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# S E R M O N S

ON THE

Most USEFUL and IMPORTANT

S U B J E C T S,

ADAPTED TO THE

FAMILY and CLOSET.

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By the Rev. SAMUEL DAVIES, *A.M.*  
Late President of the College at *Princeton in New-Jersey.*

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In THREE VOLUMES.

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V O L. II.

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# C O N T E N T S

O F

## V O L U M E II.

### S E R M O N X.

The mediatorial Kingdom and Glories of  
JESUS CHRIST.

J O H N xviii. 37.

*P*ilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.

Page 1—44

### S E R M O N XI.

Things unseen to be preferred to Things seen.

2 C O R. iv. 18,

*While we 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.*

45—66

iv CONTENTS of VOL. II.

SERMON XII.

The sacred Import of the Christian Name.

A C T S xi. 26.

*And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.* Page 67—91

SERMON XIII.

The Divine Mercy to mourning Penitents.

J E R. XXXI. 18, 19, 20.

*I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke: turn thou me, and I shall be turned; for thou art the LORD my GOD. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still; therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.* 93—126

SERMON XIV.

CHRIST precious to all true Believers.

I P E T. ii. 7.

*Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious.*

127—158

## CONTENTS of VOL. II.

### SERMON XV.

The Danger of Lukewarmness in Religion.

REV. iii. 15, 16.

*I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot :  
I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because  
thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I  
will spue thee out of my mouth. P. 159—183*

### SERMON XVI.

The divine Government the Joy of our World.

PSALM xcvi. 1.

• *The LORD reigneth, let the earth rejoice ; let the  
multitudes of isles be glad thereof. 185—209*

### SERMON XVII.

The Name of God proclaimed by himself.

EXODUS xxxiii. 18, 19.

*And he said, I beseech thee shew me thy glory. And  
he said, I will make all my goodness pass before  
thee—*

with Chap. xxxiv. 6, 7.

*And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed,  
The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gra-  
cious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness  
and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiv-  
ing iniquity and transgression and sin, and that  
will by no means clear the guilty. P. 211—241*

SERMON XVIII.

GOD is Love.

I JOHN iv. 8.

—GOD is love. 243—279

SERMON XIX.

The general Resurrection.

JOHN v. 28, 29.

*The hour is coming in the which all that are in the  
graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth;  
they that have done good, unto the resurrection of  
life; and they that have done evil, unto the resur-  
rection of damnation. 281—312*

SERMON XX.

The universal Judgment.

ACTS xvii. 30, 31.

*And the times of this ignorance GOD winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*

Page 313—357

SERMON XXI.

The one Thing needful.

LUKE X. 41, 42.

*And JESUS answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; BUT ONE THING IS NEEDFUL: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*

359—392

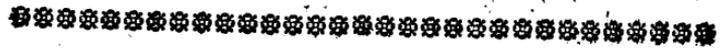


SERMON



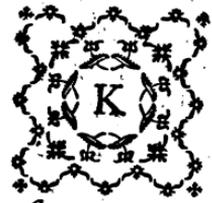
# S E R M O N X.

## The Mediatorial Kingdom and Glories of JESUS CHRIST.



J O H N XVIII. 37.

*Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a King then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.*



**K**INGS and kingdoms are the most majestic sounds in the language of mortals, and have filled the world with noise, confusions, and blood, since mankind first left the state of nature, and formed themselves into societies. The disputes of kingdoms for superiority have set the world in arms from age to age, and destroyed or enslaved a considerable part of the human race, and the contest is not yet decided.

VOL. II,

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Our

Our country has been a region of peace and tranquillity for a long time, but it has not been because the lust of power and riches is extinct in the world, but because we had no near neighbours, whose interest might clash with ours, or who were able to disturb us. The absence of an enemy was our sole defence. But now, when the colonies of the sundry *European* nations on this continent begin to enlarge, and approach towards each other, the scene is changed: now encroachments, depredations, barbarities, and all the terrors of war begin to surround and alarm us. Now our country is invaded and ravaged, and bleeds in a thousand veins. We have already \*, so early in the year, received alarm upon alarm; and we may expect the alarms to grow louder and louder as the season advances.

These commotions and perturbations have had one good effect upon me, and that is, they have carried away my thoughts of late into a serene and peaceful region, a region beyond the reach of confusion and violence; I mean, the kingdom of the Prince of peace. And thither, my brethren, I would also transport your minds this day, as the best refuge from this boisterous world, and the most agreeable mansion for the lovers of peace and tranquillity. I find it advantageous both to you and myself to entertain you with those subjects that have made the  
 deepest

\* This Sermon was preached in Hanover, Virginia, May 9,  
 1756.

deepest impresson upon my own mind. And this is the reason why I choose the present subject. In my text you hear one entering a claim to a kingdom, whom you would conclude, if you regarded only his outward appearance, to be the meanest and vilest of mankind. To hear a powerful prince, at the head of a victorious army, attended with all the royalties of his character, to hear such an one claim the kingdom he had acquired by force of arms, would not be strange. But here the despised *Nazarene*, rejected by his nation, forsaken by his followers, accused as the worst of criminals, standing defenceless at *Pilate's* bar, just about to be condemned and hung on a cross, like a malefactor and a slave, here he speaks in a royal stile, even to his judge, "I am a King: for this purpose was I born; and for this cause came I into the world." Strange language indeed to proceed from his lips in these circumstances! But the truth is, a great, a divine personage is concealed under this disguise; and his kingdom is of such a nature, that his abasement and crucifixion were so far from being a hindrance to it, that they were the only way to acquire it. These sufferings were meritorious, and by these he purchased his subjects, and a right to rule them.

The occasion of these words was this. The unbelieving Jews were determined to put JESUS to death as an impostor. The true reason of their opposition to him was, that he had severely

exposed their hypocrisy, claimed the character of the Messiah, without answering their expectations as a temporal prince, and a mighty conqueror, and introduced a new religion, which superseded the law of *Moses*, in which they had been educated. But this reason they knew would have but little weight with *Pilate* the *Roman* governor, who was an heathen, and had no regard to their religion. They therefore bring a charge of another kind, which they knew would touch the governor very sensibly, and that was, that CHRIST had set himself up as the king of the Jews, which was treason against *Cæsar* the *Roman* emperor, under whose yoke they then were. This was all pretence and artifice. They would now seem to be very loyal to the emperor, and unable to bear with any claims inconsistent with his authority, whereas, in truth, they were impatient of a foreign government, and were watching for any opportunity to shake it off. And had CHRIST been really guilty of the charge they alledged against him, he would have been the more acceptable to them. Had he set himself up as king of the Jews, in opposition to *Cæsar*, and employed his miraculous powers to make good his claim, the whole nation would have welcomed him as their deliverer, and flocked round his standard. But JESUS came not to work a deliverance of this kind, nor to erect such a kingdom as they desired, and therefore they re-  
jected

jected him as an impostor. This charge, however, they bring against him, in order to carry their point with the heathen governor. They knew he was zealous for the honour and interest of *Cæsar* his master, and *Tiberius*, the then *Roman* emperor, was so jealous a prince, and kept so many spies over his governors in all the provinces, that they were obliged to be very circumspect, and shew the strictest regard for his rights, in order to escape degradation, or a severer punishment. It was this that determined *Pilate*, in the struggle with his conscience, to condemn the innocent *JESUS*. He was afraid the Jews would inform against him, as dismissing one that set up as the rival of *Cæsar*, and the consequence of this he well knew. The Jews were sensible of this, and therefore they insist upon this charge, and at length plainly tell him, "If thou let this man go, thou art not *Cæsar's* friend." *Pilate* therefore, who cared but little what innovations *CHRIST* should introduce into the Jewish religion, thought proper to inquire into this matter, and asks him, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" dost thou indeed claim such a character, which may interfere with *Cæsar's* government? *JESUS* replies, "My kingdom is not of this world;" as much as to say, "I do not deny that I claim a kingdom, but it is of such a nature that it need give no alarm to the kings of the earth. Their kingdoms are of this world, but mine

6      *The mediatorial Kingdom and*      Serm. 10.

“ is spiritual and divine \*, and therefore can-  
 “ not interfere with theirs. If my kingdom  
 “ were of this world, like theirs, I would take  
 “ the same methods with them to obtain and  
 “ secure it; my servants would fight for me,  
 “ that I should not be delivered to the Jews;  
 “ but now, you see, I use no such means for  
 “ my defence, or to raise me to my kingdom:  
 “ and therefore you may be assured, my king-  
 “ dom is not from hence, and can give the  
 “ *Roman* emperor no umbrage for suspicion, or  
 “ uneasiness.” *Pilate* answers to this purpose,  
 Thou dost, however, speak of a *kingdom*; and  
 “ art thou a *king* then?” dost thou in any sense  
 claim that character? The poor prisoner bold-  
 ly replies, “ Thou sayest that I am a king;” that  
 is, “ Thou hast struck upon the truth: I am  
 “ indeed a king in a certain sense, and nothing  
 “ shall constrain me to renounce the title.” “ To  
 “ this end was I born, and for this cause came  
 “ I into the world, that I should bear witness  
 “ to the truth,” “ particularly to this truth,  
 “ which now looks so unlikely, namely, that I  
 “ am really a king. I was *born* to a kingdom  
 “ and a crown, and came into the world to take  
 “ possession

\* *Domitian*, the *Roman* emperor, being apprehensive that  
 CHRIST'S earthly relations might claim a kingdom in his right,  
 inquired of them concerning the nature of his kingdom, and when  
 and where it should be set up. They replied, “ It was not earth-  
 “ ly, but heavenly and angelical, and to be set up at the end of  
 “ the world.” — Οὐ κοσμικὴ μὲν εἶδε ἰσχυροῦ, ἀθανάτου δὲ καὶ ἀγλή-  
 ρου καὶ πρυχάτου ἐπὶ συνίλειαν τῷ αἰῶνι γινωσκόμενον. EUSEB. Eccl.  
 Hist. lib. iii. cap. 20.

“possession of my right.” This is that good confession which St *Paul* tells us (*a*) our Lord witnessed before *Pontius Pilate*. Neither the hopes of deliverance, nor the terrors of death could cause him to retract it, or renounce his claim.

In prosecuting this subject I intend only to inquire into the nature and properties of the kingdom of CHRIST. And in order to render my discourse the more familiar, and to adapt it to the present state of our country, I shall consider this kingdom in contrast with the kingdoms of the earth, with which we are better acquainted.

The scriptures represent the Lord JESUS under a great variety of characters, which, tho’ insufficient fully to represent him, yet in conjunction assist us to form such exalted ideas of this great personage, as mortals can reach. He is a *Surety*, that undertook and paid the dreadful debt of obedience and suffering, which sinners owed to the divine justice and law. He is a *Priest*, a great *High-Priest*, that once offered himself as a sacrifice for sin, and now dwells in his native heaven at his Father’s right hand, as the advocate and intercessor of his people. He is a *Prophet*, who teaches his church in all ages by his word and Spirit. He is the supreme and universal *Judge*, to whom men and angels are accountable; and his name is JESUS, a Saviour, because he saves his people from their sins. Under these august and endearing characters he is often represented. But there is one character

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(*a*) 2 Tim. vi. 13.

ter under which he is uniformly represented, both in the Old and New Testament, and that is that of a KING, a great KING, invested with universal authority. And upon his appearance in the flesh, all nature, and especially the gospel church, is represented as placed under him, as his KINGDOM. Under this idea the Jews were taught by their prophets to look for him, and it was their understanding these predictions of some illustrious king that should rise from the house of *David*, in a literal and carnal sense, that occasioned their unhappy prejudices concerning the Messiah, as a secular prince and conqueror. Under this idea the Lord JESUS represented himself while upon earth, and under this idea he was published to the world by his apostles. The greatest kings of the Jewish nation, particularly *David* and *Solomon*, were types of him; and many things are primarily applied to them, which have their compleat and final accomplishment in him alone. It is to him ultimately we are to apply the second psalm, "I have set my King, says JEHOVAH, upon my holy hill of *Zion*. Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for thy possession (b)." If we read the seventy second psalm we shall easily perceive that one greater than *Solomon* is there. "In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. All kings

(b) Psalm ii. 6, 8.

" kings shall fall down before him ; all nations  
 " shall serve him. His name shall continue for  
 " ever ; his name shall endure as long as the  
 " sun : and men shall be blessed in him ; and  
 " all nations shall call him blessed (c)." The  
 hundred and tenth psalm is throughout a cele-  
 bration of the kingly and priestly office of  
 CHRIST united : " The Lord, says *David*, said  
 " unto my Lord," unto that divine person who  
 is my Lord, and will also be my Son, " Sit thou  
 " at my right hand," in the highest honour and  
 authority, " until I make thine enemies thy  
 " footstool. — Rule thou in the midst of thine  
 " enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the  
 " day of thy power," and submit to thee in  
 crowds as numerous as the drops of morning  
 dew (d). The evangelical prophet *Isaiab* is of-  
 ten transported with the foresight of this illust-  
 rious King, and the glorious kingdom of his  
 grace : " Unto us a child is born, unto us a son  
 " is given ; and the *government* shall be upon  
 " his shoulder : and he shall be called — *the*  
 " *Prince of peace*. Of the increase of his *govern-*  
 " *ment* and peace there shall be no end, upon  
 " the throne of *David* and upon his kingdom,  
 " to order and to establish it with judgment and  
 " justice, from henceforth even for ever (e)." This is he who is described as another *David* in  
*Ezekiel's* prophecy, " Thus saith the Lord, I  
 " will take the children of *Israel* from among  
 " the heathen. And I will make them one na-  
 " tion

(c) Psal. lxxii. 7, 11, 17. (d) Psal. cx. 1—3. (e) Isa. ix. 6, 7.

tion — and one *king* shall be king to them all — even *David* my servant shall be king over them (f). This is the kingdom represented to *Nebuchadnezzar* in his dream, as “ a stone cut out without hands, which became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.” And *Daniel*, in expounding the dream, having described the *Babylonian*, the *Persian*, the *Grecian*, and *Roman* empires, subjoins, “ In the days of these kings,” that is, of the *Roman* emperors, “ shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not,” like the former, “ be left to other people; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever (g).” There is no character which our Lord so often assumed in the days of his flesh, as that of *the son of man*, and he no doubt alludes to a majestic vision in *Daniel*, the only place where this character is given him in the Old Testament: “ I saw in the night-visions, says *Daniel*, and behold, one like *the son of man* came to the Antient of days, and there was given to him *dominion*, and glory and a *kingdom*, that all people, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (b),” like the tottering kingdoms of the earth, which are perpetually rising and falling.

(f) Ezek. xxxvii. 21, 22, 24. (g) Dan. ii. 34, 35, 44-

(b) Dan. vii. 13, 14.

falling. This is the king that *Zechariah* refers to when, in prospect of his triumphant entrance into *Jerusalem*, he calls the inhabitants to give a proper reception to so great a prince. "Re-  
" joyce greatly, O daughter of *Zion*; shout, O  
" daughter of *Jerusalem*: behold, thy King com-  
" eth unto thee, &c. (i)" Thus the prophets conspire to ascribe royal titles, and a glorious kingdom to the Messiah. And these early and plain notices of him raised a general expectation of him under this royal character. It was from these prophecies concerning him as a King that the Jews took occasion, as I observed, to look for the Messiah as a temporal prince: and it was a long time before the apostles themselves were delivered from these carnal prejudices. They were solicitous about posts of honour in that temporal kingdom which they expected he would set up: and even after his resurrection they cannot forbear asking him, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the  
" kingdom to *Israel* (k)?" that is, "Wilt thou  
" now restore the Jews to their former liberty  
" and independency, and deliver them from  
" their present subjection to the *Romans*?" It was under this view that *Herod* was alarmed at his birth, and shed the blood of so many innocents that he might not escape. He was afraid of him as the heir of *David's* family and crown, who might dispossess him of the government; nay, he was expected by other nations under the

(i) *Zech.* ix. 9.(k) *Acts* i. 6.

the character of a mighty king, and they no doubt learned this notion of him from the Jewish prophecies, and their conversation with that people. Hence the *Magi*; or eastern wise men, when they came to pay homage to him upon his birth, inquired after him in this language, "Where is he that is born *king* of the Jews (1)." And what is still more remarkable, we are told by two heathen historians, that about the time of his appearance a general expectation of him under this character prevailed through the world. "Many, says *Tacitus*, had a persuasion that it was contained in the ancient writings of the priests, that at that very time the east should prevail, and that some descended from *Judea* should obtain universal government\*." *Suetonius* speaks to the same purpose, "An old and constant opinion, says he, commonly prevailed through all the east, that it was in the fates, that some should rise out of *Judea* who should obtain the government of the world †." This royal character CHRIST himself

(1) *Matt.* ii. 2.

\* *Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum literis contineri, eo ipso tempore fore, ut valescerat oriens, profectique Judea rerum potirentur.* *TACIT.* *Hist.* l. 5. p. 621.

† *Percrebuerat oriente toto vetus & constans opinio, esse in fatis, ut eo tempore Judea profecti rerum potirentur.* *SUET.* in *VESP.* c. 4.

The sameness of the expectation is remarkably evident from the sameness of the words in which these two historians express it. *Judea profecti rerum potirentur.* It was not only a common expectation, but it was commonly expressed in the same language.

himself assumed, even when he conversed among mortals in the humble form of a servant. "The father, says he, has given me power over all flesh (m)." Yes, "All power in heaven and earth is given to me (n)." The gospel church which he erected is most commonly called the *kingdom* of heaven, or of God in the evangelists: and when he was about to introduce it, this was the proclamation, "THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND." Under this character also his servants and disciples celebrated and preached him. *Gabriel* led the song in fortelling his birth to his mother. "He shall be great, and the Lord shall give unto him the *throne* of his father *David*; and he shall *reign* over the house of *Jacob* for ever: and of his kingdom there shall be no end (o)." St *Peter* boldly tells the murderers of CHRIST, "God hath made that same JESUS, whom you crucified, both *Lord*; and CHRIST (p)," and exalted him, with his own right hand, to be "a *Prince* and a Saviour (q)." And St *Paul* repeatedly represents him as advanced "far above principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and that God hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to his church (r)." Yea, to him all

(m) John xvii. 2.

(n) Matt. xxviii. 13.

(o) Luke i. 32, 33.

(p) Acts ii. 36.

(q) Acts v. 31.

(r) Eph. i. 21, 22. Phil. ii. 9—11.

all the hosts of heaven, and even the whole creation in concert, ascribe "power and strength, " and honour and glory (s)." *Pilate* the heathen was overruled to give a kind of accidental testimony to this truth, and to publish it to different nations by the inscription upon the cross in the three languages then most in use, the *Latin, Greek, and Hebrew*: "THIS IS JESUS OF " NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS;" and all the remonstrances of the Jews could not prevail upon him to alter it. Finally, it is he that wears " upon his vesture and upon his thigh " this name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD " OF LORDS (t);" and, as his name is, so is he.

Thus you see, my brethren, by these instances selected out of many, that the *kingly* character and dominion of our Lord JESUS run through the whole Bible. That of a King is his *favourite* character in which he glories, and which is the most expressive of his office. And this consideration alone may convince you that this character is of the greatest importance, and worthy of your most attentive regard.

It is the *mediatorial* kingdom of CHRIST that is here intended, not that which as GOD he exercises over all the works of his hands: it is that kingdom which is an *empire of grace*, an administration of mercy over our guilty world. It is the dispensation intended for the salvation of fallen sinners of our race by the gospel, and on this account the *gospel* is often called the kingdom

(s) Rev. v. 12.

