when the patient dies as when he lives.

Success is desirable. Who loves to toil in vain? Who loves to plant, and water, and see no increase?—And in general, God blesses his servants with some considerable degree of usefulness. But a useful ministry is not necessary, to a valid one. Our Saviour himself preached with very little effect: "I said I have laboured in vain; I have spent my strength for nought and in vain:" "Yet," he adds, "yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God." And so may every minister say, under

391

discouraging appearances. We serve a good master; he does not make us answerable for success: he knows infinitely better than we do, that conversion is his own prerogative, and does not depend upon us. Duty only is ours; and even with regard to this, he allows us to depend upon him for ability to discharge it; and in estimating our services, he admits into the account, not only all we do; but all we try to do, and wish to do, but in which we are hindered; and says, "It was well that it was in thy heart." The language of promise is, "Be thou *faithful* unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." We go further; we are persuaded that there are many cases in which ministers are dearer to God in their disappointments than in their successes. It is pleasant to labour when we succeed; and there is always some danger, lest pride should mix with our pleasure, and, while we acknowledge God to be the author, we should feel some little importance at least, in being the instruments. The trial of principle is to labour *without* success. To bear the burden and heat of the day without murmuring; to abide at our post under every temptation to leave it; to say, "If he is pleased to use me, I shall deem it an honour; but if he refuse me, I have no reason to complain: he has a right to choose his own instruments to be willing to lay a foundation upon which another is to build; or to set well, as another rises, and without envy or regret, to say, "He must increase and I must decrease"—here is the true spirit of a servant—here is real greatness in the sight of the Lord—and such magnanimity shall not lose its reward.

I conclude with two reflections, forcibly derived from our subject.

392

First: WITH WHAT AWFUL IMPRESSIONS SHOULD MINISTERS PREACH! The office of a lawyer is important: he guards our property. The office of a physician is more important: he takes care of our health. But the office of a minister is unspeakably the most important of all, because his concern lies with the soul. The consequences which flow from his labours are the issues of life and death, spiritual life and death, eternal life and death! What feelings should precede, accompany, follow every sermon we deliver! Is there a minister here present, that can reflect for a moment upon the greatness of his work, and not exclaim—and it is the apostle's own inference—“Who is sufficient for these things?”

Secondly: WITH WHAT SOLEMN IMPRESSIONS SHOULD PEOPLE HEAR! Yet, alas! nothing, in common, is so little revered, as preaching. With what a careless and thoughtless air are persons seen entering the house of the Eternal, and leaving it! How seldom do hearers retire, and reflect and pray, before they engage in the service of God—or even after! When do they listen under the word with that fearful devoutness which would necessarily result from such a suggestion as this: “I shall be the better, or worse, for this exercise. It will leave me so much nearer heaven, or hell?”

Many feel a kind of dread at the thought of an improper approach to the table of the Lord, having read, “He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.” But do you never consider that he who *hears* unworthily exposes himself to no less a doom? Every unhallowed attendance on any of the

393

means of grace must issue in your aggravated sin and misery. You dread the removal of the Gospel, and allow that the want of hearing the words of the Lord would be a famine, worse than a famine of bread or of water: but, perhaps, you never reflect, that as the ministry may be withdrawn in wrath, it may also be continued in judgment: that as the loss of the means of salvation is dreadful, the continuance of them is much more so, when they become only the enhancements of guilt and condemnation: you have, perhaps, often prayed against being deprived of the faculty of hearing, but never prayed against losing the grace of hearing—but hearing may prove a greater curse than deafness.

O let me call upon you seriously to consider this with regard to yourselves: and suffer me to ask, What is your prospect, and what is your condition? Remember, First, That the word preached is never universally—some would say—never generally, successful. That, Secondly, it always operates in *some* way, and it is impossible to render it an inefficient principle. It resembles Moses, who slew the Egyptian, and saved the Israelite. It is like the ark, that blessed the house of Obed-edom, and plagued the Philistines. It is an aliment that nourishes, or poisons. It is a medicine that kills, or cures. It is like the planet; sometimes the bright and morning-star, ushering in the day; and sometimes the harbinger of night, drawing on the blackness of darkness for ever. Thirdly, There are but *two* classes of hearers; believers and unbelievers; children of wrath, or heirs of glory. To which of these do you belong? Here are great diversities of talent and condition; here are male and female; old and young:

394

masters and servants; rich and poor; the educated and the illiterate.—But the distinction of our text enters and sees among you all, two divisions only. And what if an angel, next Lord's day, while you are worshipping, was to come down, and make the separation as visible as it is real? Suppose he should place *here*, on the right hand, those to whom the word is a savour of life; and *there*, on the left hand, those to whom it will be the savour of death. With what anxiety would the minister rise, and stand, and look down from this desk, and wait the discrimination! How would the hearts of religious friends and relations break, as they viewed the objects of their regard led away with the rejected! "There goes my brother—my sister—my parent—my child—my husband—my wife!"—What an unequal division! How small the one! How large the other! How different the result from previous conjecture and conviction! Some, who had feared to make a profession of religion, and hesitated to speak of the state of their souls, only lest they should have uttered what they never felt; who, for want of a room to retire in, often took a more distant and solitary walk to the house of God, praying as they went, "Send us help from the sanctuary, and strengthen us out of Zion:" would rank safe and happy: while, joined to the lost, would be found some who had attended the Gospel from their infancy; some, who had often welcomed ministers to their table; perhaps members—perhaps officers of the Church!

But in which of these classes, I address you individually, would you be found? It is not indeed likely that such a discrimination will be made in this world. It does not comport with the wisdom

395

of God's designs. You will therefore continue externally blended for a season. But the awful hour is at hand, when the separation must be made, unerringly made, publicly made, irreversibly made. It is already obvious in the view of God. It is already actually commenced—commenced in the principles and dispositions which govern you, and in the manner in which you hear, and receive the word. Again I ask. To which of these divisions do you belong? It is possible to determine. It is necessary. We press for a decision: and leave conscience to receive your reply.

SENSIBILITY AT THE PALL OP EMINENCE:

A SERMON

PREACHED IN SURREY CHAPEL,

AT THE FUNERAL OF THE

REV. ROWLAND HILL, A.M.

TO THE
RIGHT HON. ROWLAND LORD HILL,
OF ALMARAZ, AND OF HAWKESTONE,
D.C.L., G.C.B., K.T.S., K.M.T., AND K.S.G.,
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF HIS MAJESTY'S FORCES.
&c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

This Sermon, which your Lordship's candour approved in the delivery, and whose chief merit consists in a well-meant endeavour to appreciate the worth, and to improve the death of your eminently pious, and useful, and honoured relation,

IS,

with all the respect due to the high renown which you have so justly acquired, and still more to the excellences of your personal character.

Inscribed,

By your Lordship's most humble and obedient servant.

WILLIAM JAY.

Bath, April 26, 1833.

SENSIBILITY AT THE FALL OF EMINENCE.

"Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen."—Zechariah xi. 2.

NO one can read the Bible without perceiving how much it abounds with metaphor and comparisons. But did you ever, my brethren, consider the cause or the reason of this? The Bible is an Eastern book; and the warm imaginations of the Easterns never suffered them to open their lips without a figure. The Bible is an ancient book; and in proportion as you go back in history and science you will find language the more essentially poetical: all savages are full of imagery. The Bible is also a book written for the service of beings whose minds are embodied, and whose senses are the mediums of their knowledge: they therefore require such modes of representation and address. They require them for four purposes. The first is to shade and soften—This is the case when the subject is dazzling and overpowering. The second is to illustrate—This is the case when the subject is obscure and difficult, and needs the application of something more clear and easy. The third is, to impress the subject more deeply on the mind, and to render it more durable in the remembrance. And the last is, to decorate and delight; for we must be interested in order to be attentive; and we must be pleased in order to be profited—Now comparison renders the subject in-

400

viting and attractive. All love imitation. All are charmed with resemblances. Metaphorical language therefore is like our clothing, which was originally introduced from necessity, but is now used and prized for ornament and pleasure.

Hence we need not wonder that in the Scripture the world is called earth—O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord—that nations and communities are called mountains and hills—“Why leap ye, ye high hills? this is the hill which the Lord desireth to dwell in, yea, the Lord will dwell in it for ever”—and that men are expressed by plants and trees, as in the passage I have read—HOWL, FIR TREE; FOR THE CEDAR IS FALLEN.

We shall occupy none of your time in endeavouring to ascertain to whom these words were addressed, or of whom they are spoken; but shall take occasion from them to call your thoughts this morning to three things.

The first regards *the differences there are among men.*

The second: *Their fall, however distinguished.*

The third: *The sorrow the event demands.* This will serve to verify the remark of Mr. Burke, that it is the law of our nature to feel an interest in the fall of greatness; and afford me an opportunity to notice, with all the veneration and affection due to his memory, one of the most extraordinary, and excellent, and useful characters of our own age—or of any other. The

First sentiment we have to exemplify is expressed by the prophet Isaiah in a similar comparison—Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an ever-

401

lasting sign that shall not be cut off." He means that under the Divine agency persons shall possess new qualities and excellences, and be as superior to those that went before them as these trees are superior to the refuse of the forest. But if the fir be above the thorn, the cedar surpasses the fir—"Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen." The cedar is always celebrated in the Scripture. It often grew very lofty; and also very large. It was sometimes near forty feet in the girth. The wood was fragrant, and smooth, and solid, and incorruptible. Hence it was much appropriated to the formation of statues designed for duration. It was used abundantly in Solomon's palace; and in the temple of God. To a piece of cedar wood were fastened the wool and the hyssop that made the switch to sprinkle the leper from his uncleanness. David honoured it by saying the righteous "shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon and under this image Ezekiel alludes to a greater than Zerubbabel, even to Him who is fairer than the children of men: "I will also take of the highest branch of the high cedar, and will set it; I will crop off from the top of his young twigs a tender one, and will plant it upon an high mountain and eminent: in the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing; in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell." Thus you see the cedar is always used in the Scripture to designate pre-eminence.

Let us now proceed. Persons are fond of uniformity, but God, whose thoughts and ways are as much above ours as the heavens are above the earth, is always producing variety. Men often talk of equality, but where is it to be found? You have just

402

heard in the sublime chapter which has been read, that "All flesh, is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory." And if we ascend above the stars, how is it there? There we find "cherubim," and "seraphim," "angels" and "archangels," "thrones and dominions, principalities and powers." Need we be surprised therefore to find differences among men? Some are fir trees, others are cedars.

How superior are some men to others in civil rank and station! These outward distinctions indeed have always been overrated, but they are not to be overlooked. The welfare of society requires them: God has appointed them: the Scripture supports them. We are enjoined to "render to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour." We are forbidden to "despise dominion" and "speak evil of dignities."

How superior are some men to others in corporeal qualities; such as stature, speed, strength, gracefulness! These are indeed the lowest *personal* distinctions of man; and in some of these attributes he is excelled even by the animals themselves. "Beauty is deceitful, and favour is vain"—

"Were I so tall to reach the Pole,
And grasp the ocean with a span,
I must be measur'd by my soul;
The mind 's the standard of the man."

403

Yet the body is the workmanship of God, and we are fearfully and wonderfully made!

How superior are some men to others in mental endowments; in perception, in comprehensiveness, in judgment, in reasoning, in taste! It is absurd to deny that there are original differences even in mind, however unable we may be to explain the mystery. It must also be admitted that there are causes operating subsequentially to birth, which have their influence, and in many cases the chief influence, in elevating, intellectual faculty.

How superior are some men to others in acquired knowledge; whether it consists in languages, jurisprudence, commerce, or any of the sciences and arts! All have not the same opportunities for improvement, and all do not feel the same kind or pressure of motive to stimulate application.

How superior are some men to others in moral and spiritual dispositions! These—would God they were!—these are not always associated with great talents and literature; but they are far above them all, at least in the estimation of *Him* whose judgment is always according to truth. “To that man,” says He, “will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembleth at my word.” “The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in them that hope’ in his mercy.” “The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour.” We honour the HEUO in a lawful cause; but “he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city.” According to the Saviour, he that resembles a little child most is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. But

404

there are differences even here. The good ground itself yields in some places thirty, in some sixty, and in some an hundred. Some are weak in the faith, others have the full assurance of faith. Some are timid, others are bold as a lion. Some have life, but others have it more abundantly. Finally—

How superior are some men to others in usefulness! All usefulness is respectable; and we owe much to many of our fellow-creatures who have prepared the materials for so many of our enjoyments. They have laboured, and we have entered into their labours. We hail the patriots who have struggled to free our neck from the galling link of oppression. We bless the philanthropists who have toiled year after year to emancipate from their vassalage multitudes of their fellow-men, the work of God, and the purchase of the Redeemer's blood—and have not laboured in vain. We bless every hand that is stretched out to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked—But if there be “joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,” “they that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.” We sometimes hope that no Christian goes to heaven alone, but is honoured to take at least some one soul saved from death, along with him. And what preacher of the truth as it is in Jesus is there that has not a few fruits of his ministry, who, though he may not be informed of them here, will be his joy and crown in the day of the Lord Jesus? But think of some! Think of a Luther! a Wesley! a Whitfield! a Hill! O what a tax, not only of admiration, but gratitude, have some individuals levied on countries, and generations! Some also

405

have not only been preachers, but writers; and their works having obtained large acceptance and circulation are giving them a kind of ubiquity in doing good; and they are blessing thousands in numberless places at the same time—and may continue to instruct and edify to the end of the world.