(t) Rev. xix. 16.

kingdom of *heaven*; because its happy consequences are not confined to this earth, but appear in heaven in the highest perfection, and last through all eternity. Hence not only the church of CHRIST on earth, and the dispensation of the gospel, but all the saints in *heaven*, and that more finished oeconomy under which they are placed, are all included in the *kingdom* of CHRIST. Here his kingdom is in its infancy, but in heaven is arrived to perfection; but it is *substantially* the same. Though the immediate design of this kingdom is the salvation of believers of the guilty race of man, and such are its subjects in a peculiar sense; yet it extends to all worlds, to heaven, and earth, and hell. The whole universe is put under a *mediatorial* head, but then, as the apostle observes, "he is made head over all things to his *church*," (u) that is, for the benefit and salvation of his church. As *Mediator* he is carrying on a glorious scheme for the recovery of man, and all parts of the universe are interested or concern themselves in this grand event, and therefore they are all subjected to him, that he may so manage them as to promote this end, and baffle and overwhelm all opposition. The *elect angels* rejoice in so benevolent a design for peopling their mansions, left vacant by the fall of so many of their fellow-angels, with colonies transplanted from our world, from a race of creatures that they had given up for lost. And therefore

(u) Eph. i. 22.

therefore CHRIST as *Mediator* is made the head of all the Heavenly armies, and he employs them as "his ministring spirits, to minister to them" that are heirs of salvation (*w*). These glorious creatures are always on the wing ready to discharge his orders in any part of his vast empire, and delight to be employed in the services of his mediatorial kingdom. This is also an event in which the *fallen angels* deeply interest themselves; they have united all their force and art for near six thousand years to disturb and subvert his kingdom, and blast the designs of redeeming love, they therefore are all subjected to the controul of CHRIST, and he shortens and lengthens their chains as he pleases, and they cannot go an hair's breadth beyond his permission. The scriptures represent our world in its state of guilt and misery as the kingdom of *Satan*; sinners, while slaves to sin, are his subjects, and every act of disobedience against God is an act of homage to this infernal prince. Hence Satan is called "the God" of this world (*x*); the prince of this world (*y*); the power of darkness (*z*); the prince "of the power of the air, the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience (*a*)."  
 And sinners are said to be "taken captive by him at his will (*b*)."  
 Hence also the ministers of CHRIST, who are employed to recover sinners

(*w*) Heb. i. 14.

(*y*) John xii. 31,

(*a*) Eph. ii. 3.

(*x*) 2 Cor. iv. 4.

(*z*) Luke xxii. 53.

(*b*) 2 Tim. ii. 26.

finners to a state of holiness and happiness, are represented as *soldiers*, armed for war; not indeed with carnal weapons, but with those which are spiritual, plain truth, arguments, and miracles; and " these are made mighty " through God to the pulling down of strong- " holds, casting down imaginations, and every " high thing that exalteth itself against the " knowledge of GOD, and bringing into cap- " tivity every thought to the obedience of " Christ (c)." And christians in general are represented as " wrestling, not with flesh and " blood, but against *principalities*, against pow- " ers, against the rulers of the darkness of " this world, against spiritual wickednesses in " high places (d)." Hence also in particular it is that the death of CHRIST is represented not as a *defeat*, but as an illustrious *conquest* gained over the powers of hell; because, by these means a way was opened for the deliverance of sinners from under their power, and restoring them into liberty and the favour of GOD. By that strange contemptible weapon, *the cross*, and by the glorious resurrection of JESUS, he " spoiled principalities and powers, " and made a shew of them openly, triumph- " ing over them (e)." " Through death, says " the apostle, he destroyed him that had the " power of death; that is, the devil (f)." Had not CHRIST by his death offered a propitiatory

VOL. II.

C

sacrifice

(c) 2 Cor. x. 3, 4, 5.

(d) Eph. vi. 12.

(e) Col. ii. 15.

(f) Heb. ii. 14.

sacrifice for the sins of men, they would have continued for ever under the tyranny of Satan, but he has purchased liberty, life, and salvation for them; and thus he hath destroyed the kingdom of darkness, and translated multitudes from it into his own gracious and glorious kingdom.

Hence, upon the *right of redemption*, his mediatorial authority extends to the infernal regions, and he controuls and restrains those malignant, mighty, and turbulent potentates, according to his pleasure. Farther, the *inanimate world* is connected with our Lord's design to save sinners, and therefore is subjected to him as Mediator. He causes the sun to rise, the rain to fall, and the earth to yield her increase to furnish provision for the subjects of his Grace, and to raise, support, and accommodate heirs for his heavenly kingdom. As for *the sons of men*, who are more immediately concerned in this kingdom, and for whose sake it was erected, they are all its subjects; but then they are of different sorts, according to their characters. Multitudes are *rebels* against his government; that is, they do not voluntarily submit to his authority, nor chuse to do his service: they will not obey his laws. But they are his subjects notwithstanding; that is, he rules and manages them as he pleases, whether they will or not. This power is necessary to carry on successfully his gracious design towards his people, for unless he had the management

ment of his enemies, they might baffle his undertaking, and successfully counteract the purposes of his love. The kings of the earth, as well as vulgar rebels of a private character, have often set themselves against his kingdom, and sometimes they have flattered themselves they had entirely demolished it\*. But JESUS reigns absolute and supreme over the kings of the earth, and over-rules and controuls them as he thinks proper; and he disposes all the revolutions, the rises and falls of kingdoms and empires, so as to be subservient to the great designs of his mediation; and their united policies and powers cannot frustrate the work which he has undertaken. But besides these rebellious involuntary subjects, he has (blessed be his name!) gained the consent of thousands, and they have become his *willing subjects* by their own choice. They regard his authority, they love his government, they make it their study to please him, and to do his will. Over these he exercises a government of special *grace* here, and he will make them the happy subjects of the kingdom of his *glory* hereafter. And it is his government over these that I intend more particularly to consider. Once more, the kingdom of JESUS is not confined to this world, but all the millions of mankind in the *invisible* world

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\* In the 10th and last Roman persecution *Dioclesian* had a medal struck with this inscription, "The christian name demolished, and the worship of the gods restored."

are under his dominion, and will continue so to everlasting ages. " He is the Lord of the " dead and the living (g) ;" and has the keys of *Hades*, the vast invisible world, (including heaven as well as hell) and of death"(b). It is he that turns the key, and opens the door of death for mortals to pass from world to world. It is he that opens the gates of heaven, and welcomes and admits the nations that keep the commandments of GOD. And it is he that opens the prison of hell, and locks it fast upon the prisoners of divine justice. He will for ever exercise authority over the vast regions of the unseen world, and the unnumbered multitudes of spirits with which they are peopled. You hence see, my brethren, the universal extent of the Redeemer's kingdom, and in this respect how much does it differ from all the kingdoms of the earth? The kingdoms of *Great Britain, France, China, Persia*, are but little spots of the globe. Our world has indeed been oppressed in former times with what mortals call *universal monarchies* ; such were the *Babylonian*, the *Persian*, the *Grecian*, and especially the *Roman*. But in truth, these were so far from being strictly universal, that a considerable part of the habitable earth was not so much as known to them. But this is an empire strictly *universal*. It extends over land and sea ; it reaches beyond the planetary worlds, and all the luminaries of heaven, nay, beyond the throne of the most exalted arch-angels ;

(g) Rom. xiv. 9.

(b) Rev. i. 18.

angels, and downward to the lowest abyss in hell. An universal empire in the hands of a mortal, is an huge, unwieldy thing; an heap of confusion; a burden to mankind; and it has always rushed headlong from its glory, and fallen to pieces by its own weight. But JESUS is equal to the immense province of an empire strictly universal. His hand is able to hold the reins, and it is the blessing of our world to be under his administration. He will turn what appears to us scenes of confusion into perfect order, and convince all worlds, that he has not taken one wrong step in the whole plan of his infinite government.

The kingdoms of the world have their *laws* and *ordinances*, and so has the kingdom of CHRIST. Look into your Bibles, and there you will find the laws of this kingdom, from its first foundation immediately upon the fall of man. The laws of human governments are often defective, or unrighteous, but these are perfect, holy, just, and good. Human laws are enforced with sanctions, but the rewards and punishments can only affect our *mortal* bodies, and cannot reach beyond the *present* life. But the sanctions of these divine laws are *eternal*, and there never shall be an end to their execution. *Everlasting* happiness, and *everlasting* misery, of the most exquisite kind, and the highest degree, are the rewards and punishments which the *immortal* king distributes

among his *immortal* subjects, and they become his character, and are adapted to their nature.

Human laws extend only to *outward* actions, but these laws reach the *heart*, and the principle of action within. Not a secret thought not a motion of the soul, is exempted from them. If the subjects of earthly kings observe a decorum in their outward conduct, and give no visible evidence of disloyalty, they are treated as good subjects; though they should be enemies in their hearts. "But JESUS is the Lord of souls;" he makes his subjects bow their *hearts*, as well as the *knee* to him. He sweetly commands their thoughts and affections, as well as their external practice, and makes himself inwardly beloved, as well as outwardly obeyed. His subjects are such on whom he may depend. They are all ready to lay down their lives for him. Love, cordial, unfeigned, ardent love, is the principle of all their obedience; and hence it is that his commandments are not grievous, but delightful to them,

Other kings have their *ministers* and *officers* of state. In like manner JESUS employs the armies of heaven as ministring spirits in his mediatorial kingdom: besides these he has ministers of an humbler form, who negotiate more immediately in his name with mankind. These are entrusted with the ministry of reconciliation, to beseech men, in his stead, to be reconciled to GOD. These are appointed to preach his word,  
GOD.

to administer his ordinances, and to manage the affairs of his kingdom. This view gives a peculiar dignity and importance to this office. These should be adorned, not like the ministers of earthly courts, with the trappings of gold and silver, but with the beauties of holiness, the ornament of a meek and quiet, zealous and faithful spirit, and a life becoming the gospel of CHRIST.

Other kings have their *soldiers*: so all the legions of the elect angels, the armies of heaven, are the soldiers of JESUS CHRIST, and under his command. This he asserted, when he was in such defenceless circumstances, that he seemed to be abandoned by heaven and earth. "I could pray to my Father, says he, and he would send me more than twelve legions of angels (i)." I cannot forbear reading to you one of the most majestic descriptions of this all-conquering hero and his army, which the language of mortality is capable of (k). "I saw heaven opened, says St. *John*, and behold a white horse," an emblem of victory and triumph, "and he that sat upon him was called FAITHFUL and TRUE." How different a character from that of mortal conquerors! "And in *righteousness* he doth judge and make war." War is generally a scene of injustice and lawless violence, and those plagues of mankind we call heroes and warriors use their arms

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(i) Matt. xxvi. 53.

(k) Rev. xix. 11, 16.

to gratify their own avarice or ambition, and make incroachments upon others. JESUS the prince of peace makes war too, but it is in *righteousness*: it is in the cause of righteousness he takes up arms. The divine description proceeds; "His eyes were as a flame of fire; and "on his head were many crowns," emblems of his manifold authority over the various kingdoms of the world, and the various regions of the universe, "And he was clothed with "a vesture dipt in blood," in the blood of his enemies; "and his name was called *The word of* "GOD: and the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine "linen white and clean:" the whitest innocence and purity, and the beauties of holiness, are, as it were, the *uniform*, the *regimentals* of these celestial armies. "And out of his mouth goeth a "sharp sword, that with it he should smite the "nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of "iron; and he treadeth the wine-press of the "fierceness and wrath of Almighty God; and "he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a "name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF "LORDS." In what manner the war is carried on between the armies of heaven, and the powers of hell, we know not; but that there is really something of this kind, we may infer from *Rev. xii. 7, 9.* "There was war in heaven: *Michael* and his angels fought against the "dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was there place  
" found

" found any more in heaven. And the great  
" dragon was cast out, that old serpent called  
" the *Devil* and *Satan*."

Thus you see all the hosts of heaven are *volunteers* under the captain of our salvation. Nay, he marshals the stars, and calls them by their names. " The stars in their courses, says " the sublime *Deborah*, fought against *Sisera*," the enemy of GOD's people (1). Every part of the creation serves under him, and he can commission a gnat, or a fly, or the meanest insect, to be the executioner of his enemies. Fire and water, hurricanes and earthquakes; earthquakes which have so lately shattered so great a part of our globe, now tottering with age, and ready to fall to pieces, and bury the guilty inhabitants in its ruins, all these fight under him, and conspire to avenge his quarrel with the guilty sons of men. The subjects of his Grace in particular are all so many soldiers: their life is a constant warfare; and they are incessantly engaged in hard conflict with temptations from without, and the insurrections of sin from within. Sometimes alas! they fall; but their general lifts them up again and inspires them with strength to renew the fight. They fight most successfully *upon their knees*. This is the most advantageous posture for the soldiers of JESUS CHRIST; for prayer brings down recruits from heaven in the hour of difficulty. They are indeed but poor weaklings and invalids; and yet they overcome through  
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(1) Judges v. 20.

the blood of the LAMB, and he makes them conquerors, yea, more than conquerors. It is the military character of christians that gives the apostle occasion to address them in the military stile, like a general at the head of his army (l). " Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of GOD, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and your feet shoed with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of GOD, praying always with all the prayer and supplication." The ministers of the gospel in particular, and especially the apostles, are soldiers, or officers, in this spiritual army. Hence St Paul speaks of his office, in the military stile; " I have, says he, fought a good fight (m). We war, says he, though it be not after the flesh." The humble doctrines of the cross are our *weapons*, and these " are mighty through GOD, to demolish the strong-holds." of the prince of darkness, and to " bring every thought into" a joyful " captivity to the obedience of faith (n). Fight the good fight,

" says

(l) Eph. vi. 10—18.    (m) 2 Tim. iv. 7.    (n) 2 Cor. x. 3—5.

" says he to *Timothy* (o); and again, thou  
" therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier  
" of JESUS CHRIST (p)." The great design of the  
gospel-ministry is to rescue enslaved souls from  
the tyranny of sin and *Satan*, and to recover  
them into a state of liberty and loyalty to  
JESUS CHRIST; or, in the words of the apostle,  
" to turn them from darkness to light, and from  
" the power of *Satan* unto GOD (q)." Mortals  
indeed are very unequal for the conflict, but  
their success more conspicuously shews that the  
" excellency of the power is of GOD." And many  
have they subdued, through his strength, to the  
obedience of faith, and made the willing cap-  
tives of the cross of our divine *Emmanuel*.  
Other kingdoms are often founded in *blood*,  
and many lives are lost on both sides in ac-  
quiring them. The kingdom of CHRIST too  
was founded in blood; but it was the blood of  
his *own heart*: life was lost in the conflict; but  
it was his *own*; his own life lost, to purchase  
life for his people. Others have waded to em-  
pire through the blood of mankind, and even  
of their own subjects, but CHRIST shed only his  
own blood to spare that of his soldiers. The  
general devotes his life as a sacrifice to save his  
army. The *Fabii* and *Decii* of Rome, who de-  
voted themselves for their country, were but  
faint shadows of this divine bravery. O! the  
generous patriotism, the ardent love of the cap-  
tain of our salvation! How amiable does his  
character

(o) 1 Tim. vi. 12. (p) 2 Tim. xi. 3. (q) Acts xxvi. 18.

character appear, in contrast with that of the kings of the earth! They often sacrifice the lives of their subjects, while they keep themselves out of danger, or perhaps are rioting at ease in the pleasures and luxuries of a court, but JÉSUS engaged in the conflict with death and hell alone. He stood a single champion in a field of blood. He conquered for his people by falling himself: he subdued his and their enemies by resigning himself to their power. Worthy is such a general to be *Commander in Chief* of the hosts of GOD, and to lead the armies of heaven and earth. Indeed much blood has been shed in carrying on this kingdom. The earth has been soaked with the blood of the saints; and millions have resisted even unto blood, striving against sin, and nobly laid down their lives for the sake of CHRIST and a good conscience. *Rome* has been remarkably the seat of persecution; both formerly under the *Heathen Emperors*, and in later times, under a succession of *Popes*, still more bloody and tyrannical. There were no less than ten general persecutions under the *Heathen Emperors*, through the vast *Roman* empire, in a little more than two hundred years, which followed one another in a close succession; in which innumerable multitudes of christians lost their lives by an endless variety of tortures. And since the church of *Rome* has usurped her authority, the blood of the saints has hardly ever ceased running in some country or other; though

though, blessed be GOD, many kingdoms shook off the yoke at the ever memorable period of the Reformation, above two hundred years ago, which has greatly weakened that persecuting power. This is that mystical *Babylon*, that was represented to St *John*, as "Drunken with the blood" of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." (r) In her was found the blood of the prophets, and of the saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth. (s) And these scenes of blood are still perpetrated in *France*, that plague of *Europe*, that has of late stretched her murderous arm across the wide ocean to disturb us in these regions of peace. There the *Protestants* are still plundered, chained to the galleys, broken alive upon the torturing wheel, denied the poor favour of abandoning their country and their all, and flying naked to beg their bread in other nations. Thus the harmless subjects of the Prince of peace have been slaughtered from age to age, and yet they are represented as triumphant conquerors. Hear a poor persecuted *Paul* on this head: "In tribulation, in distress, in persecution, in nakedness, in peril and sword, we are conquerors, we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. (t)" "Thanks be to GOD which always causeth us to triumph in CHRIST. (u)" "Whatsoever is born of GOD," says St *John*, "overcometh the world."

(r) Rev. xvii. 6.

(s) Ch. xviii. 24.

(t) Rom. viii. 36, 37.

(u) 2 Cor. ii. 14.

" world."(x) Whence came that glorious army which we so often see in the Revelation? We are told, " they came out of great tribulation.(y)" " And they *overcame* by the blood of the Lamb, " and by the word of their testimony; and they " loved not their lives unto the death.(z)" They that suffered tortures and death under the beast, are said, " to have gotten the *victory* over him (a)." Victory and triumph sound strange when thus ascribed. But the gospel helps us to understand this mystery. By these sufferings they obtained the illustrious crown of martyrdom, and peculiar degrees of glory and happiness through an endless duration. Their death was but a short transition from the lowest and more remote regions of their redeemer's kingdom into his immediate presence and glorious court in heaven. A temporal death is rewarded with an immortal life; and " their light afflictions, which were but for a moment, " wrought out for them a far more exceeding " and eternal weight of glory.(b)" Even in the agonies of torture their souls were often filled with such delightful sensations of the love of GOD, as swallowed up the sensations of bodily pain; and a bed of flames was sweeter to them than a bed of roses. Their souls were beyond the reach of all the instruments of torment, and as for their bodies they shall yet have a glorious resurrection to a blessed immortality. And now  
 I leave

(x) 1 John. v. 4. (y) Ch. vii. 14. (z) Ch. xii. 11.

(a) Ch. xv. 2.

(b) 2 Cor. iv. 17.

I leave you to judge, whether they or their enemies got the victory in this conflict; and which had most cause to triumph. Like their master, they rose by falling; they triumphed over their enemies by submitting, like lambs, to their power. If the soldiers of other generals die in the field, it is not in the power of their commanders to reward them. But the soldiers of JESUS CHRIST by dying, are, as it were, carried in triumph from the field of blood, into the presence of their master to receive his approbation, and a glorious crown. Death puts them into a capacity of receiving and enjoying greater rewards than they are capable of in the present state. And thus it appears, that his soldiers always win the day; or as the apostle expresses it, He "causes them *always* to triumph;" and not one of them has ever been or ever shall be defeated, however weak and helpless in himself, and however terrible the power of his enemies. And O! when all these warriors meet at length from every corner of the earth, and as it were, pass in review before their general in the fields of heaven, with their robes washed in his blood, with palms of victory in their hands, and crowns of glory on their heads, all dressed in uniform with garments of salvation, what a glorious army will they make! And how will they cause heaven to ring with shouts of joy and triumph!

The founders of earthly kingdoms are famous for their heroic actions. They have  
braved

braved the dangers of sea and land, routed powerful armies, and subjected nations to their will. They have shed rivers of blood, laid cities in ruins, and countries in desolation. These are the exploits which have rendered the *Alexanders*, the *Cæsars*, and other conquerors of this world famous thro' all nations and ages. Jesus had his exploits too; but they were all of the *gracious and beneficent* kind. His conquests were so many *deliverances*, and his victories *salvations*. He subdued, in order to set free; and made captives to deliver them from slavery. He conquered the legions of hell, that seemed let loose at that time, that he might have opportunity of displaying his power over them, and that mankind might be sensible how much they needed a deliverer from their tyranny. He triumphed over the temptations of Satan in the wilderness by a quotation from his own word. He rescued wretched creatures from his power by an almighty command. He conquered the most inveterate and stubborn diseases, and restored health and vigour with a word of his mouth. He vanquished stubborn souls with the power of his love, and made them his willing people. He triumphed over death the king of terrors, and delivered *Lazarus* from the prison of the grave, as an earnest and first-fruits of a general resurrection. Nay, by his own inherent powers he broke the bonds of death, and forced his way to his native heaven. He destroyed him that had the power of death, *i. e.*  
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the Devil, by his own death, and laid the foundation in his own blood for destroying his usurped kingdom, and forming a glorious kingdom of willing subjects redeemed from his tyranny. The death of some great conquerors, particularly of *Julius Cæsar*, is said to be prognosticated or attended with prodigies : but none equal to those which solemnized the death of JESUS. The earth trembled, the rocks burst to pieces, the veil of the temple was rent, the heavens were clothed in mourning, and the dead started into life. And no wonder, when the Lord of nature was expiring upon a cross. He subdued and calmed the stormy wind, and the boisterous waves of the sea. In short, he shewed an absolute sovereignty over universal nature, and managed the most unruly elements with a single word. Other conquerors have gone from country to country, carrying desolation along with them ; *Jesus went about doing good*. His miraculous powers were but powers of miraculous mercy and beneficence. He could easily have advanced himself to a temporal kingdom, and routed all the forces of earth ; but he had no ambition of this kind. He that raised *Lazarus* from the grave could easily restore his soldiers to vigor and life, after they had been wounded or killed. He that fed five thousand with five loaves and two fishes, could have supported his army with plenty of provision in the greatest scarcity. He that walked upon the boisterous ocean, and enabled *Peter*

to do the same, could easily have transported his forces from country to country, without the conveyance of ships. Nay, he was capable by his own single power to have gained universal conquest. What could all the armies of the earth have done against him, who struck an armed company down to the earth with a word of his mouth? But these were not the victories he affected. Victories of grace, deliverances for the oppressed, salvation for the lost, these were his heroic actions. He glories in his being *mighty to save* (c). When his warm disciples made a motion that he should employ his miraculous powers to punish the *Samaritans*, who ungratefully refused him entertainment, he rebuked them, and answered like the Prince of peace, "The son of man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save.(d)" He "came to seek and to save that which was lost."(e) O how amiable a character this! How much more lovely the *Saviour of sinners, the Deliverer of souls*, than the enslavers and destroyers of mankind, which is the general character of the renowned heroes of our world? Who has ever performed such truly heroic and brave actions as this almighty conqueror? He has pardoned the most aggravated crimes, in a consistency with the honours of the divine government: he has delivered an innumerable multitude of immortal souls from the tyranny of sin, and the powers of hell, set the prisoners free,

(c) Isaiah lxiii, 1.

(d) Luke ix. 56.

(e) Luke xix. 10.

free, and brought them into the liberty of the Son of God; he has peopled heaven with redeemed slaves, and advanced them to royal dignity. "All his subjects are kings. (f)" "To him that overcometh, says he, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my father in his throne. (g)" They shall all be adorned with royal robes and crowns of unfading glory. They are advanced to empire over their lusts and passions, and all their enemies. Who ever gave such encouragement to his soldiers as this, "If we suffer with him, we know we shall also reign with him? (h)" What mortal general could bestow immortality and perfect happiness upon his favorites? But these boundless blessings Jesus has to bestow. In human governments merit is often neglected, and those who serve their country best are often rewarded with degradation. But none have ever served the King of kings in vain. The least good action, even the giving a cup of water to one of his necessitous saints, shall not pass unrewarded in his government.

Other kings have their arms, their swords, their cannon, and other instruments of destruction; and with these they acquire and defend their dominions. Jesus, our King, has his arms too, but O! of how different a kind? The force of evidence and conviction in his doctrine, attested with miracles, the energy of his dying

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love

(f) Rev. i. 6.

(g) Rev. iii. 21.

(h) 2 Tim. ii. 12.

love, the gentle, and yet efficacious influence of his holy Spirit, these are the weapons with which he conquered the world. His gospel is the great magazine, from whence his apostles, the first founders of his kingdom, drew their arms; and with these they subdued the nations to the obedience of faith. "The gospel, says St Paul, is the power of GOD unto salvation. (i)" The humble doctrines of the cross became almighty, and bore down all before them, and after a time subdued the vast Roman empire, which had subdued the world. The holy Spirit gave edge and force to these weapons; and blessed be GOD, tho' they are quite impotent without his assistance, yet, when he concurs, they are still successful. Many stubborn sinners have been unable to resist the preaching of CHRIST crucified. They have found him indeed the power of GOD. And is it not astonishing that any one should be able to stand it out against his dying love, and continue the enemy of his cross? "I," says he, if I be lifted up from the earth, "i. e. if I be suspended on the cross, " will draw all " men unto me. (k)" You see he expected his cross would be an irresistible weapon. And O! blessed JESUS, who can see thee expiring there in agonies of torture and love, who can see thy blood gushing in streams from every vein, who can hear thee groaning there, and not melt into submission at thy feet? Is there one heart

(i) Rom. i. 16.

(k) John xii. 32.

heart in this assembly proof against the energy of this bleeding, agonizing, dying love? Methinks such a sight *must* kindle a correspondent affection in your hearts towards him; and it is an exploit of wickedness, it is the last desperate effort of an impenetrable heart, to be able to resist.

Other conquerors march at the head of their troops, with all the ensigns of power and grandeur, and their forces numerous, inured to war, and well armed, and from such appearances and preparations who is there but what expects victory? But see the despised *Nazarene*, without riches, without arms, without forces, conflicting with the united powers of earth and hell; or see a company of poor fishermen and a tent-maker, with no other powers but those of doing good, with no other arms but those of reason, and the strange unpopular doctrines of a crucified CHRIST, see the professed followers of a master that was hung like a malefactor and a slave, see these men marching out to encounter the powers of darkness, the whole strength of the *Roman* empire, the lusts, prejudices and interests of all nations, and travelling from country to country, without guards, without friends, exposed to insult and contempt, to the rage of persecution, to all manner of tortures and deaths which earth or hell could invent: see this little army marching into the wide world, in these circumstances, and can you expect they will have any success? Does this appear a promising

mising expedition? No; human reason would forebode they will soon be cut in pieces, and the Christian cause buried with them. But these unpromising champions, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, conquered the world, and spread the Religion of the crucified JESUS among all nations. It is true they lost their lives in the cause, like brave soldiers; but the cause did not die with them. Their blood proved the seed of the church. Their cause is immortal and invincible. Let devils in hell, let Heathens, Jews and Mahometans, let Atheists, Free-thinkers, Papists, and persecutors of every character, do their worst; still this cause will live in spite of them. All the enemies of CHRIST will be obliged to confess at last, with *Julian* the apostate *Roman* emperor, who exerted all his art to abolish Christianity, but, when mortally wounded in battle, outrageously sprinkled his blood towards heaven, and cried out, *Vicisti, O Galilee*, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean." Yes, my brethren, JESUS, the prophet of *Galilee*, will push his conquests from country to country until all nations submit to him. And blessed be his name, his victorious arm has reached to us in these ends of the earth. Here he has subdued some obstinate rebels, and made their reluctant souls willingly bow in affectionate homage to him. And may I not produce some of you as the trophies of his victory? Has he not rooted out the enmity of your carnal minds, and sweetly constrained you to the most affectionate obedience?

Serm. 10. *Glories of JESUS CHRIST.*

dience? Thus, blessed JESUS! thus go on conquering, and to conquer. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty," and in thy glory and majesty ride prosperously through our land, and make this country a dutiful province of the dominion of thy grace. My brethren, should we all become his willing subjects, he would no longer suffer the perfidious slaves of *France*, and their savage allies, to chastise and punish us for our rebellion against him; but "peace should again run down like a river, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

The kingdoms of the world have their rise, their progress, perfection, declension, and ruin. And in these things, the kingdom of CHRIST bears some resemblance to them, excepting that it shall never have an end.

Its rise was small at first, and it has passed through many revolutions in various ages. It was first founded in the family of *Adam*, but in about 1600 years, the space between the creation and the flood, it was almost demolished by the wickedness of the world, and at length confined to the little family of *Noah*. After the flood, the world soon fell into idolatry, but, that this kingdom of CHRIST might not be destroyed quite, it was erected in the family of *Abraham*; and among the Jews it continued until the coming of CHRIST in the flesh. This was indeed but the infancy of his kingdom, and indeed is seldom called by that name. It is the Gospel-Constitution, that is represented

as the kingdom of CHRIST, in a special sense. This was but very small and unpromising at first. When its founder was dying upon *Calvary*, and all his followers had forsaken him and fled, who would have thought it would ever have come to any thing, ever have recovered? But it revived with him; and, when he furnished his apostles with gifts and graces for their mission, and sent them forth to increase his kingdom, it made its progress through the world with amazing rapidity, notwithstanding it met with very early and powerful opposition. The Jews set themselves against it, and raised persecutions against its ministers, wherever they went. And presently the tyrant *Nero* employed all the power of the *Roman* empire to crush them. *Peter*, *Paul*, and thousands of the Christians fell a prey to his rage, like sheep for the slaughter. This persecution was continued under his successors, with but little interruption, for about two hundred years.

But, under all these pressures, the church bore up her head; yea, the more she was trodden, the more she spread and flourished; and at length she was delivered from oppression by *Constantine* the Great, about the year 320. But now she had a more dangerous enemy to encounter, I mean prosperity: and this did her much more injury than all the persecutions of her enemies. Now the kingdom of CHRIST began to be corrupted with heresies: the ministry of the Gospel, formerly the most dangerous

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rous post in the world, now became a place of honour and profit, and men began to thrust themselves into it from principles of avarice and ambition; superstition and corruption of morals increased; and at length the Bishop of *Rome* set up for universal head of the Church in the year 606, and gradually the whole monstrous system of popery was formed and established, and continued in force for near a thousand years. The kingdom of CHRIST was now at a low ebb; and tyranny and superstition reigned under that name over the greatest part of the Christian world. Nevertheless our Lord still had his witnesses. The *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, *John Hus* and *Jerome of Prague*, and *Wickliffe* in *England*, opposed the torrent of corruption; until at length, *Luther*, *Calvin*, *Zuinglius*, and several others, were made the honoured instruments of introducing the Reformation from Popery; when sundry whole kingdoms, which had given their power to the beast, and particularly our mother country, shook off the papal authority, and admitted the pure light of the gospel. Since that time the kingdom of CHRIST has struggled hard, and it has lost ground in several countries; particularly in *France*, *Poland*, *Bohemia*, &c. where there once were many protestant churches, but they are now in ruins. And alas! those countries that still retain the reformed Religion, have too generally reduced it into a meer formality, and it has but little influence upon the hearts

hearts and lives even of its professors. Thus we find the case remarkably among us. This gracious kingdom makes but little way in *Virginia*. The calamities of war and famine cannot, alas! draw subjects to it; but we seem generally determined to perish in our rebellion rather than submit. Thus it has been in this country from its first settlement, and how long it will continue in this situation is unknown to mortals. However this we may know it will not be so always. We have the strongest assurances that JESUS will yet take to him his great power, and reign in a more extensive and illustrious manner, than he has ever yet done; and that the kingdoms of the earth shall yet become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his CHRIST. There are various parts of the heathen world, where the gospel has never yet been; and the Jews have never yet been converted as a nation; but both the calling of the Jews and the fulness of the gentiles, you will find plainly foretold in the 11th chapter to the *Romans*; and it is, no doubt, to render the accomplishment of this event the more conspicuous, that Jews, who are dispersed all over the world, have, by a strange, unprecedented, and singular providence, been kept a distinct people to this day, for 1700 years; tho' all other nations have been so mixt and blended together, who were not half so much dispersed into different countries, that their distinct original cannot be traced. Posterity shall see this glorious event,

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in some happy future period. How far it is from us, I will not determine: though upon some grounds I apprehend it is not very remote. I shall live and die in the unshaken belief that our guilty world shall yet see glorious days. Yes, my brethren, this despised Gospel, that has so little effect in our age and country, shall yet shine like lightning, or like the sun, through all the dark regions of the earth. It shall triumph over Heathenism, Mahometism, Judaism, Popery, and all those dangerous errors that have infected the Christian church. This Gospel, poor *Negroes*, shall yet reach your countrymen, whom you left behind you in *Africa* in darkness and the shadow of death, and bless their eyes with the light of salvation. And the *Indian* savages, that are now ravaging our country, shall yet be transformed into lambs and doves by the gospel of peace. The scheme of Providence is not yet completed, and much remains to be accomplished of what God has spoken by his prophets, to ripen the world for the universal judgement; but when all these things are finished, then proclamation shall be made through all nature, "that Time shall be no more:" then the supreme Judge, the same JESUS that ascended the cross, will ascend the throne, and review the affairs of time. Then he will put an end to the present course of nature, and the present form of administration. Then shall  
heaven

heaven and hell be filled with their respective inhabitants. Then will time close, and eternity run on in one uniform tenor without end. But the kingdom of CHRIST, though altered in its situation and form of government, will not then come to a conclusion. His kingdom is strictly the kingdom of HEAVEN : and at the end of this world, his subjects will only be removed from these lower regions into a more glorious country, where they and their King shall live together for ever in the most endearing intimacy ; where the noise and commotions of this restless world, the revolutions and perturbations of kingdoms, the terrors of war and persecution, shall no more reach them ; but all will be perfect peace, love, and happiness through immeasurable duration. This is the last and most illustrious state of the kingdom of CHRIST, now so small and weak in appearance. This is the final grand result of his administration, and it will appear to admiring worlds wisely planned, gloriously executed, and perfectly finished.

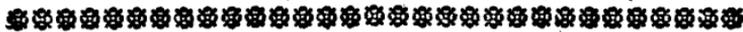
What conqueror ever erected such a kingdom ! What subjects so compleatly, so lastingly happy, as those of the blessed JESUS !

S E R M O N



# S E R M O N XI.

Things unseen to be preferred to  
Things seen.



2 C O R. IV. 18.

*While we 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.*



**A**MONG all the causes of the stupid unconcernedness of sinners about religion, and the feeble endeavours of saints to improve in it, there is none more common or more effectual, than their not forming a due estimate of the things of time, in comparison of those of eternity. Our present affairs engross all our thoughts, and exhaust all our activity, though they are but transitory trifles; while the awful realities of the future world are hid from our eyes by the veil of flesh, and the clouds of ignorance. Did these break in upon our minds in all their almighty evidence and tre-

tremendous importance they would annihilate the most majestic vanities of the present state, obscure the glare of earthly glory, render all its pleasures insipid, and give us a noble insensibility under all its sorrows. A realizing view of these would shock the libertine in his thoughtless career, tear off the hypocrite's mask, and inflame the devotion of languishing saints. The concern of mankind would then be how they might make a safe exit out of this world, and not how they may live happy in it. Present pleasure and pain would be swallowed up in the prospect of everlasting happiness or misery hereafter. Eternity, awful eternity, would then be our serious contemplation. The pleasures of sin would strike us with horror, if they issue in eternal pain, and our present afflictions, however tedious and severe, would appear but light and momentary, if they work out for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

These were the views the apostle had of things, and these their effects upon him. He informs us in this chapter of his unwearied zeal to propagate the gospel amid all the hardships and dangers that attended the painful discharge of his ministry. Though he bore about in his body the dying of the Lord JESUS, though he was alway delivered unto death for JESUS' sake, yet he fainted not; and this was the prospect that animated him, that his "light affliction" which was but for a moment would work for "him

" him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." When we view his sufferings absolutely, without any reference to eternity, they were very heavy and of many years continuance; and when he represents them in this view, how moving is the relation? see 2 Cor. xi. 23—29. But when he views them in the light of eternity, and compared with their glorious issues, they sink into nothing; then scourging, stoning, imprisonment, and all the various deaths to which he was daily exposed, are but *light*, trifling afflictions, hardly worth naming; then a series of uninterrupted sufferings for many years are but *afflictions that endure for a moment*. And when he views a glorious futurity, human language cannot express the ideas he has of the happiness reserved for him; it is *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. A noble sentiment! and express in the sublimest manner the language of mortals can admit of.

It is *glory*, in opposition to *affliction*; a *weight* of glory, in opposition to *light* affliction; a massy oppressive blessedness, which it requires all the powers in the soul, in their full exertion, to support: and in opposition to affliction for a *moment*, it is *eternal* glory: to finish all, it is *a far more exceeding glory*.† What greater idea can be grasped by the human mind, or express in  
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† The original far surpasses the best translation. The adjective absolute with a gender (τὸ ἰλαρὸν τῆς θλίψεως) is very significant; and καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν is inimitable in our language.

the feeble language of mortality! Nothing but feeling that weight of glory could enlarge his conception, and nothing but the dialect of heaven could better express it. No wonder that with this view of things, " he should reckon, " that the sufferings of the present life, are not " worthy to be compared with the glory that " shall be revealed."<sup>(a)</sup>

The apostle observes, that he formed this estimate of things, while he looked not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen. By the things that are seen, are meant the present life, and all the things of time; all the pleasures and pains, all the labours, pursuits, and amusements of the present state. By the things that are not seen are intended all the invisible realities of the eternal world; all the beings, the enjoyments and sufferings that lie beyond the reach of human sight; as, the great father of spirits, the joys of paradise, and the punishments of hell. We look on these invisible things, and not on those that are seen. This seems like a contradiction; but it is easily solved by understanding this act, described by *looking*, to be the act not of the bodily eye, but of faith and enlightened reason. Faith is defined by this apostle to be, " The substance of " things hoped for, and the evidence of things " not seen."<sup>(b)</sup> And 'tis his chief design in that chapter, to give instances of the surprising efficacy of such a realizing belief of eternal invisible things

(a) Rom: viii. 18,

(b) Heb. xi. 1.

things ; see particularly ver. 10, 13, 14, 16, 25, 26, 27. Hence to look not at visible, but invisible things, signifies that the apostle made the latter the chief objects of his contemplations, that he was governed in the whole of his conduct by the impression of eternal things, and not by the present ; that he formed his maxims and schemes from a comprehensive survey of futurities, and not from a partial view of things present ; and, in short, that he acted as an expectant of eternity, and not as an everlasting inhabitant of this wretched world. This he elsewhere expresses in equivalent terms, " We walk by faith, and not by sight"(a).