Having remarked the differences there are among men, let us.

Secondly, observe their *fall*, however distinguished they may be; “Howl, fir tree; for the cedar is FALLEN.” There is a two-fold fall to which the best and greatest are liable.

There is a *moral* fall to which they are exposed while in this weak state of flesh and blood. However eminent in their attainments, they are never beyond the reach of danger as long as they remain in a world that lieth in wickedness, and retain within them any remains of an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” There is nothing more awfully affecting than to see a person who has been for years famous in the Church of God, and has drawn so many eyes towards him, falling into error, or overcome by temptation, so as to disgrace his character, prove a stumbling-block to the weak, and a grief to the strong, and to cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of, and the worthy name by which we are called to be blasphemed. “It is,” as Isaiah says, “as when a standard-bearer fainteth,” and the party to which he was attached, no longer led and animated by him, flee and disperse. On the other hand, it always affords us relief, when we hear of the removal of an eminent character, to know that

406

he stood in the evil day, and having done all stood, and was not only sincere, but without offence until the day of Christ. When such a man finishes his course, we surround his death, not indeed without weeping, as we shall presently see, but with songs of deliverance. Each is ready to exclaim, "Well, thou hast gained the day—thy warfare is accomplished—thou hast nobly fought, and conquered." We rejoice, as the Scripture says, that no man took his crown—he left it uninjured, unsullied—and we lay the moral coronet upon his coffin, and shout the plaudit he has already heard in another world, "Servant of God, well done"—"Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

This reminds us of another fall, and with which we are familiar this morning; a *mortal* fall, or a falling by death. Either by accident, or disease, or infirmity, or age, the great die as well as others. It might indeed have been imagined, that there would be an exception in their favour, and that as their Saviour died for them, they would be exempted from dying themselves. It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that he died for them; and by dying for them he hath abolished death, now as to its sting, and hereafter as to its state. Yea, by dying for them he has turned the curse into a blessing, so that the righteous have hope in their death, and blessed are the dead that die in the Lord. But in this war there is no discharge. Here the rich and the poor, the small and the great, meet together. "My servant Moses," says God, "is dead." There is no entering glory but through the grave. There is no being clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. In order to be clothed, we must first be found naked. Chris-

407

tians and ministers therefore, however elevated, fall tunder the same stroke of mortality with others.

Yea, they sometimes die before others; the cedar falls while the fir tree survives. This is not indeed always the case—witness the death of your venerable pastor. If it were true, as an old writer remarks, that “every minister removed from his people before he is threescore, is removed in judgment,” you have the satisfaction to know that your beloved minister was not taken from you prematurely, but has come to his grave like a shock of corn, fully ripe in his season. But in how many providences has the Lord tried and perplexed the faith of the bereaved! For not only, as Young says, does death love a shining mark, but often strikes down the most important and useful individuals at a period when, in the estimation of reason, they can least be spared. Josiah, and our Edward the Sixth, who likened each other in many things, were princes of great promise, and were much called for by the exigencies ‘of the time; but these flowers, before they were fully blown, were cut down and withered. And if we turn from the State to the Church, and come nearer ourselves, not only have some of our ministers been removed in advanced age, but many also have been taken away in the midst of their days, and of their greatest usefulness. The late excellent Dr. Davis, when informed by the preacher that Dr. Williams, who had been his illustrious pupil, was dead, burst into a flood of tears, and said, with great emphasis, “I am almost ashamed to be seen alive—Why am I detained here an unprofitable servant or a mere cumberer of the ground—when so many great and good men are called away?”—This leads us.

408

Thirdly, to the *sorrow* such an event demands: "HOWL, fir tree; for the cedar is fallen." We shall here say nothing of that distress into which people are thrown by their evil and disorderly passions. There Ahab, king of Israel, falls sick and takes to his bed, because a faithful peasant will not surrender to him his little garden of herbs. There Haman comes home, with all his honours thick upon him, and relates his greatness to his wife, but adds, "Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the King's gate." Here is one perpetually sour, because all will not yield to his fancy or humour. Another resolves to be a stranger to pleasure till he has acquired, and he does not know he ever shall require, such a fortune. A third pines away with envy, because a rival has gained the office he had emulated. All this, as the Apostle says, "is the sorrow of the world, that worketh death." I should be ashamed to enlarge upon such distress as this; it would be wholly unbecoming the place and the occasion. But there *is* a sorrow that demands respect. It is the sorrow derived from the death of eminent men; and though this sorrow is not exclusively confined to *their* removal, it is always enhanced by it. We give this sorrow four characters.

The first we call *sympathetic*. Sympathy is one of those hard words which, the more we examine, the more we are at a loss to explain. But we know the fact—we know that God has placed something within us receptive of a counter-feeling to that which we witness in another. The mother hears her infant cry, and instantly she melts, and wipes her hands out of any business in which she was engaged, and darts to

409

its relief. You see a man in the water; you sink as he sinks, you rise as he rises, and you seem as glad as he to be brought on shore. This is nature, and nothing else; yet we see much of the wisdom and goodness of God in it: for there are many persons destitute of all sense of religion who are governed by this principle, in a thousand instances beneficial to the interests of society. They are affected when they behold an object of distress, and are induced to relieve in order to ease themselves of their own sensations. But nothing awakens this sympathy so much as dying scenes. It is said many of the Jews went to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Now, suppose one of these attendants arriving at the farm-house just after the mournful occurrence had taken place. He sees the gate open—the cattle going astray—every thing betokens confusion and distress. He enters the dwelling, and finds the servants in different places sobbing over a master who had behaved like a father to them. He is then introduced to the sisters, with dishevelled hair and negligent attire, sitting near, and viewing through the briny flood their deceased brother. At length he approaches his friend himself, with whom he had frequently taken sweet counsel, and gone to the house of God in company, now pale and motionless—and touches with the back of his fingers the cold cheek of death. Why, would it have been possible for him not to weep?—Is this religion? No. Is it virtue? No, no more than hunger is religion, or sleep virtue. It arises from no motive—it is unavoidable, and is what we call sympathetic sorrow.