Further, he assigns a reason why he had a greater regard to invisible things than visible, in the regulating of his conduct ; " for the things," says he, which are seen, are temporal ; but the " things which are not seen, are eternal." An important reason indeed ! Eternity annexed to a trifle would advance it into infinite importance, but when it is the attribute of the most perfect happiness, or of the most exquisite misery, then it transcends all comparison : then all temporal happiness and misery, however great and long continued, shrinks into nothing, is drowned and lost, like the small drop of a bucket in the boundless ocean.

My present design, and the contents of the text prescribe to me the following method.

VOL. II.

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I. I

(a) 2 Cor. v. 7.

I. I shall give you a comparative view of visible and invisible things, that you may see the trifling nature of the one, and the importance of the other. This I choose to do under one head, because by placing these two classes of things in an immediate opposition we may the more easily compare them, and see their infinite disparity. And,

II. I shall shew you the great and happy influence a suitable impression of the superior importance of invisible to visible things would have upon us.

I. I shall give you a comparative view of visible and invisible things; and we may compare visible and invisible things, as to their intrinsic value, and as to their duration.

I. As to their intrinsic value; and in this respect the disparity is inconceivable.

This I shall illustrate in the two comprehensive instances of *pleasure* and *pain*. To shun the one, and obtain the other, is the natural effort of the human mind. This is its aim in all its endeavours and pursuits. The innate desire of happiness, and aversion to misery, are the two great springs of all human activity; and, were these springs relaxed or broken, all business would cease, all activity would stagnate, and universal torpor would seize the world. And these principles are co-existent with the soul itself, and will continue in full vigor in a future state. Nay, as the soul will then be  
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matured, and all its powers arrived to their complete perfection, this eagerness after happiness, and aversion to misery, will be also more quick and vigorous. The soul in its present state of infancy, like a young child, or a man enfeebled and stupified by sickness, is incapable of very deep sensations of pleasure or pain; and hence an excess of joy, as well as sorrow, has sometimes dissolved its feeble union with the body. On this account we are incapable of such degrees of happiness or misery from the things of this world as beings of more lively sensations might receive from them: and much more are we incapable of the happiness or misery of the future world, until we have put on immortality. We cannot see God and live. Should the glory of heaven blaze upon us in all its insufferable splendor it would overwhelm our feeble nature; we could not support such a weight of glory. And one twinge of the agonies of hell would dislodge the soul from its earthly mansion: one pang would convulse and stupify it, were not its powers strengthened by the separation from the body. But in the future world all the powers of the soul will be mature and strong, and the body will be clothed with immortality; the union between them after the resurrection will be inseparable, and able to support the most oppressive weight of glory, or the most intolerable load of torment. Hence it follows that pleasure and pain include all that we can desire or fear in the present or

future world; and therefore a comparative view of present and future pleasure and pain, is sufficient to enable us to form a due estimate of visible and invisible things. By *present pleasure*, I mean all the happiness we can receive from present things, as from riches, honours, sensual gratifications, learning and intellectual improvements, and all the amusements and exercises of this life. And by *future pleasure*, or the pleasure which results from invisible things, I mean all the fruitions and enjoyments in which heavenly happiness consists. By *present pain*, I intend all the uneasiness which we can receive from the things of the present life; as poverty, losses, disappointments, bereavements, sickness, and bodily pains. And by *future pain*, I mean all the punishments of hell; as, banishment from God, and a privation of all created blessings, the agonizing reflections of a guilty conscience, the horrid company and exprobrations of infernal ghosts, and the torture of infernal flames.

Now let us put these in the balance, and the one will sink into nothing, and the other rise into infinite importance.

Temporal things are of a contracted nature, and not adequate to the capacities of the human soul; but eternal things are great, and capable of communicating all the happiness and misery which it can receive. The soul in its present state is not capable of such degrees of happiness and misery as it will be in the future, when

when it dwells among invisible realities. All that pleasure and pain which we receive from things that are seen is intermingled with some ingredients of a contrary nature; but those proceeding from things that are not seen, are pure and unmingled.

1. Visible things are not equal to the capacities of the human soul. This little spark of being, the soul, which lies obscured in this prison of flesh, gives frequent discoveries of surprising powers: its desires in particular have a kind of infinity. But all temporary objects are mean and contracted; they cannot afford it a happiness equal to its capacity, nor render it as miserable as its capacity of suffering will bear. Hence, in the greatest affluence of temporal enjoyments, in the midst of honours, pleasures, riches, friends, &c. it still feels a painful void within, and finds an unknown something wanting to compleat its happiness. Kings have been unhappy upon their thrones, and all their grandeur has been but majestic misery. So *Solomon* found it, who had opportunity and curiosity to make the experiment, and this is his verdict upon all earthly enjoyments after the most impartial trial, "Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, "Vanity of vanities; all is "vanity and vexation of spirit." On the other hand, the soul may possess some degree of happiness, under all the miseries it is capable of suffering from external and temporal things.

Guilt indeed denies it this support; but if there be no intestine broils, no anguish resulting from its own reflections, not all visible things can render it perfectly miserable; its capacity of suffering is not put to its utmost stretch. This has been attested by the experience of multitudes who have suffered for righteousness sake. But, O, when we take a survey of invisible things, we find them all great and majestic, not only equal, but infinitely superior to the most enlarged powers of the human and even of the angelic nature. In the eternal world the great *Invisible* dwells, and there he acts with his own immediate hand. It is he that immediately communicates happiness through the heavenly regions; and it is his immediate breath, that, like a stream of brimstone, kindles the flames of hell. Whereas in the present world he rarely communicates happiness, and inflicts punishment, but by the instrumentality of creatures; and it is impossible the extremes of either should be communicated through this channel. This the infinite GOD alone can do, and, though in the future world he will use his creatures to heighten the happiness or misery of each other, yet he will have a more immediate agency in them himself. He will communicate happiness immediately from himself, the infinite fountain of it, into the vessels of mercy: and he will immediately shew his wrath, and make his power known upon the vessels of wrath. I may add, that those  
creatures

creatures, angels and devils, which will be the instruments of happiness or misery to the human soul in the invisible world, are incomparably more powerful than any in this; and consequently capable of contributing more to our pleasure or pain. And let me also observe, that all the objects about which our faculties will be employed then, will be great and majestic; whereas, at present, we grovel among little fordid things. The objects of our contemplation will then be either the unveiled glories of the divine nature, and the naked wonders of creation, providence, and redemption; or the terrors of divine justice, the dreadful nature and aggravations of our sin, the horrors of everlasting punishment, &c. And since this is the case, how little should we regard the things that are seen, in comparison of them that are not seen? But though visible things were adequate to our present capacities, yet they are not to be compared with the things that are not seen, because,

2. The soul is at present in a state of infancy, and incapable of such degrees of pleasure or pain as it can bear in the future world. The enjoyments of this life are like the play-things of children, and none but childish souls would trifle with them, or fret and vex themselves or one another about them; but the invisible realities before us, are manly and great, and such as an adult soul ought to concern itself with. The soul in another world can no more be happy or miser-

able from such toys, than men can be happy or wretched in the possession or loss of the baubles of children; it will then demand great things to give it pleasure or pain. The apostle illustrates this matter in this manner *(b)*. How foolish is it then to be chiefly governed by these puerilities, while we neglect the manly concern of eternity, that can make our souls perfectly happy or miserable, when their powers are come to perfection!

3. And lastly, All the happiness and misery of the present state, resulting from things that are seen are intermingled with contrary ingredients. We are never so happy in this world, as to have no uneasiness; in the greatest affluence we languish for want of some absent good, or grieve under some incumbent evil. On the other hand, we are never so miserable as to have no ingredient of happiness. When we labour under a thousand calamities, we may still see ourselves surrounded with, perhaps, an equal number of blessings. And where is there a wretch so miserable as to endure simple unmingled misery without one comfortable ingredient? But in the invisible world there is an eternal separation made between good and evil, pleasure and pain, and they shall never mingle more. In heaven the rivers of pleasures flow untroubled with a drop of sorrow; in hell, there is not a drop of water to mitigate the fury of the flame. And who then would not prefer the things

*(b)* 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 11.

things that are not seen, to those that are seen? Especially if we consider,

2. The infinite disparity between them as to duration. This is the difference particularly intended in the text. "The things that are seen, are temporal; but the things that are not seen, are eternal."

The transitoriness of visible things, implies both, that the things themselves are perishable, and they may soon leave us; and that our residence among them is temporary, and we must soon leave them.

And the eternity of invisible things, implies the quite contrary, that the things themselves are of endless duration; and that we shall always exist to receive happiness or misery from them.

Before we illustrate these instances of disparity, let us take a view of Time and Eternity in themselves, and as compared to one another.

Time is the duration of creatures in the present state. It commenced at the creation, and near 6000 years of it are since elapsed; and how much of it yet remains we know not. But this we know that the duration of the world itself is as nothing in comparison of eternity. But what is our duration compared with the duration even of this world? It is but a span, an hair's-breadth; sixty, seventy, or eighty years is generally the highest standard of human life, and it is by far the smallest number of mankind that arrives to these periods. The most

most of them die like a flower blasted in the morning, or at noon ; and we have more reason to expect it will be our fate than to hope the contrary. Now the span of time we enjoy in life is all our time ; we have no more property in the rest of it than in the years before the flood. All beside is eternity. "Eternity!" We are alarmed at the sound ! lost in the prospect ! Eternity, with respect to GOD, is a duration without beginning as well as without end : Eternity, as it is the attribute of human nature, is a duration that had a beginning, but shall never have an end. This is inalienably entailed upon us poor dying worms : and let us survey our inheritance. Eternity ! it is a duration that excludes all number and computation ; days and months and years, yea, and ages are lost in it, like drops in the ocean. Millions of millions of years, as many years as there are sands on the sea shore, or particles of dust in the globe of the earth, and these multiplied to the highest reach of number, all these are nothing to eternity. They do not bear the least imaginable proportion to it ; for these will come to an end, as certainly as a day, but eternity will never, never, never come to an end. It is a line without end ; it is an ocean without a shore. Alas ! what shall I say of it ? It is an infinite unknown *something*, that neither human thought can grasp, nor human language describe.

Now place time in comparison with eternity, and what is it ? It shrinks into nothing, and less

less than nothing. What then is that little span of time in which we have any property? Alas! it is too diminutive a point to be conceived. Indeed, properly speaking, we can call no part of time our own but the present moment, this fleeting NOW: future time is uncertain, and we may never enjoy it; the breath we now respire may be our last; and as to our past time, it is gone, and will never be ours again. Our past days are dead and buried, though perhaps guilt, their ghost, may haunt us still. And what is a moment to eternity? The disparity is too great to admit of comparison.

Let me now resume the former particulars, implied in the transitoriness of visible, and eternity of invisible things.

Visible things are perishable, and may soon leave us. When we think they are ours, they often fly from our embrace. Riches may vanish into smoke and ashes by an accidental fire. We may be thrown down from the pinnacle of honour, and sink the lower into disgrace. Sensual pleasures often end in satiety and disgust, or in sickness and death. Our friends are torn from our bleeding hearts, by the inexorable hand of death. Our liberty and property may be wrested from us by the hand of tyranny, oppression, or fraud. In a word, what do we enjoy but we may lose? On the other hand, our miseries here are temporary; the heart receives many a wound, but it heals again. Poverty may end in riches; a clouded character may clear

clear up, and from disgrace we may rise to honour; we may recover from sickness; and if we lose one comfort, we may obtain another. But in eternity every thing is everlasting and unchangeable. Happiness and misery are both without end; and the subjects of both know that this is the case. It is this perpetuity that finishes the happiness of the inhabitants of heaven; a suspicion of an end would intermingle itself with all their enjoyments, and embitter them; and the greater the happiness, the greater the anxiety at the expectation of losing it. But O how transporting for the saints on high to look forward through the succession of eternal ages, with an assurance that they shall be happy through them all; and that they shall feel no change but from glory to glory! On the other hand, this is the bitterest ingredient in the cup of divine displeasure in the future state that the misery is eternal. O with what horror does that despairing cry, *forever, forever, forever!* echo through the vaults of hell! Eternity is such an important attribute, that it gives infinite weight to things that would be insignificant were they temporary. A small degree of happiness, if it be eternal, exceeds the greatest degree that is transitory; and a small degree of misery, that is everlasting, is of greater importance than the greatest degree that soon comes to an end. Would you not rather endure the most painful tortures that nature can bear for a moment than an eternal tooth-ach  
or

or head-ach ? Again, should we consider all the ingredients and causes of future happiness and misery, we should find them all everlasting. The blessed GOD is an inexhaustible perennial fountain of bliss ; his image can never be erased from the hearts of glorified spirits ; the great objects of their contemplation will always lie obvious to them ; and they will always exist as the partakers and promoters of mutual bliss. On the other hand, in hell the worm of conscience dieth not, and the fire is not quenched ; divine justice is immortal, malignant spirits will always exist as mutual tormentors, and their wicked habits will never be extirpated.

And now, need I offer any thing farther to convince you of the superior importance of invisible and eternal to visible and temporary things ? Can a rational creature be at a loss to choose in so plain a case ? Can you need any arguments to convince you that an eternity of the most perfect happiness is rather to be chosen, than a few years of sordid unsatisfying delight ? Or that the former should not be forfeited for the sake of the latter ? Have you any remaining scruples, whether the little anxieties and mortifications of a pious life are more intolerable than everlasting punishment ? O it is a plain case: what then means an infatuated world, who lay out all their concern on temporal things, and neglect the important affairs of eternity ? Let us illustrate this matter by a supposition. Suppose a bird were to pick up and carry

carry away a grain of sand or dust from the globe of this earth once in a thousand years, till it should be at length wholly carried away ; the duration which this would take up appears a kind of eternity to us. Now suppose it were put to our choice, either to be happy during this time, and miserable ever after, or to be miserable during this time, and happy ever after, which would you choose ? Why, though this duration seems endless, yet he would be a fool that would not make the latter choice ; for, O, behind this vast duration, there lies an eternity, which exceeds it infinitely more than this duration exceeds a moment. But we have no such seemingly puzzling choice as this ; the matter with us stands thus, Will you choose the little sordid pleasures of sin, that may perhaps not last an hour, at most not many years, rather than everlasting pleasure of the sublimest kind ? Will you rather endure intolerable torment forever than painfully endeavour to be holy ? What does your conduct, my brethren, answer to these questions ? If your tongues reply, they will perhaps for your credit give a right answer, but what says your prevailing disposition and common practice ? Are you not more thoughtful for time than eternity ? More concerned about visible vanities than invisible realities ? If so, you make a fool's choice indeed.

But let it be further considered, that the transitoriness of **■**visible things may imply that we must ere long be removed from them. Though they

they were immortal it would be nothing to us, since we are not so in our present state. Within a few years, at most, we shall be beyond the reach of all happiness and misery from temporal things.

But when we pass out of this transitory state, we enter upon an everlasting state. Our souls will always exist; exist in a state of unchangeable, boundless happiness or misery. It is but a little while since we came into being out of a state of eternal non-existence; but we shall never relapse into that state again. These little sparks of being shall never be extinguished, they will survive the ruins of the world, and kindle into immortality. When millions of millions of ages are past, we shall still be in existence; and O! in what unknown region? In that of endless bliss, or of interminable misery! Be this the most anxious enquiry of our lives.

Seeing then we must soon leave this world, and all its joys and sorrows, and seeing we must enter on an unchangeable everlasting state of happiness or misery, be it our chief concern to end our present pilgrimage well. It matters but little, whether we lie easy or not during this night of existence, if so be we awake in eternal day. It is but a trifle, hardly worth a thought, whether we be happy or miserable here, if we be happy forever hereafter. What then mean the bustle and noise of mankind about the things of Time? O, Sirs! Eternity,  
awful

awful all-important Eternity, is the only thing that deserves a thought. I come,

II. To shew the great and happy influence a suitable impresson of the superior importance of invisible to visible things would have upon us. This I might exemplify in a variety of instances with respect to saints and sinners.

When we are tempted to any unlawful pleasures, how would we shrink away with horror from the pursuit, had we a due sense of the misery incurred, and the happiness forfeited by it?

When we find our hearts excessively eager after things below, had we a suitable view of eternal things, all these things would shrink into trifles hardly worth a thought, much less our principal concern.

When the sinner, for the sake of a little present ease, and to avoid a little present uneasiness, stifles his conscience, refuses to examine his condition, casts the thoughts of eternity out of his mind, and thinks it too hard to attend painfully on all the means of grace, has he then a due estimate of eternal things? Alas! no; he only looks at the things that are seen. Were the mouth of hell open before him, that he might behold its torments, and had he a sight of the joys of paradise, they would harden him into a generous insensibility of all the sorrows and anxieties of this life, and his enquiry would not be, Whether these things required of him are easy? But, Whether they are necessary

to obtain eternal happiness, and avoid everlasting misery?

When we suffer any reproach or contempt on a religious account, how would a due estimate of eternal things fortify us with undaunted courage, and make us willing to climb to heaven through disgrace, rather than sink to hell with general applause?

How would a realizing view of eternal things animate us in our devotions? Were this thought impressed on our hearts, when in the secret or social duties of religion, "I am now acting for eternity," do you think we should pray, read, or hear with so much indifferency and languor? O no; it would rouse us out of our dead frames, and call forth all the vigour of our souls. With what unwearied importunity should we cry to GOD! With what eagerness hear the word of salvation!

How powerful an influence would a view of futurity have to alarm the secure sinner, that has thought little of eternity all his life, though it be the only thing worth thinking of!

How would it hasten the determination of the lingering, wavering sinner, and shock him at the thought of living one day unprepared on the very brink of eternity!

In a word, a suitable impression of this would quite alter the aspect of things in the world, and would turn the concern and activity of the world into another channel. Eternity then would be the principal concern. Our

quiries would not be, Who will shew us any temporal good? What shall we eat, or what shall we drink? But, What shall we do to be saved? How shall we escape the wrath to come? Let us then endeavour to impress our hearts with invisible things, and for that purpose consider, that

We shall ere long be engulfed in this awful eternity, whether we think of it or not. A few days or years will launch us there; and O! the surprising scenes that will then open to us.

Without deep impressions of eternity on our hearts, and frequent thoughtfulness about it, we cannot be prepared for it.

And if we are not prepared for it, O! how inconceivably miserable our case! But if prepared, how inconceivably happy!

“ Look not then 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.”

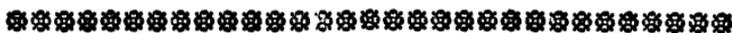


S E R M O N



# S E R M O N XII.

## The sacred Import of the Christian Name.



A C T S XI. 26.

*The Disciples were called CHRISTIANS first at Antioch.*

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 names are empty sounds, and but of little consequence: and yet it must be owned there are names of honour and significancy, and, when they are attended with the things signified by them, they are of great and sacred importance. Such is the *Christian* name; a name about seventeen hundred years old. And now, when the Name is almost lost in Party-distinctions, and the Thing is almost lost in Ignorance, Error, Vice, Hypocrisy, and Formality, it may be worth our while to consider the original import of that sacred name, as a proper expedient to recover both name and thing.

The name Christian was not the first by which the followers of CHRIST were distinguished.

guished. Their enemies called them *Galileans*, *Nazarenes*, and other names of contempt. And among themselves they were called *Saints* from their holiness, *Disciples* from their learning their religion from CHRIST as their teacher, *Believers* from their believing in him as the Messiah, and *Brethren* from their mutual love and their relation to GOD and each other. But after some time they were distinguished by the name of *Christians*. This they first received in *Antioch*, an heathen city, a city infamous for all manner of vice and debauchery, a city that had its name from *Antiochus Epiphanes*, the bitterest enemy the Church of the Jews ever had. A city very rich and powerful, from whence the Christian name would have an extensive circulation, but it is long since laid in ruins, unprotected by that sacred name: in such a city was CHRIST pleased to confer his name upon his followers: and you cannot but see that the very choice of the place discovers his Wisdom, Grace, and Justice.