The second we name *rational*. All die. The merchants that supply our tables, and the mechanics

410

that furnish our rooms, die. The ploughmen that till our grounds, and the rustics that reap down our fields, die. The soldiers that defend us die. The rulers that govern us die. The scholars that instruct us die—Yes, all die. And can we see the nation stripped of all these, like a tree dropping his leaves in autumn—can we see the country robbed of its members and ornaments—and not feel? Can we view improvement checked, business given up, shops closed, and “void” upon the window and the door—can we see the decree continually accomplishing, “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return”—and not sigh—sigh even for ourselves? Here, alas! we meet with cause for wonder, and are led to conclude that if man be a rational creature, it is more by his possessing reason than by exercising it. What was the reflection in the days of Job? “They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it.” And how is it with you? You attend your departing connexions—you close their eyes—you dress them in the attire of death—you lay them in their coffin—you follow them to the dust, and leave them in the grave—you return home eager to hear their bequests—you gain their effects—you fill their places. And is this *all*? It *is* all with many. But reason would say, “If all die, why then I must die. If the grave, to which my friend is carried, is the house appointed for all living, I also must occupy that long home. If he has gone the way of all the earth, I must follow him. His lovely voice will be heard no more; mine also will be soon silenced for ever. Can I think upon myself and believe all this? Can I witness my sickness in his sickness; my dying sweat in his dying sweat; my mingling

411

with corruption and worms in his interment—and not say, ‘So teach us to number our days that we may apply our heart unto wisdom?’ ”

The third we call *religious*. Insensibility at such deaths is mentioned by Isaiah as a peculiar mark of the degeneracy of the age: “The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart.” Here the absence of sorrow is *crime*. The reason is obvious. The death of the wise and good is a loss, and a loss that cannot be easily repaired. When a godly man goes, there is less of God left; and if all the godly were withdrawn, who would wish to live here another hour? Our earth would be only a wilderness of thorns and briars—a cage of unclean birds—a lair of evil beasts—an emblem of hell. I know of nothing that tends to wean the heart from the world so much as the thought that all the blessed are gone, or going. O! who has not felt at the death of a man of God the sentiment of Thomas?—I am sure the Preacher has felt, it this morning—“Let us go away that we may die with him.”

Let us weigh matters for a few moments, and see what reason we have to grieve. When he goes, we lose his influence as an *example*. Pair examples of genuine godliness are unspeakably valuable. They often impress more than sermons. They are often like the law to convince of sin, and like the Gospel to lead to Christ. How few of these have we in an evil generation! And can we part with *them*?—We lose his influence as a *benefactor*. He is one of those who are not only blessed, but blessings. Whatever he possesses he considers as a talent, and uses it as steward of the manifold grace of God. Who can enter yonder chamber, and see the widows weeping, and shewing

412

the coats and garments Dorcas made for them while she was yet living, and not weep with them? Who can hear Job saying, "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I made the widow's heart to sing for joy," and not exclaim, how, among the multitudes of the useless and the injurious, can we resign such a fine character as this? We lose his influence as an *intercessor*. The partakers of Divine grace are men of prayer; and they pray, not only for themselves, but for others; and they do not pray in vain. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much; and the success does not depend upon genius or condition: He despiseth not the prayer of the destitute. They have power with God, and can prevail; and, as Porteus observes, though scarcely known of his neighbours, such a suppliant can enter his closet, and, by prayer, move the hand that moves the whole machinery of the state. This anticipates another loss—We lose their influence as *defenders* and *preservers*. To the country they are better than navies and armies. It is the meaning of the exclamation, "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." Ten righteous men would have saved the cities of the plain: and "except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and have been like unto Gomorrah." Let all have their praise; but though the world knoweth them not, it is for the sake of the godly that judgments are prevented or withdrawn; and for their sakes blessings are conferred and continued. Let the statesman, let the warrior have his due, but let us not forget those who, in the records above, are "called the repairers of the breach, the restorers of paths to dwell in."

413

The last kind of sorrow we notice is what we call *unlawful*, and therefore *forbidden*. This arises from the degree, and the circumstances. It might be exemplified various ways; but we are compelled to omit and abbreviate in the illustrations of our subject in order to have time to do some justice to other claims. One instance is mentioned by the Apostle to the Thessalonians when he enjoins them “not to sorrow even as others who have no hope for them that sleep in Jesus.” He refers to the heathen, who had no knowledge of a future state upon which they could rely; and therefore were ignorant of what had become of their friends and relations when they died. They saw then—bodies consumed in the fire, or buried in the earth; but they never expected to see them again; and therefore their parting grief was the howl of endless separation. But, Christians, this is not the case with you. You are not left in darkness or uncertainty with regard to those who have withdrawn from you. You know that they have departed to be with Christ, which is far better; and that while their souls are in joy and felicity, their flesh also rests in hope. Though, therefore, you lay their bodies in the grave, you are sure they will not perish there, but sweetly sleep till the morning of the resurrection, when, waked by the trump of God, they will arise and shake themselves from the dust, and put on their beautiful garments, and arise and meet the Lord in the air, and so will they be for ever with the Lord. Or, to vary the metaphor, what have we been doing a few moments back, when we let down the remains of the aged saint into this vault, but sowing a handful of precious seed in the ground? “It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in

414

dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”

Your mourning would be improper if it were accompanied with murmuring. Instead of charging God foolishly, you are to say, “I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.” You are to remember that when God comes and thus takes away a friend from the house, or a minister from the sanctuary, he comes not as a robber, but as a Proprietor, resuming only what was always his own. The way to be still is to know that he is God.

Your grief would be improper were it to cause you to be ungrateful for your remaining mercies. The intenseness of our sorrow on such an occasion often betrays the idolatry of our hearts, in our inordinate creature attachments and reliances. Our happiness is so bound up in a single life that when this is removed every thing seems removed; and we say in temper, though not in words, “Let Him take all, since he has taken this.” But, however great the bereavement may be, is there nothing left? Is not health left? Is not friendship left? Is not the throne of grace left? Is not the everlasting covenant left? Is not God left?—and are we to overlook all this because our friend Lazarus sleepeth?

And it would be assuredly blameable were it to preclude an attention to the calls of present duty. The Striker in all these cases is the Speaker too; and the Speaker is a Friend and a wonderful Counsellor. It proves his wisdom and kindness to take you aside from the world, and address you in such a silence!

415

and such a solitude! "Hear ye therefore the rod, and him that hath appointed it," Instead of yielding to the absorption of sorrow, and to what every deep sufferer more or less feels, the *indolence* of grief, it becomes you to rouse from the event, and to ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Philip Henry observes, that "weeping must not hinder sowing and the Scripture tells that "blessed are they that sow beside all waters."

So far our reflections have been general. We must now turn to the death which has assembled us together, and to improve which the office-bearers of this church and the friends of the deceased have summoned me here. I have never been accustomed to make apologies; and I shall not begin this morning. I only lament to say, that my indisposition was such when I received the appointment, that I was obliged for awhile to hesitate in complying with it; and that ever since it has rendered application painful, and excitement trying. Otherwise I should not have deemed myself entirely unfit for the service—at least on two accounts. First, because of my high regard for the deceased. And, Secondly, because of my long acquaintance with him. I have known him more than forty-seven years, and have annually aided him forty-six years within these walls. During all that eventful period I have had free access to him in private, and multiplied opportunities to judge of him in public. Indeed never was there a man more open to observation, and never was there a man more qualified to bear it; for he had all the transparency of glass without the brittleness. I have, therefore, one happy advantage on this occasion. My brethren in

416

the ministry well know how embarrassed we sometimes are in our funeral exercises between the wishes and expectations of friends, and the convictions of our own consciences; hence some have declined such engagements altogether. But there is nothing this morning for the preacher to deny, or palliate, or excuse, or explain—the infirmities, inseparable from even sanctified humanity, while here, being excepted.

And this is one of his highest distinctions, that he passed through life with unblemished reputation, and left a character without a single stain. Yet the trial of his principles was unusually long; for he commenced his religious course early, and had, when he finished it, nearly entered his ninetieth year. And it was severe as well as lengthened. He was called to endure a great variety of probations; and especially the perils arising from popular applause, concerning which the wisest of men long ago remarked, “as the fining-pot for silver and the furnace for gold, so is a man to his praise.” The popularity of this exalted character was not comparative, or transient. It was full at first, and it continued to the last. Whenever his name was announced for preaching, the place was always crowded, and a multitude hung upon his Eps. Persons may differ in their views of the worth of popularity; but it can never be overrated as an instrument of usefulness: and they may differ in their opinions of the sources of popularity; but mere novelty and peculiarity will never fully account for a popularity that flourished much more than half a century without decay. Since he emerged into public notice, how many wonderful men (as the phrase is) have been cried up, of whom, after a time, We have heard nothing! They rose suddenly with a

417

rush, and crackled, and sparkled downward, and expired, and paper and stick were only left on the ground. But the departed was not a sky-rocket—his path was “like the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” He was not a meteor—he resembled “the sun when he goeth forth in his strength.”

As there was no declension in his acceptance, so neither was there any cooling in his zeal. His zeal was like the fire on the Jewish altar kindled by the breath of Heaven, and which never went out. He loved his Master; he loved his work. The love of Christ constrained him to live not to himself, but to him that died for him and rose again. Preaching was his very element and delight; and as he wished, so it was; his work and his life nearly closed together.

It is well known to many that our venerable friend was educated at Eton, and Cambridge; and that the design was, that he should exclusively exercise his ministry in the Established Church. Accordingly he was admitted into Deacon's orders, but could obtain from the Bishop no further ordination without a promise of regularity. This he conscientiously refused. I am not called upon to pronounce upon this instance of his conduct, I mean, in connexion with his still avowing the *clerical* profession; nor shall I inquire how far his being an *unbeneficed* clergyman may be supposed to extenuate his offence, if it was one. He was from the beginning a peculiar individual, a perfectly original character; and there are cases that must not be tried by abstract principles, or general rules, but by their own laws and circumstances; and which are so singular and rare, as that

418

there is no probability of their being established as precedents or examples.

But from this determination arose much of the complexion of Mr. Hill's future character; and we are persuaded much of his usefulness too. For now feeling himself free from every trammel, and at full liberty to follow his convictions, he went forth, preaching every where, the Lord working with him, and confirming the word with signs following. Wherever a door was opened, in whatever religious denomination, he readily entered it; and when the door was shut, or the place was too strait for him, he took the field and preached in the open air.

After labouring for some little time in London and a few other parts, he arrived at Bristol. My dear and honoured friend and tutor, Cornelius Winter, of blessed memory, was in Bristol when he first visited that city. I have often heard him expatiate with uncommon interest upon the fact, remarking how delighted he was to attend him from place to place, and saying, with the humility so peculiar to him, that he desired nothing more than to have been his servant. His condition in life, his youth, the sprightliness of his imagination, the earnestness of his address, produced an amazing attention and effect. He preached in the streets, on the quays, and at Kingswood among the colliers. He spread through the several neighbouring counties of Wiltshire, Somersetshire, and especially Gloucestershire. In the latter county many were awakened and truly converted to God; where by his labours, also, several congregations, now large and flourishing, were founded. One of these was established at Wootton-under-Edge. This drew much of his regard. He there built a taber-

419

nacle, and attached to it a dwelling-house, which he always afterwards continued to occupy as the centre of his retreat and excursions when in the country.

Going forth to the Redeemer without the camp, he had of course to bear his reproach, and he rejoiced to bear it. Misrepresentation, and ridicule, and scorn, were plentifully applied by the haters of vital godliness. He frequently met with personal indignities from missives often employed at that period, especially when the service was out of doors. We need not wonder also that he should meet with opposition for a time from some of his own connexions, and be denied those supplies which produced occasional and temporary dependence. But how honourable was this! seeing it was an act of choice, a sacrifice to usefulness, a conformity to Him who became poor, that others through his poverty might become rich.

In 1783 Mr. Hill laid the first stone of this spacious chapel, and opened the place in 1784. Here he always passed the winter half of the year, supplying the pulpit the other months by a succession of assistants. Here the congregation was always vast, and a large Church was soon formed, many of whose members (and I have had opportunity to know them) I have always ranked among the most eminent Christians I ever knew, distinguished by their zeal, spirituality, humility, candour, and, above all, liberality and benevolence.

The subject of his preaching was invariably and uniformly the same. Never was there a preacher who more entirely adhered to the determination to "know nothing save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." He was never higher or lower in his sentiments.

420

Truths were always duly balanced in his mind; and his heart was established with grace. He always blended together doctrine, experience, and practice. He fell into no errors. He embraced no whims. He made no new discoveries in religion. He never supposed any were to *be* made. He never pretended to speak With new tongues, and was never found neglecting his work, to break open the seals, and blow the trumpets, and pour out the vials in the Apocalypse. If he had any particular opinions, though I never heard of his having any, he did not deem it necessary to amuse or distract the religious public with them, but remembered the Apostolic maxim, "Hast thou faith? Have it to thyself before God."

Some may deem this the more remarkable and worthy of notice, as our excellent friend had in his composition a considerable portion of eccentricity. This, however, *never* appeared in the subject-matter of his preaching; but only occasionally in the manner. Into this he was betrayed, not only by the singularity of his genius, but his wish to attract and strike especially the lower orders, whom he thought (and thought truly) were too much overlooked by many modern preachers, both in the Establishment and among the Dissenters.