The original word *χρηματισται*, here rendered *called*, seems to intimate, that they were called Christians by divine appointment, for it generally signifies an oracular nomination, or a declaration from GOD, and to this purpose it is generally translated †. Hence it follows, that  
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† It is this word that is used *Mat. ii. 12.* Καὶ χρηματίσθητε, being warned of GOD, and the like in *Mat. ii. 22.* So in *Rom. xi. 4.* χρηματισμοῦ, is rendered the answer of GOD. *Rom. vii. 3.* χρηματισθῆναι, she shall be called (*viz.* by the divine-law)-an adulteress.

the very name *Christian*, as well as the thing, was of a divine original; assumed, not by a private agreement of the disciples among themselves, but by the appointment of GOD. And in this view it is a remarkable accomplishment of an old prophecy of *Isaiab*, chap. lxii. 2. "The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a *new name*, which the mouth of the LORD shall name." So *Isaiab* lxv. 15. "The LORD shall call his servants by *another name*."

This name was at first confined to few; but it soon had a surprisngly extensive propagation through the world. In many countries, indeed, it was lost, and miserably exchanged for that of *Heathen*, *Mahometan*, or *Musselman*. Yet the *European* nations in general still retain the honour of wearing it. A few scattered Christians are also still to be found here and there in *Asia* and *Africa*, though crushed under the oppressions of *Mahometans* and *Pagans*. This name has likewise crossed the wide ocean to the wil-

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terefs. *Luke* ii. 26 *χημαλισμνον*, it was revealed to him by the Holy Ghost. *Acts* x. 22. *εχηματισθη*, was warned from GOD. *Heb.* viii. 5. *εχημαλισαι Μωσεν*, *Moses* was admonished of GOD. *Heb.* xi. 7. *Nab* being warned of GOD, *χηματισθη*. *Heb.* xii. 25. If they escaped not, who refused Him that spake on earth; viz. by divine inspiration; *χηματιζοντα επι της γης*. These are all the places perhaps in which the word is used in the New Testament; and in all these it seems to mean a Revelation from GOD, or something oracular. And this is a strong presumption that the word is to be so understood in the text.

dernefs of *America*, and is worn by the fundry *European Colonies* on this continent. We, in particular, call ourfelves *Christians*, and fould take it ill to be denied the honour of that diftinction. But do we know the meaning and facred import of that name? Do we know what it is to be *Christians* indeed? That is, to be in reality what we are in name : certainly it is time for us to confider the matter, and it is my prefent defign that we fould do fo.

Now we may confider this name in various views : particularly, as a name of diftinction from the reft of the world, who know not the Lord *JESUS*, or reject him as an Impoftor ;—as a patronymic name, pointing out the Father and Founder of our holy Religion, and the *Christian Church* ;—as a badge of our relation to *CHRIST* as his fervants, his children, his bride ;—as intimating our unction by the holy Spirit, or our being the fubjects of his influences (c) ; as *CHRIST* was anointed by the holy Spirit, or replenifhed with his Gifts above meafure (for you are to obferve that *Anointed* is the *English* of the *Greek* name [*Χριστος*,] *Christ*, and of the *Hebrew*, משיח *Meffiah* (d).—And as a name of appropriation, fignifying that we are the property of *CHRIST*, and his peculiar people. Each of thefe particulars might be profitably illuftrated (e). But my prefent defign confines

(c) 1 John ii. 20--27.

(d) Pfal. cv. 15. Touch not my Chrifts, that is, my anointed people ; μη ἀψυχοῦς τῶν Χριςτων. LXX.

(e) See a fine illuftration of them in *Dr Grofwenor's excellent ESSAY*

finer me to consider the Christian name only in two views, namely, as a catholic name, intended to bury all party-denominations; and as a name of obligation upon all that wear it to be Christians indeed, or to form their temper and practice upon the sacred model of Christianity.

I. Let us consider the Christian name as a catholic name intended to bury all party-denominations.

The name *Gentile* was odious to the *Jews*, and the name *Jew* was odious to the *Gentiles*. The name *Christian* swallows up both in one common and agreeable appellation. He that hath taken down the partition-wall has taken away partition-names, and united all his followers in his own name, as a common denomination. For now, says *St Paul*, "there is neither *Greek* nor *Jew*, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but CHRIST is all and in all. (f)" "And ye are all one in CHRIST JESUS". (g) According to a prophecy of *Zachariah*, "The LORD shall be king over all the earth; and in that day there shall be one LORD, and his name one (b)."

It is but a due honour to JESUS CHRIST, the founder of Christianity, that all who profess his Religion should wear his name: and they pay an extravagant and even idolatrous com-

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ESSAY on the *Christian Name*; from whom I am not ashamed to borrow several amiable sentiments.

(f) Col. iii. 11.

(g) Gal. iii. 28.

(b) Zech. xiv. 9.

pliment to his subordinate officers and ministers, when they take their denomination from them. Had this humour prevailed in the primitive church, instead of the common name *Christians*, there would have been as many party-names, as there were apostles or eminent ministers. There would have been *Paulites* from *Paul*; *Petrines* from *Peter*; *Johnites* from *John*; *Barnabites* from *Barnabas*, &c. &c. St Paul took pains to crush the first risings of this party-spirit in those churches which he planted; particularly in *Corinth*, where it most prevailed. While they were saying, "I am of *Paul*; and I of *Apollos*; and I of *Cephas*, and I of *CHRIST*," he puts this pungent question to them. "Is *CHRIST* divided? Are his servants the ring-leaders of so many parties? Was *Paul* crucified for you? or were ye baptized in or into the name of *Paul*, that ye should be so fond to take your name from him?" He counted it a happiness that providence had directed him to such a conduct as gave no umbrage of encouragement to such a humour. "I thank *GOD*, says he, that I baptized none of you, but *Crispus* and *Gaius*: lest any should take occasion to say, I baptized into my own name, and was gathering a party for myself. (b)"

But alas! how little has this convictive reasoning of the apostle been regarded in the future ages of the church? What an endless variety of de-

(b) 1 Cor. i. 12-15.

denominations taken from some men of character, or from some little peculiarities, has prevailed in the Christian world, and crumbled it to pieces, while the Christian name is hardly regarded? Not to take notice of the *Jesuits*, *Jansenists*, *Dominicans*, *Franciscans*, and other denominations and orders in the *Popish* church, where, having corrupted the Thing, they act very consistently to lay aside the Name, what party-names have been adopted by the Protestant-Churches, whose religion is substantially the same common christianity, and who agree in much more important articles than those in which they differ; and who therefore might peaceably unite under the common name of Christians? We have *Lutherans*, *Calvinists*, *Arminians*, *Zuinglians*, *Churchmen*, *Presbyterians*, *Independents*, *Baptists*, and a long list of names which I cannot now enumerate. To be a *Christian* is not enough now-a-days, but a man must also be *something* more and better, that is, he must be a strenuous bigot to this or that particular church. But where is the reason or propriety of this? I may indeed believe the same things which *Luther* or *Calvin* believed; but I do not believe them on the authority of *Luther* or *Calvin*, but upon the sole authority of JESUS CHRIST, and therefore I should not call myself by their name, as one of their disciples, but by the name of CHRIST, whom alone I acknowledge as the Author of my religion, and my only Master and Lord. If I  
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learn my religion from one of these great men it is indeed proper I should assume their name. If I learn it from a Parliament or Convocation, and make their acts and canons the rule and ground of my faith, then it is enough for me to be of the established religion, be that what it will : I may with propriety be called a meer conformist ; that is my highest character : but I cannot be properly called a *Christian* ; for a Christian learns his religion, not from Acts of Parliament, or from the determinations of Councils, but from JESUS CHRIST and his gospel.

To guard against mistakes on this head, I would observe that every man has a natural and legal right to judge and choose for himself in matters of religion ; and that is a mean supple soul indeed, and utterly careless about all religion, that makes a compliment of this right to any man, or body of men upon earth, whether Pope, King, Parliament, Convocation, or Synod. In the exercise of this right, and searching for himself, he will find that he agrees more fully in lesser as well as more important articles with some particular church than others ; and thereupon, it is his duty to join in stated communion with that Church ; and he may, if he pleases, assume the name which that church wears by way of distinction from others. This is not what I condemn. But for me to glory in the denomination of any particular church, as my highest character ; to lay more stress upon the name of a *Presbyterian* or a *Churchman* than

than upon the sacred name of *Christian*; to make a punctilious agreement with my sentiments in the little peculiarities of a party the test of all religion; to make it the object of my zeal to gain profelytes to some other than the Christian name; to connive at the faults of those of my own party, and to be blind to the good qualities of others, or invidiously to misrepresent or diminish them; these are the things which deserve universal condemnation from God and man; these proceed from a spirit of bigotry and faction, directly opposite to the generous catholic spirit of Christianity, and subversive of it. And yet how common is this spirit among all denominations? And what mischief has it done in the world? Hence proceed contentions and animosities, uncharitable suspicions and censures, slander and detraction, partiality and unreasonable prejudices, and a hideous group of evils, which I cannot now describe. This spirit also hinders the progress of serious practical religion, by turning the attention of men from the great concerns of eternity, and the essentials of Christianity, to vain jangling and contests about circumstantials and trifles. Thus the Christian is swallowed up in the partisan, and fundamentals lost in extra-essentials.

My brethren, I would warn you against this wretched mischievous spirit of party. I would not have you entirely sceptical and undetermined even about the smaller points of religion, the modes and forms, which are the matters of contention  
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between different churches ; nor would I have you quite indifferent what particular church to join with in stated communion. Endeavour to find out the truth, even in these circumstantial, at least so far as is necessary for the direction of your own conduct. But do not make these the whole or the principal part of your religion : do not be excessively zealous about them, nor break the peace of the church by magisterially imposing them upon others. " Hast thou faith in these little disputables," It is well ; but " have it to thyself before God," and do not disturb others with it. You may, if you please, call yourselves *Presbyterians* and *Dissenters*, and you should bear without shame or resentment all the names of reproach and contempt, which the world may brand you with. But as you should not be mortified on the one side, so neither should you glory on the other. A *Christian!* a *Christian!* let that be your highest distinction : let that be the name which you labour to deserve. God forbid that my ministry should be the occasion of diverting your attention to any thing else. But I am so happy that I can appeal to yourselves, whether I have, during several years of my ministry among you, laboured to instil into you the principles of bigotry, and make you warm profelytes to a party : or whether it has not been the great object of my zeal to inculcate upon you the grand essentials of our holy Religion, and to make you sincere practical Christians. Alas! my dear  
people

people, unless I succeed in this, I labour to very little purpose, though I should *presbyterianize* the whole colony.

Calumny and slander, it is hoped, have by this time, talked themselves out of breath ; and the lying spirit may now be at some loss for materials to form a popular plausible fallshood, which is likely to be credited where the *Dissenters* are known. But you have heard formerly, and some of you may still hear strange surmises, wild conjectures, and dismal insinuations. But if you would know the truth at once, if you would be fully informed by one that best knows what religion I am of, I will tell you (with Mr *Baxter*) " I am a Christian, a meer " Christian ; of no other Religion : the church " I am of is the Christian Church." The Bible ! the Bible ! is my religion ; and if I am a Dissenter, I dissent only from such modes and forms of religion, which I cannot find in my Bible ; and which therefore I conclude have nothing to do with religion ; much less should they be made terms of Christian communion, since CHRIST, the only lawgiver of his church, has not made them such. Let this congregation be a *Christian Society*, and I little care what other name it wears. Let it be a little *Antioch*, where the followers of CHRIST shall be distinguished by their old catholic name *Christians*. To bear, and to deserve this character, let this be our ambition, this our labour. Let Popes pronounce, and councils decree what they please ;  
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let Statesmen and Ecclesiastics prescribe what to believe ; as for us, let us study our Bibles : let us learn of CHRIST, and if we are not dignified with the smiles, nor enriched with the emoluments of an Establishment, we shall have his approbation, who is the only Lord and Sovereign of the realm of conscience, and by whose judgment we must stand or fall forever.

But it is time for me to proceed to consider the other view of the Christian name, on which I intend principally to insist ; and that is,

II. As a name of obligation upon all that wear it to be Christians indeed, or to form their temper and practice upon the sacred model of Christianity. The prosecution of this subject will lead me to answer this important enquiry, *What is it to be a CHRISTIAN ?*

*To be a Christian*, in the popular and fashionable sense, is no difficult or excellent thing. It is to be baptized, to profess the Christian religion, to believe, like our neighbours, that CHRIST is the *Messiah*, and to attend upon public worship once a week, in some church or other that bears the Christian name. In this sense a man may be a Christian, and yet be habitually careless about eternal things; a Christian, and yet fall short of the morality of many of the Heathens; a Christian, and yet a Drunkard, a Swearer, or a slave to some Vice or other; a Christian, and yet a wilful impenitent offender against GOD and man. To be a Christian  
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in this sense is no high character ; and, if this be the whole of Christianity, it is very little matter whether the world be christianized or not. But is this to be a Christian in the original and proper sense of the word ? No ; that is something of a very different and superior kind. *To be a Christian indeed*, is the highest character and dignity of which the human nature is capable : it is the most excellent thing that ever adorned our world : it is a thing that heaven itself beholds with approbation and delight.

*To be a Christian*, is to be like to CHRIST, from whom the name is taken : it is to be a follower and imitator of him ; to be possessed of his spirit and temper ; and to live as he lived in the world : it is to have those just, exalted, and divine notions of GOD and divine things, and that just and full view of our duty to GOD and man, which CHRIST taught ; in short, it is to have our sentiments, our temper, and practice formed upon the sacred model of the gospel. Let me expatiate a little upon this amiable character.

1. To be a Christian, is to depart from iniquity. To this the name obliges us ; and without this, we have no title to the name ; " Let every one that nameth the name of CHRIST, depart from iniquity (*i*). " That is, let him depart from iniquity, or not dare to touch that sacred name. CHRIST was perfectly free from sin ; he was " holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate  
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(*i*) 2 Tim. ii. 19.

"from sinners." His followers also shall be perfectly free from sin in a little time; ere long they will enter into the pure regions of perfect holiness, and will drop all their sins, with their mortal bodies, into the grave. But this, alas! is not their character in the present state, but the remains of sin still cleave to them. Yet, even in the present state, they are labouring after perfection in holiness. Nothing can satisfy them until they are conformed to the image of God's dear Son. They are honestly conflicting with every temptation, and vigorously resisting every iniquity in its most alluring forms. And, though sin is perpetually struggling for the mastery, and sometimes, in an inadvertent hour, gets an advantage over them, yet, as they are not under the Law, but under Grace, they are assisted with recruits of Grace, so that no sin has an habitual dominion over them (*k*). Hence they are free from the gross vices of the age, and are men of good morals. This is their habitual universal character, and to pretend to be Christians without this requisite, is the greatest absurdity.

What then shall we think of the drunken, swearing, debauched, defrauding, rakish, profligate, profane Christians, that have over-run the Christian world? Can there be a greater contradiction? A loyal subject in arms against his sovereign, an ignorant scholar, a sober drunkard, a charitable miser, an honest thief, is not  
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(*k*) Rom. vi. 14.

a greater absurdity, or a more direct contradiction. To depart from iniquity is essential to Christianity, and without it, there can be no such thing. There was nothing that CHRIST was so remote from as Sin; and therefore for those that indulge themselves in it to wear his name, is just as absurd and ridiculous as for a coward to denominate himself from *Alexander* the Great, or an illiterate dunce to call himself a *Newtonian* Philosopher. Therefore if you will not renounce Iniquity renounce the Christian name: for you cannot consistently retain both. *Alexander* had a fellow in his army, that was of his own name, but a mere coward. "Either be like me, says *Alexander*, or lay aside my name." Ye servants of sin, it is in vain for you to wear the name of CHRIST, it renders you the more ridiculous, and aggravates your guilt: you may with as much propriety call yourselves Lords, or Dukes, or Kings, as Christians, while you are so unlike to CHRIST. His name is a sarcasm, a reproach to you, and you are a scandal to his name. His name is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you.

2. To be a *Christian* is to deny ourselves and take up the cross, and follow him. These are the terms of discipleship fixt by CHRIST himself. "He said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me (1)." To deny ourselves is to abstain from the pleasures of sin,

to moderate our sensual appetites, to deny our own interest for the sake of CHRIST, and in short to sacrifice every thing inconsistent with our duty to him, when these come in competition. To take up our cross, is to bear sufferings, to encounter difficulties, and break through them all in imitation of JESUS CHRIST and for his sake. To follow him, is to trace his steps and imitate his example, whatever it cost us. But this observation will coincide with the next Head, and therefore I now dismiss it. These, Sirs, and these only, are the terms, if you would be Christians, or the disciples of CHRIST. These he honestly warned mankind of, when he first called them to be his disciples. He did not take an advantage of them, but let them know beforehand upon what terms they were admitted. He makes this declaration in the midst of a great crowd, in *Luke* xiv. 25, &c. "There went a great multitude with him," fond of becoming his followers:" but he turned, "and said unto them, If any man come to me "and hate not his father and mother, and "wife and children, and sisters, yea, and his "own life also, he cannot be my disciple." By *bating* is here meant a smaller degree of love, or a comparative hatred, that is, if we would be CHRIST'S disciples, we must be willing to part with our dearest relations, and even our lives, when we cannot retain them consistently with our duty to him. He goes on "Whoso-  
ever doth not bear his cross," and encounter  
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the greatest sufferings after my example, " cannot be my disciple." The love of CHRIST is the ruling passion of every true Christian, and for his sake he is ready to give up all, and to suffer all that earth or hell can inflict. He must run all risks, and cleave to his cause at all adventures. This is the essential character of every true Christian.

What then shall we think of those crowds among us, who retain the Christian name, and yet will not deny themselves of their sensual pleasures, nor part with their temporal interest for the sake of CHRIST? Who are so far from being willing to lay down their lives, that they cannot stand the force of a laugh or a sneer in the cause of Religion, but immediately stumble and fall away? or are they Christians, whom the commands of CHRIST cannot restrain from what their depraved hearts desire? No; a Christian without self-denial, mortification, and a supreme love to JESUS CHRIST, is as great a contradiction, as fire without heat, or a sun without light, an hero without courage, or a friend without love. And does not this strip some of you of the Christian name, and prove that you have no title at all to it?

3. I have repeatedly observed, that a true Christian must be a follower or imitator of CHRIST. " Be ye followers of me, says St Paul, as I also am of CHRIST(m)." CHRIST is the model after whom every Christian is formed, for, says St Peter, " he left us an ex-

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(m) 1 Cor. xi. 1.

" ample, that we should follow his steps (*n*). " St Paul tells us, that " we must be conformed to the image of GOD's dear Son (*o*), " and that " the same mind must be in us which " was also in CHRIST JESUS (*p*): " unless we partake of his Spirit, and resemble him in practice, unless we be as he was in the world, we have no right to partake of his name.