He certainly did not forget the sanction of Horace with regard to the facetious.* And here (for his excellences will abundantly bear it) I need not be afraid to say, our honoured friend occasionally erred; and I have sometimes known him acknowledge it afterwards. But this exceedingly decreased with growing years and experience. A thousand things, too, of this kind, reported of him, were perfectly

* "Ridendo dicere veram quid vetat?"

421

false. To which, we may add, that, feeling great ardour, and speaking almost perfectly extemporaneous, he could not be always measured and guarded in his imagery and diction. Indeed, with his constant activities and engagements, and preaching commonly every day in the week (and sometimes more than once), he could not be expected to prepare *much* for the pulpit. Yet his best friends and admirers could have wished that he had attended a little more to this prerequisite. A preacher may meditate his sermons well, who neither reads nor even writes them. Men who speak off hand have one advantage: not having anticipated their thoughts, they may feel more of their freshness and liveliness in delivering them—that is, when they are in a good mood, or have a flow of sentiment and language—But how is it when they are in a bad one? and are dry? embarrassed? and miserable? And let not my younger brethren suppose that we are like the Apostles when they were called to appear suddenly before Jewish and heathen tribunals, who were to take no thought—what they should answer, for it should be given them in the same hour what they should speak. Let them remember too that a man who has in prospect the attention of a large audience for an hour should feel it to be a great talent intrusted to him, and be concerned to turn it to the greatest advantage: and this requires not only dependence, but application: not only prayer, but study.

Yet with regard to the *manner* of preaching, it is by no means necessary that all should conform to the same model. “There may be diversities of administration, but the same Spirit working severally in every man as he will.” The excellency of our de-

422

parted, friend's preaching did not consist in the textual, or in any definite arrangement, or unity of design—though he sometimes had a series of thought consecutively pursued through a discourse—but in free, detached, and striking sentiments and sentences, reminding us of the observation of Solomon, “the words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the Master of Assemblies.” He seldom spoke without uttering something sublime and pathetic. Where is the person who ever heard him whose occasional smile was not instantly followed by a tear, like the gleams of sunshine in April by the dropping shower?

He had an uncommon quickness of perception; a kind of intuition in apprehending things to which he never seemed to apply himself. What subject was there upon which he did not seem to be at home, and qualified to speak? He was thoroughly versed in civil and ecclesiastical history, and in casuistical and practical divinity; and as to his knowledge of all the ordinary concerns of life, even down to trade and mechanism, nothing seemed to escape him; and the wonder of all who were familiar with him must have been, when and where and how he had gained, in such a course as his, such a variety and extent of information.

He had also an amazing talent for seizing a powerful thought, and even a profound argument, and bringing it within the reach of popular understanding; and also, by means of some familiar, or shrewd, or striking allusion, furnishing it with a handle to enable hearers to take hold of it and carry it away. In this faculty, he always appeared to me to be unequalled. What a multitude of exemplifications of it might be

423

collected together from his judicious hearers, whether constant or occasional!

There was often a peculiar vehemence in the manner and loudness in the voice of this preacher, especially in the earlier parts of his ministry; but it never was *continuous* through the whole discourse, and which would have proved it to be merely mechanical. Like those of Whitfield, the bursts were occasional, and excited by the energy of feeling at the moment. There was nothing he so much disliked as a tame smoothness of language that easily slid off from the mind and conscience of the hearer; or a mode of address, which, if free from faults (a poor recommendation *alone*), was equally void of excellences. *His* aim, *his* endeavour, was to impress, to excite, to accomplish the grand design of preaching, to turn sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. His expressions were always full of point, and sometimes tinged with quaintness: he employed the most colloquial phrases, and preferred what his illustrious predecessor had called "market language:" and thus, though not exclusively, the "poor had the Gospel preached unto *them*;" and "the *common* people heard him gladly." And of whom was this originally said? The Lord pardon those who would not glory in such a commendation! They who sit still may see little trips in those who walk, and especially in those that run, from which they are free—not because they move better, but do not move at all. The tame-minded may carp at the efforts of genius whose province it is to snatch many a beauty beyond the reach of art, while it sometimes fails in its ventures; and congratulate themselves that they are not chargeable with such failures

424

—but the reason is because they are incapable of such flights. Quarle tells us,

“They that crawl,
Cannot fall.”

It was said of a nonconformist minister who was reflected upon by some of his nicer brethren, that *he* did much more by his wild notes than *they* did with their set music. And who can deny that the success of the deceased was remarkable, and that no modern preacher has perhaps ever had so many seals to his ministry? “He that winneth souls is wise”—where then is found the wisdom of many?

We must not forget to mention, besides the conversion of souls, another species of his usefulness—his excitements to liberality and beneficence. What collections followed his sermons! What immense sums must have been gained by him in the whole course of his long life, for individual and public, sacred and civil charities! Several eleemosynary institutions he established himself, and not only by influencing the generosity of others, but by exerting his own. Indeed benevolence was one of the predominant features of his fine character, and from my knowledge of no few of the members, I am persuaded the attribute pervades the whole family.

Mr. Hill has not distinguished himself much as an author. He published two or three occasional Sermons, and a few detached Journals. His “Aphoristic Observations on the evil Tendency of introducing Theatrical Amusements into Country Towns” are strikingly just and full of humour. But his principal work was two volumes of “Village Dialogues,” written in his own peculiar manner, with a great degree of

425

Bunyan's imagination and tenderness. This work has deservedly passed through a great number of editions, and has charmed and blessed thousands.

In general, the Lord takes his people and ministers from the humbler or middle walks of life; but your Pastor was a man of family, ancient and respectable: and it is not a little surprising how many of the household, for it was large, have been distinguished by genuine piety. Sir Richard Hill, his elder brother, was much known by several publications not only in favour of the doctrines he held, but in promotion of brotherly love and candour, especially between Churchmen and Dissenters who "hold the head." Sir Richard was religious before his brother; and was accessory to his conversion. I have heard him say more than once that his brother Rowland was not awakened by the preaching of the word, but by *his* reading a Sermon of Bishop Beveridge—I lament I did not *ascertain* which of his Sermons it was that Divine grace so signalized; but I have some recollection that it was the Sermon on "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He also furnished me with some instances of his early wit and fervour which time will not allow me to relate.

But the religion thus commenced was not a form of godliness, but the power thereof. It was a divinely vital principle, and from that hour he walked by faith, he went about doing good, and made the end of one good work the beginning of another. When we consider the journeys he took, the sermons he preached, the visits he paid to the sick and dying, how well may we apply to him the Saviour's commendation, "Thou hast laboured and hast not fainted:"

426

“I know thy works, and the last to be more than the first!”

Mr. Hill had survived his wife a few years. She was a Miss Tudway, sister of Clement Tudway, M.P. for Wells. I am sorry, and unable to account for it, that so little notice has been taken of this very excellent female. She was a truly gracious woman, of a very sound understanding, and possessing the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. She was formed for a minister's wife by her prudence, peaceableness, un-talkative temper, and unintermeddling conduct. She was singularly suited to the man she espoused; and our friend's obligations to those properties in her character which tended to qualify the peculiarities of his own, were great, and I have no doubt but he would have been willing to say of her, as Mr. Newton did of his wife, “I never followed her advice but I had reason to approve of it; and I never acted against it but I had cause to repent of it.” It is but just to add, that Mrs. Hill always found his demeanour in relative and private life perfectly correspondent with his character in official and public life.

Under the Divine blessing, a life of temperance, and exertion, and cheerfulness, conduced to secure and perpetuate a high degree of health, so that the deceased was scarcely ever through life laid by from employment. Thus also he reached a fine old age, which it was delightful to look on. “The days of our years,” says Moses, “are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow.” But here was more than the period, without the infirmities: and at last nature was not racked with torment-

427

ing pain, nor the frame worn out with consuming disease; hut the good old patriarch grew a little drowsy towards the evening of a long and laborious day, and having served his generation, fell asleep, and was not, for God took him.

And such a life is better as a testimony than a few dying expressions. These indeed are pleasing and impressive; but our departed friend furnished but little of this kind with regard to his own experience. We insert a few of his last words, with a brief account of the few days preceding his decease, from the Rev. Mr. Weight, who was then assisting him.

“The last sermon he preached was on Sunday, March the 31st. The text, 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8. On the following Tuesday he had engaged to preach to the teachers of the Southwark Sunday School Union; but as he felt unwell, he requested me to commence the service, and deliver a short sermon. He then ascended the pulpit, and addressed the teachers for about ten minutes, with a fervency and kindness unusual even to himself. This brief address greatly exhausted him. After this he never entered the chapel again. On the morning of Good-Friday he complained of great weakness, but would not consent either to my taking the service, or assisting him in it. His text was, as usual, written out for him on a sheet of foolscap paper, and was selected from Heb. x. 4. Before we had finished breakfast he told me he felt too unwell to go into the chapel at all; and requested me therefore to apologize for him to his beloved people. ‘I cannot,’ said he, ‘now do the things that I would. I hope I am not a lazy minister, though I am compelled to be an inactive one.’

“On the evening of that day he exhibited the first

428

symptoms of a confused and wandering mind- These, with his excessive lassitude, alarmed us, and induced the fear that the time of his departure was at hand. Yet, as he was a little relieved on the Saturday, he thought he might be able to preach on the following morning: and, had this been possible, he wished to have addressed the people from the appropriate passage, 1 Peter i. 3.

“On Monday and Tuesday we had the annual meeting of the Sunday School children. He sat at the drawing-room window, and talked as they came in of the delight he had often felt in addressing these little ones, and kindly admonished me to speak plainly and affectionately to them of the Lord Jesus Christ. On the first of these two evenings he also dictated to me the following aphorisms, which he had some intention of printing for the use of the ministers who might supply his pulpit. They will shew not only the activity of his mind only three days before his death, but also the fervent piety that ruled in his heart.

“What is the nature of God, that must ever be the will of God: he who is holy in his nature must be holy in his laws.

“God must ever behold sin with infinite detestation and abhorrence; and he must pronounce the sentence of condemnation on him who commits it.

“As we all have sinned, so we all have come short of the glory of God.

“The law condemns the sinner, and not one jot or tittle of that law can ever fail.

“The law is the letter that killeth as to all expectation of good from ourselves; all hope of salvation by our own works is therefore perfectly fallacious.

429

“The sinner can find no hope but in the full Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we have redemption by his blood, and acceptance through his righteousness.

“We can never desire to say ‘Thy will be done,’ until the kingdom of God is set up in our hearts; and we can possess no assurance that the kingdom of God is within us, unless it produces righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

“Every subject of Christ’s kingdom will naturally be desirous of entire conformity to the holy laws of that government to which he belongs.

“These first principles must be rooted and grounded in the heart of every Gospel minister, or he cannot expect to preach them with power and success. . . r

“He who is thus influenced will preach as with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; he will be animated with a glowing anxiety that his hearers should feel the truths he feels himself.

“He will yearn over souls in the bowels of Jesus Christ, and travail in birth for them until Christ be formed in them the hope of glory.

“No consideration whatsoever, which is not immediately conducive to the introduction of these first principles, should be allowed to influence the mind of a minister of Christ, or to attend him in his sacred work.

“He will not consider his own feelings, but lay himself out for the universal good of the Saviour’s cause—he will spend and be spent for his Redeemer, and will die harnessed as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

“While it is acknowledged that the labourer is worthy of his hire, yet this will be the very last consideration that will influence his devoted mind.’

430

“On Wednesday I enjoyed much conversation with him, especially on the subject of the Gospel ministry. He told me, if he could live over his life again, he would preach the very same truths as those he had been accustomed to deliver. ‘I have to deplore nothing but that I have not preached them with more of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.’ I asked him if he felt his personal interest in Christ? ‘I can see more of the Saviour’s glory than of my interest in him. God is letting me down gently into the grave; and I shall *creep* into heaven.’

“In the evening of Wednesday his mind wandered. He called up his servant, and desired him to read to him. He read the 5th chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and he commented on the 4th and 17th verses. About ten that night he sent for me, to conduct family prayer by his bedside, refusing to rest till I had done so.

“On Thursday, the collection of phlegm in his chest prevented his speaking very audibly; but I could hear him. softly repeating verses of Scripture and hymns—particularly, ‘Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;’ and ‘Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God.’

“About ten o’clock that morning, I repeated to him a verse that had been often on his lips—

‘And when I’m to die,
‘Receive me,’ I ’ll cry;
For Jesus hath lov’d me—I cannot say why:
But this I can find—
We two are so join’d,
He ’ll not live in glory, and leave me behind!’

431

He shewed me that he understood what I was saying, but he could not articulate. And this was the last evidence of sensibility he gave. At half-past five the same day, without a sigh, groan, or struggle, he gently expired.”

Considering the length of his life, the extent of his character, and the multitude of incidents connected with his history, you will readily conclude what difficulty I have found in the selections I have made to form this sketch (for it can be nothing more) of this extraordinary personage. Indeed I have been obliged to omit and abridge what I had intended to deliver: but *this* can be rectified in the published discourse—I say *published*, for it does not depend upon the Preacher whether it shall *be* published—he must do it in his own defence, as indecency and injustice will have a stolen or defective publication for sale in a few hours,—the sale indeed was advertised before the sermon itself was delivered or prepared!