Here I would observe, that what was miraculous in our LORD's conduct, and peculiar to him as the Son of GOD, and Mediator, is not a pattern for our imitation, but only what was done in obedience to that Law of GOD which was common to him and us. His heart glowed with love to his Father, he delighted in universal obedience to him; it was his meat and his drink to do his will, even in the most painful and self-denying instances; he abounded in devotion, in prayer, meditation, fasting, and every religious duty. He was also full of every grace and virtue towards mankind: meek and lowly, kind and benevolent, just and charitable, merciful and compassionate; a dutiful son, a loyal subject, a faithful friend, a good master, and an active, useful, public-spirited member of society. He was patient and resigned, and yet undaunted and brave under sufferings; he had all his appetites and passions under proper government, he was heavenly-minded, above this world in heart while he dwelt

(*n*) 1. Pet. ii. 21.

(*o*) Rom. viii. 29.

(*p*) Phil. ii. 5.

dwelt in it. Beneficence to the souls and bodies of men was the business of his life, for " he went about doing good (q)." This is an imperfect sketch of his amiable character; and in these things every one that deserves to be called after his name, does in some measure resemble and imitate him. This is not only his earnest endeavour, but what he actually attains, though in a much inferior degree; and his imperfections are the grief of his heart. This resemblance and imitation of CHRIST is essential to the very being of a Christian, and without it it is a vain pretence. And does your christianity, my brethren, stand this test? may one know that you belong to CHRIST by your living like him, and discovering the same temper and spirit? Do the manners of the divine Master spread through all his family; and do you shew that you belong to it by your temper and conduct? Alas! if you must be denominated from hence, would not some of you with more propriety be called *Epicureans* from *Epicurus*, the sensual atheistic philosopher, or *Mammonites* from *Mammon*, the imaginary god of riches, or *Bacchanals* from *Bacchus*, the god of wine, than *Christians* from CHRIST, the most perfect pattern of living holiness and virtue that ever was exhibited to the world?

If you claim the name of Christians, where is that ardent devotion, that affectionate love to GOD, that zeal for his glory, that alacrity

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(q) Acts x 38.

in his service, that resignation to his will, that generous benevolence to mankind, that zeal to promote their best interests, that meekness and forbearance under ill usage, that unwearied activity in doing good to all, that self-denial and heavenly-mindedness which shone so conspicuous in CHRIST, whose holy name you bear? Alas! while you are destitute of these graces, and yet wear his name, you burlesque it, and turn it into a reproach both to him and yourselves.

I might add, that the Christian name is not hereditary to you by your natural birth, but you must be born anew of the Spirit, to entitle you to this new name; that a Christian is a Believer, believing in Him after whom he is called as his only SAVIOUR and LORD, and that he is a true penitent. Repentance was incompatible with CHRIST'S character, who was perfectly righteous, and had no sin of which to repent, but it is a proper virtue in a sinner, without which he cannot be a Christian. On these and several other particulars I might enlarge, but my time will not allow, I shall therefore conclude with a few reflections.

*First,* You may hence see that the Christian character is the highest, the most excellent and sublime in all the world. It includes every thing truly great and amiable. The Christian has exalted sentiments of the supreme Being, just notions of duty, and a proper temper and conduct towards God and man. A Christian  
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is a devout worshipper of the God of heaven, a chearful observer of his whole law, and a broken-hearted penitent for his imperfections. A Christian is a complication of all the amiable and useful graces and virtues; temperate and sober, just, liberal, compassionate and benevolent, humble, meek, gentle, peaceable, and in all things conscientious. A Christian is a good Parent, a good Child, a good Master, a good Servant, a good Husband, a good Wife, a faithful Friend, an obliging Neighbour, a dutiful Subject, a good Ruler, a zealous Patriot, and an honest Statesman; and as far as he is such, so far, and no farther, he is a Christian. And can there be a more amiable and excellent character exhibited to your view? It is an angelic, a divine character. Let it be your glory and your ambition to wear it with a good grace, to wear it so as to adorn it.

To acquire the title of *Kings* and *Lords* is not in your power, to spread your fame as *Scholars*, *Philosophers*, or *Heroes*, may be beyond your reach; but here is a character more excellent, more amiable, more honourable than all these, which it is your business to deserve and maintain. And, blessed be God, this is a dignity which the meanest among you, which beggars and slaves may attain. Let this therefore be an object of universal ambition and pursuit, and let every other name and title be despised in comparison of it. This is the way to rise

to true honour in the estimate of God, Angels, and good Men. What tho' the *antichristian* Christians of our age and country ridicule you? let them consider their own absurd conduct and be ashamed. They think it an honour to wear the christian name, and yet persist in unchristian practices, and who but a fool, with such palpable contradiction, would think so? A beggar that fancies himself a king, and trails his rags with the gait of majesty as though they were royal robes, is not so ridiculous as one that will usurp the christian name without a christian practice, and yet such christians are the favourites of the world. To renounce the profession of Christianity is barbarous and profane; to live according to that profession, and practise Christianity, is preciseness and fanaticism. Can any thing be more preposterous? This is as if one should ridicule learning, and yet glory in the character of a Scholar; or laugh at bravery, and yet celebrate the praises of Heroes. And are they fit to judge of the wisdom and propriety, or their censures to be regarded, who fall into such an absurdity themselves?

*Secondly,* Hence you may see that, if all the professors of Christianity should behave in character, the Religion of CHRIST would soon appear divine to all mankind, and spread thro' all nations of the earth. Were Christianity exhibited to the life in all its native and inherent glories, it would be as needless to offer arguments

arguments to prove it divine, as to prove that the sun is full of light: the conviction would flash upon all mankind by its own intrinsic evidence. Did Christians exemplify the Religion they profess, all the world would immediately see that that religion which rendered them so different a people from all the rest of mankind, is indeed divine, and worthy of universal acceptance. Then we should have no such monsters as *Atheists*, *Deists*, and *Infidels* in christian countries. Then *Heathenism*, *Mahometism*, and all the false religions in the world, would fall before the heaven-born religion of CHRIST. Then it would be sufficient to convince an Infidel just to bring him into a christian country, and let him observe the different face of things there from all the world beside. But alas!

*Thirdly*, How different is the christian world from the christian religion? Who would imagine that they who take their name from CHRIST have any relation to him, if we observe their spirit and practice? Should a stranger learn Christianity from what he sees in *Popish Countries*, he would conclude it principally consisted in bodily austerities, in worshipping Saints, Images, Relics, and a thousand trifles, in theatrical fopperies and insignificant ceremonies, in believing implicitly all the determinations of a fallible man as infallibly true, and in persecuting all that differ from them, and shewing their love to their souls by burning their  
their

their bodies. In *Protestant Countries*, alas! the face of things is but little better, as to good morals and practical religion. Let us take our own country for a sample. Suppose an *Heathen* or *Mahometan* should take a tour through *Virginia* to learn the religion of the inhabitants from their general conduct, what would he conclude? would he not conclude that all the religion of the generality consisted in a few *Sunday-Formalities*, and that the rest of the week they had nothing to do with GOD, or any Religion, but were at liberty to live as they please? And were he told that these were the followers of one CHRIST, and were of his Religion, would he not conclude that he was certainly an impostor, and the minister of sin? But when he came to find that notwithstanding all this licentiousness they professed the pure and holy Religion of the Bible, how would he be astonished, and pronounce them the most inconsistent bare-faced Hypocrites? My Brethren, great and heavy is the guilt that lies upon our Country on this account. It is a scandal to the Christian Name: it is guilty of confirming the neighbouring *Heathen* in their prejudices, and hinders the propagation of Christianity through the world. O let not us be accessory to this dreadful guilt, but do all we can to recommend our Religion to universal acceptance! I add,

*Fourthly*, and lastly, let us examine whether we have any just title to the Christian Name;

Name ; that is, whether we are Christians indeed, for, if we have not the Thing, to retain the Name is the most inconsistent folly and hypocrisy, and will answer no end but to aggravate our condemnation. A lost Christian is the most shocking character in hell, and, unless you be such Christians as I have described, it will ere long be your character. Therefore be followers of CHRIST, imbibe his spirit, practise his precepts, and depart from iniquity, otherwise he will sentence you from him at last as workers of iniquity. " And then will " I profess unto them (they are CHRIST'S own " words) I never knew you ; depart from me, " ye that work iniquity (*r*)."

(*r*) Matt. vii. 23.

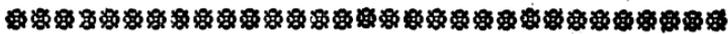


SERMON



# S E R M O N XIII.

The Divine Mercy to mourning Penitents.



JEREMIAH XXXI. 18, 19, 20.

*I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus, Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke : turn thou me, and I shall be turned ; for thou art the LORD my GOD. Surely after that I was turned, I repented ; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh : I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth. Is Ephraim my dear son ? is he a pleasant child ? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still : therefore my bowels are troubled for him : I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.*

**I**N these words the mourning language of a penitent child, sensible of ingratitude, and at once desirous and ashamed to return, and the tender language of a compassionate father, at once chastising, pitying, and pardoning, are sweetly

sweetly blended; and the images are so lively and moving, that, if they were regarded only as poetical descriptions founded upon fiction, they would be irresistibly striking. But when we consider them as the most important realities, as descriptive of that ingenuous repentance which we must all feel, and of that gracious acceptance we must all obtain from God before we can be happy, what almighty energy should they have upon us! how may our hearts dissolve within us at the sound of such pathetic complaints, and such gracious encouragements! Hard indeed is that heart that can hear these penitential strains without being melted into the like tender relentings, and inveterate is that melancholy, incurable is that despondency, that can listen to such expressions of fatherly compassion and love, without being cheered and animated.

This whole chapter had a primary reference to the Jews, and such of the *Israelites* as might mingle with them in their return from the *Babylonian* captivity. As they were enslaved to foreigners, and removed from their native land for their sin, so they could not be restored but upon their repentance. Upon this condition only a restoration was promised them, *Lev. xxvi. 40—43. Deut. xxx. 1—16.*

In this chapter we have a prediction of their repentance under the heavy chastisement of seventy years captivity, and of their return thereupon to their own land. In the text the whole

whole body of penitents among them is called by the name of a single person, *Ephraim*. In the prophetic writings the kingdom of the ten tribes, as distinguished from that of *Judah*, is frequently denominated by this name, because the *Ephraimites* were a principal family among them. And sometimes, as here, the name is given to the Jews, probably on account of the great number of *Ephraimites* mingled with them, especially on their return from captivity. All the penitent Jews are included under this single name to intimate their unanimity in their repentance; their hearts consented, like the heart of one man, to turn to the Lord, from whom with horrid unanimity they had revolted. This single name *Ephraim* also renders this passage more easily applicable to particular penitents in all ages. Every one of such may insert his own name, instead of that of *Ephraim*, and claim the encouragement originally given to him. And indeed this whole passage is applicable to all true penitents. Repenting *Ephraim* did but speak the language of every one of you, my brethren, who is made sensible of the plague of his own heart, and turned to the LORD; and the tender language of forgiving grace to mourning *Ephraim* is addressed to each of you, and it is with a view to you that I intend to consider this scripture.

The text naturally resolves itself into three parts, as it consists of three verses. In the first verse we find the careless, resolute Impenitent  
reduced

reduced by chastisement to a sense of his danger, and the necessity of turning to GOD, and yet sensible of his utter inability, and therefore crying for the attractive influences of divine grace. You hear *Ephraim* bemoaning his wretched case, and pouring out importunate groans for relief, thus; "Thou hast chastised me, and " I was chastised, like a bullock unaccustomed " to the yoke," that struggles and wearies himself in vain to get free from it, and must be broken and tamed with severe usage.—

" Thus stubborn and unmanageable have I " been; and now, when I am convinced of " the necessity of a return to thee, I feel my " my obstinate heart reluctant, like a wild ox, " and I cannot come. I therefore cry to thee " for the attractive influence of thy grace; " Turn thou me, and I shall be turned; draw " me, and I shall run after thee. To whom " but to thee, should I return? and to whom " but to thee, should I apply for strength to " return? For thou only art the LORD my " GOD, who can help me, and whom I " am under infinite obligations to serve."—

Thus the awakened sinner prayed, and mercy listened to his cries. The attractive influences of divine grace are granted, and he is enabled to return; which introduces the second branch of the text in the 19th verse, in which the new convert is represented as reflecting upon the efficacy of converting grace, and the glorious change wrought in him by it: "Surely after " that

“ that I was turned, I repented ; and after that  
 “ I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh : I  
 “ was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because  
 “ I did bear the reproach of my youth.”

While the returning Prodigal is venting himself in these plaintive strains in some solitary corner his heavenly Father's bowels are moving over him. The third part of the text represents the blessed GOD listening to the cries of his mourning child. “ I have surely heard,” or according to the emphasis of the original, hearing I have heard “ *Ephraim* bemoaning himself :” and while *Ephraim* is going on in his passionate complaints, GOD as it were interrupts him, and surprises him with the soothing voice of mercy. “ Is *Ephraim* my dear son ? is he a pleasant child \* ? surely he is ?” Or we may understand the words thus, as if GOD should say, “ Whose mourning voice is this I hear ? Is this *Ephraim* my dear son ? Is this my pleasant child, that bemoans himself as a helpless orphan, or one abandoned by his father ? And can I bear to hear his complaints without mingling divine consolations with them, and assuring him of pardon ? no ; for since I spake against him in my threatenings, I do earnestly remember him still : therefore my  
 VOL. II. H “ bowels

\* Though affirmative Interrogations are generally to be understood as strong Negations, yet sometimes they are to be understood affirmatively. See 1 Sam. ii. 27, 28. Job xx. 4. according to the Hebrew, Jer. iii. 6. Ezek. xx. 36. Amos vi. 2.

“ bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the LORD.”

I shall endeavour to illustrate each of these parts of the text, and thus shall be led to describe the preparative exercises, the nature and concomitants of true repentance; and the tender compassions of heaven towards mourning penitents.

I. Let us view the returning sinner under his first spiritual concern, which is generally preparatory to evangelical Repentance.

And where shall we find him? And what is he doing? We shall not now find him, as usual, in a thoughtless hurry about earthly things, confining all his attention to these trifles, and unmindful of the important concerns of eternity. We shall not find him merry, inconsiderate, and vain in a circle of jovial, careless companions? much less shall we find him intrepid and secure in a course of sin, gratifying his flesh, and indulging his lusts. In this enchanted road the crowd of hardy impenitents pass secure and chearful down to the chambers of death, but the awakened sinner flies from it with horror, or, if his depraved heart would tempt him to walk in it, he cannot take many steps before he is shocked with the horrid apparition of impending danger. He finds the flattering paths of sin haunted with the terrible spectres of guilt, and the sword of divine vengeance gleams bright and dreadful

dreadful before him, and seems lifted to give the fatal blow. You will therefore find the awakened sinner solitary, and solemn in some retired corner, not deceiving himself with vain hopes of safety in his present state, but alarmed with apprehensions of danger; not planning schemes for his secular advantage, nor asking with sordid anxiety, "Who will shew me any temporal good?" but solicitous about his perishing soul, and anxiously enquiring, "what shall I do to be saved?" He is not congratulating himself upon the imaginary goodness of his heart or life, or priding himself with secret wonder in a rich conceit of his excellencies, but you will hear him in his sorrowful retirement bemoaning, or (as the original signifies) condoling himself. He sees his case to be really awful and sad, and he, as it were, takes up a lamentation over himself. He is no more senseless, hard-hearted, and self-applauding as he was wont to be, but, like a mourning turtle, he bewails himself in such tragical strains as these: "Unhappy creature that I am! into what a deplorable state have I brought myself! and how long have I continued in it with the insensibility of a rock, and the stupidity of a brute? Now I may mourn over my past neglected, and unimproved days, as so many deceased friends, sent indeed from heaven to do me good, but cruelly killed by my ungrateful neglect, and continued delays as to a return to God and holiness.

“ Fly back ye abused months and years ; arise  
“ from the dead ; restore me your precious  
“ moments again, that I may unravel the web  
“ of life, and form it anew ; and that I may  
“ improve the opportunities I have squandered  
“ away. Vain and desperate wish ! The wheels  
“ of time will not return, and what shall I  
“ do ? Here I am, a guilty obnoxious creature,  
“ uncertain of life, and unfit to die ; alienated  
“ from GOD, and incapable, alas, I may add,  
“ unwilling to return ; a slave to sin, and too  
“ feeble to break the fetters of inveterate ha-  
“ bits ; liable to the arrest of divine justice,  
“ and unable to deliver myself ; exposed to  
“ the vengeance of heaven, yet can make no  
“ atonement ; destitute of an interest in CHRIST,  
“ and uncertain, awfully uncertain, whether  
“ I shall ever obtain it. Unhappy creature !  
“ How justly may I take up a lamentation over  
“ myself ! Pity me, ye brute creation, that  
“ know not to sin, and therefore cannot know  
“ the misery of my case ; and have pity upon  
“ me, have pity upon me, O ye my friends !  
“ And if these guilty lips may dare to pro-  
“ nounce thy injured name, O thou GOD of  
“ grace, have pity upon me ! But alas ! I de-  
“ serve no pity, for how long have I denied it  
“ to myself ! Ah ! infatuated wretch ! why did  
“ not I sooner begin to secure my unhappy soul,  
“ that has lain all this time neglected and un-  
“ pitied upon the brink of ruin ! Why did I  
“ not sooner lay my condition to heart ? Alas,  
“ I should

“ I should have gone on thoughtless still, had  
 “ I not been awakened by the kind severity,  
 “ the gracious chastisements of my dishonour-  
 “ ed Father.”

“ Thou hast chastised me”. This, as spoken by *Ephraim*, had a particular reference to the *Babylonish* captivity, but we may naturally take occasion from it to speak of those calamities in general, whether outward or inward, that are made the means of alarming the secure sinner.

There are many ways which our heavenly Father takes to correct his undutiful children until they return to him. Sometimes he kindly takes away their health; the abused occasion of their wantonness and security, and restrains them from their lusts with fetters of affliction. This is beautifully described by *Elihu*, “ He  
 “ is chastened with pain upon his bed, and  
 “ the multitude of his bones with strong  
 “ pain; so that his life abhorreth bread,  
 “ and his soul dainty meat. His flesh is con-  
 “ sumed away, that it cannot be seen, and his  
 “ bones that were not seen, stick out, yea;  
 “ his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his  
 “ life unto the destroyers. If there be a mes-  
 “ senger with him, a peculiarly skilful interpret-  
 “ er, one among a thousand, to shew unto man  
 “ his uprightnes; then he is gracious unto  
 “ him, and saith, Deliver him from going down  
 “ to the pit; I have found a ransom(a).” Some-  
 times GOD awakens the sinner to bethink

H 3

him-

(a) Job xxxiii. 19, &c.

himself by stripping him of his earthly supports and comforts, his estate or his relatives, which drew away his heart from eternal things, and thus brings him to see the necessity of turning to God the fountain of bliss, upon the failure of the streams. Thus he dealt with profligate *Manasseh* (b). "He was taken in thorns, and bound in fetters, and carried to *Babylon*; and when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord, and humbled himself greatly before him, and prayed unto him, &c." Thus also God promises to do with his chosen; "I will cause you to pass under my rod, and bring you into the bond of my covenant (c)."

But the principal means of correction which God uses for the end of return to him is that of conscience; and indeed without this all the rest are in vain. Outward afflictions are of service only as they tend to awaken the conscience from its lethargy to a faithful discharge of its trust. It is conscience that makes the sinner sensible of his misery, and scourges him till he return to his duty. This is a chastisement the most severe that human nature can endure. The lashes of a guilty conscience are intolerable, and some under them have chosen strangling and death rather than life. The spirit of a man may bear him up under outward infirmities; but when the spirit itself is wounded

(b) 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11, 12.