But I was called up to this service, not to eulogize the servant, but to glorify God in him; and to exhort others to follow the deceased even as he also followed Christ.

Well, we have just laid in its place the earthen vessel, that so largely and so long held the heavenly treasure—and what says the providence? Here are present many in the ministry—some who are just beginning, and others who have been longer engaged. But it is not probable, my brethren, that any of us should reach such an advanced age as this man of God, or if we should, that our vigour and powers of action would equal his. Let *us* therefore think of an earlier, appearance before our Master, and pray that we may give up our account with joy, and not with

432

grief. Let us take up the mantle he has dropped, and say, "Where is the God of Elijah?" and O that a double portion of the spirit of the departed may actuate and guide those that remain, that each, more alive and awake than ever, may say, with his Saviour and example, "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh wherein no man can work."

But what shall I say for a few moments to this bereaved congregation? Many of you have not duly valued his labours, for you have not improved them, You have been hearers of his word, but not doers, and therefore are not blessed in your deed—**THERE HE LIES.** Who lies? The preacher once; the witness now. And, oh! what will be his testimony at the great day? Will he not be compelled to say, "For fifty years long, O Lord, I addressed them in thy Name—I called them—I warned them—I encouraged them—I wept over them—but all in vain!"

Oh! that I could say something that should signalize this occasion, and render the death of the saint the life of the sinner! Yet what can *I* say that *he* has not said times without number beneath this roof?—But suppose you had died when he died—would you be now where he now is? And yet you must die—and you know not how soon. Hie when you will, it is not likely that your death will excite the attention his death produces. The world may no more regard your death than the death of a worm or a fly: but it will be of infinite consequence to yourselves; as it will seal up your character, and determine your condition for eternity. How long—have some of you been spared, suspended by the sin-

433

gle thread of life over the bottomless pit! What if any of the numberless accidents or diseases to which you have always been exposed had broken this thread—What, O what had become of you? God saw you were unfit to die, and therefore in his mercy he has left you as yet in the land of hope. He is long-suffering, not willing that you should perish. O let his goodness lead you to repentance! O that you were wise, that you understood this, that you would consider your latter end!

If you do not mean to neglect so great salvation always, but only postpone an attention to the things that belong to your peace, allow me to ask. How *long* do you mean to delay? Till you are paralytic? or till you are apoplectic? or till you are cut off with a stroke? or till you are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin? or till you are given up to strong delusion to believe a lie? And *why* do you delay? Are you not putting off your liberty? your safety? your dignity? your happiness? For happy in your present state you cannot be. "There is no peace, saith my God, unto the wicked." If you pretend to the enjoyment, with what face can you call the professors of religion hypocrites? Who so false as you? We have trodden far enough in these paths ourselves to know that they are not pleasantness and peace—and you know it too. You *know* that you are not strangers to a wish that you had never been born—you *know* that you have often envied the brutes their felicity—you *know* that you still sigh over every success and indulgence, who will shew me any good?—you *know* that the world is vanity and vexation of spirit, that you are moaning through a vale of tears,

434

that the graves are ready for you, and that after death is the judgment.

I should consider humanity the most forlorn and wretched portion of the universe, were it not that Christianity tells us there is hope in Israel concerning this thing, and brings to us the Consolation of Israel to realize it. In him there is not only plentiful redemption, but present happiness. The deceased had it. He enjoyed it in life. He felt it in death. It filled him with all joy and peace in believing. And there are numbers here this morning who can bear their testimony to the same truth. By believing they have entered into rest. They are delivered from the tyranny and rage of those appetites and passions which made them a load to themselves, as well as a curse to those around them. They find his yoke easy, and his burden light. They cast all their care on him who careth for them. They know that he has provided for every condition in which they can be found; that his grace will be sufficient for them in all their duties and trials; that he will guide them with his counsel, and afterwards receive them to glory. They are now inviting and entreating you, by my mouth, to make this affecting occasion the date, I will not say of your seriousness, but of your blessedness—

“Ye, alas! who long have been
Willing slaves of hell and sin,
Now from BLISS no longer rove;
Stop, and taste redeeming love.”

“O taste and see that the Lord is good, BLESSED is the man that trusteth in him.”

But there are others here concerning whom our

435

hope is steadfast and lively. MANY of you have been called by his ministry. MANY also have been nourished up in the words of faith and sound doctrine under his services. You have had for a long period the advantage of his teaching and temper and example combined. How well could he take up the language of the Apostle to his beloved Thessalonians, and say to you—Our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: but, as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts: for neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness: nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the Apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children. So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.” Look back a few days and imagine you heard him from his dying chamber making this appeal: “YE know after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind and with many tears—And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying, both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all

436

men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. 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 which are sanctified.”—He *has*, in fact, thus addressed you—and you are sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that you should see his face no more.

But though he is dead, the Lord liveth; and blessed be your rock, and let the God of your salvation be exalted. His removal has made a void which cannot indeed be easily filled. O Surrey Chapel, concerning which of so many “the Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this, and that man was born there”—thou place of my trembling hut accepted efforts when a youth, and where I have annually laboured till the almond tree blossoms—thou temple of the living God, where candour has always triumphed over all the minor distinctions that divide so many—I feel for thee! But I do not despair.—Here is eminently the cause of God. With Him is the residue of the Spirit. The prayers of your long-honoured Pastor are recorded on high. Seek direction and assistance from the God of all grace. Adhere firmly together. Submit yourselves one to another, in the fear of God. Let no root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled. Maintain the liberal and benevolent character, with regard both to private and public interests, which has so much distinguished and honoured

437

you—AND THE BEAUTY OF THE LORD OUR GOD BE UPON YOU.

And ye who were so attached to him as your friend, and have enjoyed so much communion with him as your spiritual guide, and helper, and comforter, remember, the connexion between you is not broken off, but only suspended; and the suspension cannot be long. A few more waxing and waning moons, and your intercourse will be renewed to infinite advantage, where

Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown.

Mr. Reynolds, of Shrewsbury, after reading Mr. Tong's Memoirs of Mr. Henry, wrote this reflection—"And now, dear saint, farewell. Thy memory is fragrant on earth. Thy works will perpetuate thy fame. Thy spirit is gone to those that are made perfect. I am following after thee, tried, sinning, and sighing. But I have one motive more to quicken me in my course—That I shall meet the loving and beloved, the holy and blessed Henry." Amen.

END OF VOL. VII.