(c) Ezek. xx. 37. See also Psal. lxxxix. 32. Prov. xxii. 15. and xxix. 15.

wounded, who can bear it (*d*)? Conscience is a serpent in his breast, which bites and gnaws his heart, and he can no more avoid it than he can fly from himself. Its force is so great and universal, that even the heathen poet *Juvenal*, not famous for the delicacy of his morals, taught by experience, could speak feelingly of its secret blows, and of agonizing sweats under its tortures\*.

Let not such of you as have never been tortured with its remorse, congratulate yourselves upon your happiness, for you are not innocents; and therefore conscience, will not always sleep; it will not always lie torpid and inactive, like a snake benumbed with cold, in your breast. It will awaken you either to your conversion, or condemnation. Either the fire of God's wrath flaming from his law will enliven it in this world to sting you with medicinal anguish; or the unquenchable fire of his vengeance in the lake of fire and brimstone will thaw it into life, and then it will horribly rage in your breast, and diffuse its tormenting poison through

H 4

(*d*) Prov. xviii. 14.

• ——— Frigida mens est

Criminibus, tacitâ sudant præcordia culpâ.

JUVEN. Sat. I.

————— Cur tamen hos tu

Evasisse putes, quos diri conscia facti

Mens habet attonitos, & surdo verberæ cædit,

Occlusum quatiente animo tortore flagellum?

Id. Sat. XIII.

through your whole frame: then it will become a never-dying worm, and prey upon your hearts forever. But if you now suffer it to pain you with salutary remorse, and awaken you to a tender sensibility of your danger, this intestine enemy will in the end become your bosom-friend, will support you under every calamity, and be your faithful companion and guardian through the most dangerous paths of life. Therefore now submit to its wholesome severities, now yield to its chastisements. Such of you as have submitted to its authority, and obeyed its faithful admonitions, find it your best friend; and you now bless the day in which you complied with its demands; though, before divine grace renewed your heart, your wills were stubborn and reluctant; and you might say with *Ephraim*,

“ I was chastised as a bullock unaccustomed  
 “ to the yoke ;” that is, “ As a wild young ox,  
 “ unbroken from the herd, is unmanageable,  
 “ refuses the yoke, becomes outrageous at the  
 “ whip or goad, and wearies himself in in-  
 “ effectual struggles to throw off the burden  
 “ clapt upon him, and regain his savage li-  
 “ berty, and never will submit until wearied  
 “ out, and unable to resist any longer ; so has  
 “ my stubborn heart, unaccustomed to obey,  
 “ refused the yoke of thy law, O my God, and  
 “ struggled with sullen obstinacy under thy  
 “ chastisements. Instead of calmly submitting  
 “ to thy rod, and immediately reforming un-  
 “ der

“ der correction, instead of turning to thee,  
“ and flying to thy arms to avoid the falling  
“ blow, I was unyielding and outrageous, like  
“ a wild bull in a net (e). I wearied myself in  
“ desperate struggles to free myself from thy  
“ chastising hand, or vainly tried to harden  
“ myself to bear it with obdurate insensibility.  
“ I tried to break the rod of conscience that I  
“ might no more groan under its lashes, and  
“ my heart reluctated and rebelled against the  
“ gracious design of thy correction, which was  
“ to bring me back to thee my heavenly fa-  
“ ther. But now I am wearied out, now I  
“ am sensible I must submit, or perish, and  
“ that my conscience is too strong for me, and  
“ must prevail.”

You see, my brethren, the obstinate reluctance of an awakened sinner to return to God. Like a wild young bullock, he would range at large, and is impatient of the yoke of the law, and the restraints of conscience. He loves his sin, and cannot bear to part with it. He has no relish for the exercises of devotion, and ascetic mortification; and therefore will not submit to them. The way of holiness is disagreeable to his depraved heart, and he will not turn his feet to it. He loves to be stupidly easy and serene in mind, and cannot bear to be checked in his pursuit of business or pleasure by anxieties of heart, and therefore he is impatient of the honest warnings of his  
con-

(e) Isa. li. 20.

conscience, and uses a variety of wretched expedients to silence its clamorous remonstrances. In short, he will do any thing, he will turn to any thing rather than turn to God. If his conscience will but be satisfied, he will forsake many of his sins; he will, like *Herod (f)*, do *many things*, and walk in the whole round of outward duties. All this he will do, if his conscience will be but bribed by it. But if conscience enlarges its demands, and, after he has reformed his life, requires him to make him a *new heart*, requires him to turn not only from the outward practice of gross vices, but from the love of all sin, not only to turn to the observance of religious duties, but to turn to the LORD with all his heart, and surrender himself entirely to him, and make it the main business of life to serve him; if conscience, I say, carries its demands thus far, he cannot bear it, he struggles to throw off the yoke. And some are cursed with horrid success in the attempt: they are permitted to rest content in a partial Reformation, or external Religion, as sufficient, and so go down to the grave "with a lie in their right hand." But the happy soul, on whom divine grace is determined to finish its work in spite of all opposition, is suffered to weary itself out in a vain resistance of the chastisements of conscience, till it is obliged to yield, and submit to the yoke. And then with *Ephraim*, it will cry,

Turn

(f) Mark vi. 20.

" Turn thou me, and I shall be turned." This is the mourning sinner's language, when convinced that he must submit and turn to God, and in the mean time finds himself utterly unable to turn. Many essays he makes to give himself to the LORD, but O! his heart starts back, and shrinks away, as though he were rushing into flames, when he is but flying to the gracious embraces of his Father. He strives, and strives to drag it along, but all in vain. And what shall he do in this extremity? but cry, "LORD, turn thou me, and I shall be turned; draw me, and I shall run after thee". "Work in me to will and to do, and then I shall work out my own salvation? LORD, though I am sensible of the necessity of turning to thee, though I exert my feeble strength in many a languid effort to come, yet I cannot; I cannot so much as creep towards thee, though I should die on the spot. Not only thy word, but my own experience now convinces me that I cannot come unto thee, unless thou draw me (g). Others vainly boast of their imaginary power, as though, when they set themselves about it they could perform some great achievements. Thus I once flattered myself, but now, when I am most capable of judging, that is, when I come to the trial, all my boasts are humbled. Here I lie, an helpless creature, unable to go to the physician;

" unable

(g) John vi. 44.

" unable to accept of pardon and life on the  
 " easy terms of the gospel, and unable to free  
 " myself from the bondage of sin; and thus I  
 " must lie forever, unless that God from whom  
 " I have revolted, draws me back to himself.  
 " Turn me, O thou that hast the hearts of all  
 " men in thy hands, and canst turn them  
 " whithersoever thou pleasest, turn me; and  
 " then, weak and reluctant as I am, I shall  
 " be turned; this backward heart will yield to  
 " the almighty attraction of thy grace.

" Here I am as passive clay in the hand of  
 " the potter; incapable to fashion myself  
 " into a vessel fit for thy house, but thou canst  
 " form me as thou pleasest. This hard and  
 " stubborn heart will be ductile and pliable  
 " to thine irresistible power." Thus you see  
 the awakened sinner is driven to earnest prayer  
 in his exigence. Never did a drowning man  
 call for help, or a condemned malefactor plead  
 for pardon with more sincerity and ardour.  
 If the sinner had neglected prayer all his life  
 before, now he flies to it as the only expedient  
 left, or if he formerly ran it over in a careless  
 unthinking manner, as an insignificant form,  
 now he exerts all the importunity of his soul;  
 now he prays as for his life, and cannot rest  
 till his desires are answered.

The sinner ventures to enforce his petition  
 by pleading his relation to God; "Turn me  
 " —for thou art the Lord my God." There  
 is a sense in which a sinner in his unregenerate  
 state

state cannot call God *his* God, that is, he cannot claim a special interest in him as his portion, nor cry "Abba, Father" with the Spirit of adoption, as reconciled to God. But even an unregenerate sinner may call him *my* God in other senses; he is *his* God by right, that is, though he has idolatrously yielded himself to other gods, yet by right he should have acknowledged him only. He is *his* God as that name denotes authority and power, to which all should be subject; *his* God, as he would now choose him to be his God, his portion, and his all, which is implied in turning to him; he is *his* God by anticipation and hope, as upon his turning to him he will become his reconciled God in covenant; and he *his* God by outward profession and visible relation. The force of this argument to urge his petition for converting grace may be viewed in various lights.

It may be understood thus; "Turn thou me, for thou only, who art the LORD of the universe, and hast all the creation at thy controul, thou only, who art my God and ruler, and in whose hand my heart is, art able to turn so obstinate a creature. In vain do I seek for help elsewhere. Not all the means upon earth, not all the persuasions, exhortations, invitations and terrors that can be used with me, can turn this heart; it is a work becoming the Lord God almighty, and it is thou alone canst effect it."

Or

Or we may understand the plea thus ; “ Turn  
 “ thou me, and I shall turn to thee ; to thee  
 “ who art the Lord my God, and to whom I  
 “ am under the most sacred obligations to re-  
 “ turn, I would resign thine own right to  
 “ thee ; I would submit to thee who alone hast  
 “ a just claim to me as thy servant.”

Or the words may be understood as an abju-  
 ration of all the idol-lusts to which the sinner  
 was enslaved before. “ I will turn to thee ;  
 “ for to whom should I turn but to the Lord  
 “ my God? “ What have I to do any more  
 “ with idols (b)?” Why should I any longer  
 “ submit to other Lords, who have no right  
 “ to me? I would renounce them all; I would  
 “ throw off all subjection to them, and avouch  
 “ thee alone for the Lord my God.” Thus  
 the Jews renounced their false gods upon their  
 return from *Babylon*.

Or we may understand the words as an en-  
 couragement to hope for converting grace, since  
 it is asked from a God of infinite power and  
 goodness. “ Though I have most grievously  
 “ offended, and, had I done the thousandth part  
 “ so much against my fellow creatures, I could  
 “ never expect a favourable admission into  
 “ their presence ; yet I dare ask so great a fa-  
 “ vour of thee, for thou art God, and not  
 “ man : thy power and thy grace are all di-  
 “ vine, such as become a God. I therefore  
 “ dare to hope for that from thy hands, which  
 “ I might

(b) *Hosea xiv. 8.*

“ I might despair of from all the universe of  
 “ beings besides.”

Or finally, the passage may be looked upon as a plea drawn from the sinner's external relation to God, as a member of his visible church, and as dedicated to him. “ Turn me, and I  
 “ will turn to thee, whose name I bear, and  
 “ to whom I have been early devoted. I would  
 “ now of my own choice acknowledge the  
 “ God of my fathers, and return to the guide  
 “ of my youth. And, since thou hast honour-  
 “ ed me with a place in thy visible church, I  
 “ humbly hope thou wilt not reject me now,  
 “ when I would sincerely consecrate myself to  
 “ thee, and become thy servant in reality, as  
 “ well as in appearance.” In this sense the plea might be used with peculiar propriety by the Jews, who had been nationally adopted as the peculiar people of God.

In whatever sense we understand the words they convey to us this important truth, that the awakened sinner is obliged to take all his encouragement from God, and not from himself. All his trust is in the divine mercy, and he is brought to an happy self-despair.

Having viewed *Ephraim* under the preparatory work of legal conviction, and the dawn of evangelical repentance, let us view him,

II. As reflecting upon the surprising efficacy  
 of

of grace he had sought, and which was bestowed upon him in answer to his prayer.

We left him just now crying, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned:" here we find him actually turned: "Surely after that I was turned, I repented." When the LORD exerts his power to subdue the stubbornness of the sinner, and sweetly to allure him to himself, then the sinner repents. Then his heart dissolves in ingenuous disinterested relentings. His sorrow and concern before conversion are forced and mercenary, they are occasioned only by a selfish fear of punishment, and he would willingly get rid of them, but now his grief is free and spontaneous; it flows from his heart as freely as streams from a fountain; and he takes pleasure in tender relentings before the LORD for his sin; he delights to be humble, and to feel his heart dissolve within him. An heart of flesh, soft and susceptible of impressions, is his choice, and a stony insensible heart his greatest burden; the more penitent the more happy, and the more senseless, the more miserable he finds himself. Now also his heart is actuated with a generous concern for the glory of God, and he sees the horrid evil of sin as contrary to the holiness of God, and an ungrateful requital of his uninterrupted beneficence.

We learn from this passage that the true penitent is sensible of a mighty turn in his temper and inclinations, "Surely after that I was **TUR**NED, I repented." His whole soul is  
*turned*

*turned from* what he formerly delighted in, and *turned to* what he had no relish for before. Particularly his thoughts, his will, and affections are turned to GOD; there is an heavenly bias communicated to them, which draws them to holiness, like the law of gravitation in the material world. There is indeed a new turn given to his outward practice; the world may in some measure see that he is a *new* man; but this is not all; the first spring that turns all the wheels of the soul and actions of life is the heart, and this is first set right. The change within is as evident as that without, could our eyes penetrate the heart. In short, "If any man be in CHRIST, he is throughout a *new* creature; old things are passed away, and behold, all things are become new."

Apply this touch-stone to your hearts, my brethren, and see if they will stand the test.

The penitent proceeds, "After that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh." The same grace that turns him does also instruct him; nay, it is by discovering to him the beauty of holiness, and the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST, that it draws him. He is brought out of darkness into marvellous and astonishing light, that surprises him with new discoveries of things: he is instructed particularly, as to the necessity of turning to GOD, as to the horrid ingratitude, vileness, and deformity of sin, and as to his folly and wickedness in continuing so long alienated from GOD. By the

way have you ever been let in to these secrets, my hearers? And when instructed in these,

“ He smites upon his thigh.” This gesture denotes consternation and amazement, and nature directs us thus to express these passions. *Ezekiel* is enjoined to use this gesture as a prophetic action signifying the horror and astonishment of his mind (i). This action therefore of the penitent intimates what consternation and amazement he is cast into, when these new discoveries flash upon his soul. He stands amazed at himself. He is struck with horror to think what an ungrateful, ignorant, stupid wretch he has been all his life till this happy moment.

“ Alas! what have I been doing? abusing all  
 “ my days in ruining my own soul, and dishonouring the God of all my mercies! contentedly estranged from him, and not seeking to return! Where were my eyes that I  
 “ never before saw the horrid evil of my conduct, and the shocking deformity of sin,  
 “ which now opens to me in all its hideous colours! Amazing! that divine vengeance has  
 “ not broken out upon me before now! Can it  
 “ be that I am yet alive! in the land of hope  
 “ too! yea, alive, an humble pardoned penitent!  
 “ Let heaven and earth wonder at this, for surely  
 “ the sun never shone upon a wretch so undeserving so great a monument of mercy!”

The pardoned Penitent proceeds, “ I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I  
 “ did

(i) Ezek. xxi. 12.

“ did bear the reproach of my youth.” We are ashamed, when we are caught in a mean, base, and scandalous action; we blush, and are confounded, and know not where to look, or what to say. Thus the Penitent is heartily ashamed of himself, when he reflects upon the sordid dispositions he has indulged, and the base and scandalous actions he has committed. He blushes at his own inspection; he is confounded at his own tribunal. He appears to himself, a mean, base, contemptible wretch; and, though the world may honour him, he loaths himself, as viler than the earth he treads on, and is secretly ashamed to see the face of man. And how then shall he appear before God? how shall he hold up his face in the presence of his injured Father? He comes to him ashamed, and covering his head. He knows not what to say to him; he knows not how to look him in the face, but he falls down abashed and confounded at his feet. Thus was penitent *Ezra* ashamed before God. He fell upon his knees, and lifted up his hands (his eyes, like the *Publican*, he durst not lift up) unto the heavens, and he says, “ O my God, I am  
 “ ashamed, and blush to lift up my face to thee,  
 “ my God; for our iniquities are increased  
 “ over our heads, and our trespasses are grown  
 “ up unto the heavens.—And now, O our  
 “ God, what shall we say after this? for we  
 “ have broken thy commandments (k). “ Thus

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“ it

(k) *Ezra* ix. 5—10.

" it was foretold concerning the repenting Jews,  
 " Then thou shalt remember thy evil ways and  
 " be ashamed. Thou shalt be confounded,  
 " and never open thy mouth any more, because  
 " of thy shame (*l*).<sup>4</sup> There is good reason for  
 this conscious shame, and therefore it is en-  
 joined as a duty: " Not for your sakes do I this  
 " unto you, saith the Lord God, be it known  
 " unto you: be ashamed and confounded for  
 " your own ways, O house of Israel (*m*).<sup>5</sup>

And what is the cause of this shame in the  
 mourning Penitent? " O, says he, it is because  
 " I bear the reproach of my youth." " I *carry*  
 " upon me (as the original word signifies) the  
 " brand of infamy. My youth, alas! was  
 " spent in a thoughtless neglect of God and  
 " the duties I owed him; my vigorous days  
 " were wasted in sensual extravagances, and  
 " gratifying my criminal inclinations. My  
 " prime of life, which should have been sacred  
 " to the Author of my existence, was spent  
 " in rebellion against him. Alas! my first  
 " thoughts, my virgin-love did not aspire to  
 " him; nor did my young desires, as soon  
 " as fledged, wing their flight to heaven. In  
 " short, the temper of my heart, and my  
 " course of life, from the first exercises of rea-  
 " son to this happy hour of my conversion,  
 " were a disgrace to my rational nature; I  
 " have degraded myself beneath the beasts that  
 " perish." " Behold, I am vile! I loath and  
 " abhor

<sup>4</sup>) Ezek. xvi. 61, 63.

<sup>5</sup>) Ezek. xxxvi. 32.

“ abhor myself for all my filthiness and abominations(n).” “ And how amazing the grace of God, to honour so base a wretch with a place among the children of his love !”

Thus I have delineated the heart of penitent *Ephraim* : and let me ask you, my brethren, is this your picture? Have you ever felt such ingenuous relentings, such just consternation, such holy shame and confusion? There can be no transition from nature to grace without previous concern, &c. You all bear the reproach of that youth, you have all spent some unhappy days in the scandalous ways of sin, and your consciences still bear the brand of infamy. And have you ever been made deeply sensible of it? Has God ever heard you bemoaning yourselves thus in some mournful solitude, “ Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke.” Is there any such mourner here this day? then listen to the gracious voice of your heavenly Father, while

III. I am illustrating the last, the sweetest part of the text, which expresses the tender compassion of God towards mourning Penitents.

While they are bemoaning their case, and conscious that they do not deserve one look of love from God, he is represented as attentively listening to catch the first penitential groan that breaks from their hearts. *Ephraim*, in the

I 3

depth

(n) Ezek. xxxvi. 31.

depth of his despondency, probably did hardly hope that God took any notice of his secret sorrows, which he suppressed as much as possible from the public view: but God heard him, God was watching to hear the first mournful cry; and he repeats all his complaints, to let him know (after the manner of men) what particular notice he had taken of them. "I have surely heard, or hearing I have heard," "that is, I have attentively heard" *Ephraim* bemoaning himself thus.

What strong consolation may this give to desponding mourners, who think themselves neglected by that God to whom they are pouring out their weeping supplications! He hears your secret groans, he counts your sighs, and puts your tears into his bottle. His eyes penetrate all the secrets of your heart, and he observes all their feeble struggles to turn to himself; and he beholds you not as an unconcerned spectator, but with all the tender emotions of fatherly compassion: for,

While he is listening to *Ephraim's* mournful complaints, he abruptly breaks in upon him, and sweetly surprises him with the warmest declarations of pity and grace. "Is this *Ephraim*, my dear son, whose mourning voice I hear? Is this my pleasant child, or (as it might be rendered) the child of my delights, who thus wounds my ear with his heart-rending groans?" What strange language this to an ungrateful, unyielding rebel, that

con-

continued obstinate till he was wearied out; that would not turn, till drawn; that deserved to fall a victim to justice? This is the language of compassion all divine, of grace that becomes a GOD.

This passage contains a most encouraging truth, that, however vile and abandoned a sinner has been, yet, upon his repentance he becomes GOD'S dear son, his favourite child. He will from that moment regard him, provide for him, protect him, and bring him to his heavenly inheritance, as his son and heir. "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, &c. (o) shall separate him from his Father's love; but he shall inherit all things (p)." Yea, all things are his already in title, and he shall be made "greater than the kings of the earth," he shall be made such as becomes so dignified a relation, as that of a Son to the King of kings and Lord of lords.

And is not this magnet sufficient to attract all this assembly to their Father's house? Can you resist the almighty energy of such compassion? Return, ye perishing Prodigals! Return; though you have "sinned against heaven and before your father, and are no more worthy to be called his sons," yet return, and you shall be made his dear sons, his pleasant children.

I 4

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(o) Rom. viii. 38, &amp;c.

(p) Rev. xxi. 7.

Are none of you in need of such strong consolation as this? Do you want encouragement to return, and are you ready to spring up, and run to your Father's arms, upon the first assurance of acceptance? If this be what you want, you have an abundance for your supply. Are all your souls then in motion to return? Does that eye, which darts through the whole creation at once, now behold your hearts moving towards God? Or am I wasting these gracious encouragements upon stupid creatures, void of sensation, that do not care for them, or that are so conceited of their own worth, as not to need them? If so, I retract these consolations, with respect to you, and shall presently tell you your doom. But let us farther pursue these melting strains of paternal pity.

"For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still." Many and dreadful were the threatenings denounced against the sinner, while impenitent; and, had he continued impenitent, they would certainly have been executed upon him. But the primary and immediate design of the threatenings are to make men happy, and not to make them miserable; they are designed to deter them from disobedience, which is naturally productive of misery, or to reclaim them from it, which is but to restrain them in their career to ruin. And consequently these threatenings, proceed from love as well as the promises of our God, from love to the person, though from hatred to sin.

So

So the same love which prompts a parent to promise a reward to his son for obedience, will prompt him also to threaten him, if he takes some dangerous weapon to play with: or, to choose a more pertinent illustration, for GOD is the moral ruler as well as father of the rational world, the same regard to the public weal, which induces a lawgiver to annex a reward to obedience, will also prompt him to add penalties to his law to deter from disobedience; and his immediate design is not to make any of his subjects miserable, but to keep them from making themselves and others miserable by disobedience; though, when the threatening is once denounced, it is necessary it should be executed, to vindicate the veracity of the lawgiver, and secure his government from insult and contempt. Thus when the primary end of the divine threatenings, namely, the deterring and reclaiming men from disobedience is not obtained, then it becomes necessary that they should be executed upon the impenitent in all their dreadful extent; but when the sinner is brought to repentance, and to submit to the divine government, then all these threatenings are repealed, and they shall not hurt one hair of his head. And the sinner himself will acknowledge that these threatenings proved necessary mercies to him, and that the denunciation of everlasting punishment was one mean of bringing him to everlasting happiness, and that di-  
vine

vine vengeance in this sense conspired with divine grace to save him.

Consider this, ye desponding Penitents, and allay your terrors. That God, who has written such bitter things against you in his word, earnestly and affectionately remembers you still, and it was with a kind intent to you that he thundered out these terrors at which you tremble. These acids, this bitter physic were necessary for your recovery. These coals of fire were necessary to awaken you out of your lethargy. Therefore read the love of your Father, even in these solemn warnings. He affectionately remembers you still; he cannot put you out of his thoughts.

" Therefore my bowels, (adds the all-gracious *Jehovah*) are troubled for him." Astonishing beyond conception! How can we bear up under such words as these? Surely they must break our hearts, and overwhelm our spirits! Here is the great God, who has millions of superior Beings to serve him, and who is absolutely independent upon them all, troubled, his very bowels troubled, for a rebellious, useless, trifling worm! Be astonished at this, ye Angels of light, who are the witnesses of such amazing, such unbounded compassion! and wonder at it, O ye sons of men, who are more intimately concerned in it, stand and adore as it were, in statues of admiration! It is true these words are not to be taken literally, as though the Deity were capable of sorrow, or  
any

any of the human passions, but he here condescends to adapt himself to the language of mortals, and to borrow such images as will convey to us the most lively ideas of his grace and tenderness to mourning Penitents, and no image can answer this end better, than that of a Father, whose bowels are yearning over his mourning child prostrate at his feet, and who with eager embraces raises him up, assuring him of pardon and acceptance. If any of you know what it is to receive a penitent child in this manner, while all the *father* is tenderly working within you, you may form some affecting ideas of the readiness of our heavenly Father to receive returning sinners from this tender illustration.

The LORD concludes this moving speech with a promise that includes in it more than we can ask or think, sealed with his own sacred name. "I will surely have mercy," or (according to the more emphatical original) with "Mercy I will have mercy upon him, saith the LORD:" that is, I will shew abundant mercy to him, I will give him all the blessings that infinite mercy can bestow, and what can be needed more? This promise includes pardon, acceptance, sanctification, joy in the holy Ghost, peace of conscience, and immortal life and glory in the future world. O Sirs! what a God, what a Father is this? "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, &c (r)?"

And

(r) Micah vii. 18.

And can you, ye mourners in *Zion*, can you fear a rejection from such a tender Father? Can you dread to venture upon such abundant mercies? Is there a mourning *Ephraim* in this assembly? I may call you, as GOD did *Adam*, *Ephraim*, where art thou? Let the word of GOD find you out, and force a little encouragement upon you: your heavenly Father, whose angry hand you fear, is listening to your groans, and will measure you out a mercy for every groan, a blessing for every sigh, a drop, a draught of consolation for every tear. His bowels are moving over you, and he addresseth you in such language as this, "Is this my dear son? is this my pleasant child? &c."

And as to you, ye hardy Impenitents, ye abandoned Profligates, ye careless Formalists, ye *almost* Christians, can you hear these things, and not begin to relent? Do you not find your frozen hearts beginning to thaw within you? Can you resist such alluring grace? Can you bear the thoughts of continuing enemies to so good, so forgiving a Father? Does not *Ephraim's* petition now rise in your hearts, "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned?" then I congratulate you upon this happy day, you are this day become GOD's dear sons, the children of his delights, &c.

Is there a wretch so senseless, so wicked, so abandoned, as to refuse to return? Where art thou, hardy rebel? stand forth, and meet the terrors of thy doom. To thee I must change  
my

my voice, and, instead of representing the tender compassions of a Father, must denounce the terrors of an angry judge. Thy doom is declared and fixt by the same lips that speak to Penitents in such encouraging strains; by those gracious lips that never uttered an harsh censure. "God is angry with thee every day (r)." "Except thou repentest, thou shalt surely perish (s)." The example of CHRIST authorizes me to repeat it again, "Except thou repentest, thou shalt surely perish, *ver.* 5. The God that made thee will destroy thee, and he that formed thee will shew thee no favour (t). Thou art treasuring up wrath in horrid affluence against the day of wrath (u). God is jealous, and revengeth; the LORD revengeth, and is furious; the LORD will take vengeance on his adversaries; and he reserveth wrath for his enemies. The mountains quake at him: the hills melt; the earth is burnt at his presence; yea, the world, and they that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? who can endure in the fierceness of his anger? His fury is poured out like fire, and the rocks are thrown down by him (x)." These flaming thunderbolts, finner, are aimed at thy heart, and, if thou canst harden thyself against their terror, let me read thee thy doom before we part. You have it pronounced by God himself in *Deuteronomy,*

(r) Psalm vii. 11.

(s) Luke xiii. 3.

(t) Isai. xxvii. 11.

(u) Rom. ii. 5.

(x) Nahum i. 2—6.

namy, the twenty ninth chapter, at the nineteenth and following verses, " If it come to pass, " that when he heareth the words of this curse, " that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I " shall have peace, though I walk in the ima- " gination of my heart.—The LORD will not " spare him, but then the anger of the LORD, " and his jealousy shall smoke against that " man, and all the curses that are written in " this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD " shall blot out his name from under heaven ; " and the LORD shall separate him unto evil " out of all the tribes of *Israel*, according to " all the curses of the covenant that are written " in this book of the law." And now, sinner, if thou canst, return home careless and senseless with this heavy curse upon thee : expect not a word of comfort, expect no blessing, till thou art made truly penitent, for " how shall " I bless whom God has not blessed?" The ministerial blessing falls upon one on thy right hand, and one on thy left, but it lights not upon thee. The curse is thy lot, and this must thou have at the hand of GOD, if thou continuest hardened and insolent in sin, " Thou must lie " down in sorrow (*y*). Consider this, all ye " that forget GOD, lest he tear you in pieces, " and there be none to deliver (*z*).

(x) *Isai.* l. 11.

(y) *Psalms* l. 22.

S E R M O N .



# S E R M O N XIV.

CHRIST precious to all true Believers.



I P E T E R II. 7.

*Unto you therefore which believe He is precious\*.*

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\* Or preciousness in the abstract, τιμή.

comparatively in our world ; tho' there are, I am afraid, but few additions made to them from among us ; yet, blessed be God, there are some believers even upon our guilty globe ; and I doubt not but I am now speaking to some such.

My Believing brethren, (if I may venture to claim kindred with you) I am now entering upon a design, which I know you have much at heart ; and that is, to make the blessed Jesus more precious to you, and, if possible, to recommend him to the affections of the crowd that neglect him. You know, alas ! you love him but little ; but very little, compared to his infinite excellency and your obligations to him ; and you know that multitudes love him not at all. Whatever they profess, their practice shews that their carnal mind is enmity against him. This you often see, and the sight affects your hearts. It deeply affects you to think so much excellency should be neglected and despised, and so much love meet with such base returns of ingratitude. And you cannot but pity your poor fellow-sinners, that they are so blind to the brightest glory and their own highest interest, and that they should perish, through wilful neglect of their deliverer, perish, as it were, within reach of the hand stretched out to save them. This is indeed a very affecting and lamentable, and alas ! a very common sight. And will you not then bid me God speed this day in my attempt to recommend this precious, tho' neglected,

lected, JESUS? Will you not contribute your share towards my success in so pious and benevolent a design by your earnest prayers? Now shall not the interceding sigh rise to Heaven from every heart, and every soul be cast into a praying posture? I shall hope to discharge my duty with more comfort and advantage, if you afford me this assistance. And surely such of you cannot deny me this aid, who desire that JESUS may become still more precious to your own hearts, and that he may be the object of universal love from all the sons of men, who are now disaffected to him!

“ To you that believe, HE is precious”—HE? —Who? Is it *Mammon*, the God of the world? Is it Pleasure, or Honour? No; none of these is the darling of the believing heart. But it is *he*, who is uppermost in every pious heart; *he*, who is first in the thoughts and affections; *he*, whom every friend of his must know, even without a name, if it be but said of him, HE is *precious*: this is enough to distinguish him from all others. “ If it be HE the apostle means, may every believer say, who is most precious to my soul, then I can easily point him out, though without a name. It must be JESUS, for, O! it is *he* that is most precious to me.” The connection also of the text directs us to the same person. It is HE the apostle means, whom he had just described as a living stone, chosen of GOD, and precious; the chief corner-stone, the great foundation of the church, that spiritual

VOL. II. K temple

temple of God, so stately and glorious, and reaching from Earth to Heaven; it is this precious stone, this heavenly jewel, that is precious to believers.

“To you that believe, he is PRECIOUS;” *i. e.* He is highly valued by you. You esteem him one of infinite worth, and he has the highest place in your affections. He is dearer to your hearts than all other persons and things. The word † requires a still stronger translation: “To you that believe, he is *preciousness* ;” preciousness in the abstract; all preciousness, and nothing but preciousness; a precious stone without one blemish. Or it may be translated with a little variation, “To you that believe HE is honour †.” It confers the highest honour upon you to be related to him; and you esteem it your highest honour to sustain that relation. Though JESUS and his cross are names of reproach in the unbelieving world, you glory in them; and they reflect a real glory upon you. Or, “To you that believe, there is honour\*.” Honour is now conferred upon you in your being built as living stones in the temple of God upon this precious foundation; and honour is reserved for you in Heaven, where the crown of righteousness awaits you.

“TO YOU WHICH BELIEVE, he is precious;” that is to say, the value of this precious stone is,

† τιμή.

\* The pronoun HE is not in the original, but the passage reads thus; “To you who believe, honour;” Ὑμῖν ἡ τιμὴ τῶν πιστεύουσιν.

is, alas! unknown to the crowd. It is so far from being precious, that it is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; a stone disallowed of men, (v. 4.) rejected even by the builders; (v. 7.) but you believers, ye happy few, have another estimate of it. Faith enables you to see the glories of the blessed JESUS; and, when you know him through this medium, you cannot but love him. The blind world neglect the Lord of Glory, because they know him not; but you believers know him, and therefore to you he is precious. Faith presents him to your view in a just light, and directs you to form a proper estimate of him. It is truly lamentable that such real excellency should be despised, but so it will be with the world till they believe. The meer speculative recommendation of their reason, the prepossessions of education in his favour, and the best human means are not sufficient to render JESUS precious to them. Nothing but saving faith can effect this.

“ TO YOU THEREFORE which believe he is “ precious.” The illative particle *therefore* shews this passage is an inference from what went before, and the reasoning seems to be this. “ This “ stone is precious to GOD, *therefore* it is pre- “ cious to you that believe. You have the same “ estimate of JESUS CHRIST, which GOD the “ Father has; and for that very reason he is “ precious to you, *because* he is precious to him.” That this is the connection will appear if you look back to the 4th and 6th verses; where you

find JESUS described as "a chief corner-stone, laid in Zion, elect or chosen, and *precious*— disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of GOD, and *precious*\*." Men wickedly disapprove this stone, and even many of the professed builders of his church reject him. This, says the Apostle, must be granted. But this is no objection to his real worth. He is precious to GOD, who knows him best, and who is a perfect judge of real excellency; and for that very reason he is precious to you that believe. Faith teaches you to look upon persons and things in the same light in which GOD views them; it makes your sentiments conformed to his. CHRIST is the Father's beloved Son, in whom he is well-pleased; and he is your beloved Saviour, in whom you are well pleased.

Is it any wonder JESUS should be precious to believers, when he is so precious in himself, and in his offices, so precious to the angelic armies, and so precious to his father?

1. He is precious in himself. He is *Immanuel*, *God-man*; and consequently, whatever excellencies belong either to the divine or human nature center in him. If wisdom, power, and goodness, divine or human, created or uncreated, can render him worthy of the highest affection, he has a just claim to it. Whatever excellencies, natural or moral, appear in any part of the vast universe,

\* The word *επιμον*, used in ver. 4, and 6, is a compound derived from *τιμη* rendered *precious* in the text. And this is an intimation that the text is an inference from the above verses.

universe, they are but faint shadows of his beauty and glory. " All things were created " by him and for him ; and through him all " things consist (a) : " and whatever excellencies are in the effect must be eminently in the cause. You do not wonder nor censure, when you see men delighted with the glories of the sun, and the various luminaries of the sky : you do not wonder nor blame, when they take pleasure in the beautiful prospects of Nature, or in that rich variety of good things, which Earth, and Sea, and every element furnishes for the support of man, or the gratification of his senses : you do not wonder and blame, when they are struck with moral beauty ; when you see them admire and approve wisdom, benevolence, justice, veracity, meekness, and mercy : you never think it strange, much less censurable, that men should love these things, and count them precious ; and can you be astonished, can you ridicule or find fault that JESUS is precious to poor believers ? If the copy be so fair and lovely, who would not love the original, that has eyes to behold it ? Believers see so much of the worth of CHRIST as is sufficient to captivate their hearts, and convince them of their guilt in loving him no more ; and the clearer their views are of him, the more are they mortified at the criminal defects of their love ; for, O ! they see he deserves infinitely more !

2. The LORD JESUS is precious in his offices.

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His

(a) Col. i. 16, 17.

His mediatorial office is generally subdivided into three parts, namely, That of a Prophet, of a Priest, and of a King, and how precious is CHRIST in each of these!

As a Prophet, how sweet are his instructions to a bewildered soul! How precious the words of his lips, which are the words of eternal life! How delightful to sit and hear him teach the way of duty and happiness, revealing the Father, and the wonders of the invisible state! How transporting to hear him declare upon what terms an offended God may be reconciled! a discovery beyond the searches of all the sages and philosophers of the heathen world! How reviving is it to listen to his gracious promises and invitations! promises and invitations to the poor, the weary, and heavy-laden, the broken-hearted, and even to the chief of sinners! The word of CHRIST has been the treasure, the support, and joy of believers in all ages. "I have esteemed the words of his mouth," says *Job*, "more than my necessary food (b)." It is this precious word the psalmist so often and so highly celebrates. He celebrates it as "more to be desired than gold; yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey, and the honeycomb (c)." "O how love I thy law!" says he, "it is my meditation all the day (d)." "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth (e)!" "The law

(b) *Job* xxiii. 12.(c) *Psalms* xix. 10.(d) *Psalms* cxix. 97.(e) *Ver.* 103.

" law of thy mouth is better than thousands of  
 " gold and silver (*f*). " Behold, I have longed  
 " after thy precepts (*g*). " Thy statutes have  
 " been my song in the house of my pilgrim-  
 " age (*b*). " In my affliction, thy word hath  
 " quickened me (*i*). " Unless thy law had  
 " been my delight, I should then have perished  
 " in my affliction (*k*). " This is the language of  
*David* in honour of this divine prophet near  
 three thousand years ago; when CHRIST had not  
 revealed the full gospel to the world, but only  
 some rays of it shone through the veil of the  
*Mosaic* dispensation. And must not believers  
 now, who live under the more compleat and  
 clear instructions of this great prophet, enter-  
 tain the same sentiments of him? Yes, to such  
 of you as believe, even in this age, he is most  
 precious.

But this external objective instruction is not  
 all that CHRIST as a prophet communicates;  
 and indeed, did he do no more than this, it  
 would answer no valuable end. The mind of  
 man, in his present fallen state, like a disor-  
 dered eye, is incapable of perceiving divine  
 things in a proper light, however clearly they  
 are revealed; and therefore, till the perceiving  
 faculty be rectified, all external revelation is in  
 vain, and is only like opening a fair prospect to  
 a blind eye. Hence this great prophet carries  
 his instructions farther, not only proposing di-

K 4

vine

*(f)* Ver. 72.*(g)* Ver. 48.*(b)* Ver. 54.*(i)* Ver. 50.*(k)* Ver. 92.

vine things in a clear objective light by his word, but inwardly enlightening the mind, and enabling it to perceive what is revealed by his Spirit. And how precious are these internal subjective instructions! How sweet to feel a disordered dark mind opening to admit the shinings of heavenly day; to perceive the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST, the beauties of holiness, and the majestic wonders of the eternal world! Speak, ye that know by happy experience, and tell how precious JESUS appears to you, when by his own blessed Spirit he scatters the cloud that benighted your understandings, and lets in the rays of his glory upon your admiring souls; when he opens your eyes to see the wonders contained in his law, and the glorious mysteries of his gospel. What a divine glory does then spread upon every page of the sacred volume! Then it indeed appears THE BOOK OF GOD, God-like, and worthy its Author. O precious JESUS! let us all this day feel thine enlightening influences, that experience may teach us how sweet they are! Come, great Prophet! come, and make thine own Spirit our teacher, and then shall we be divinely wise!

Again, the LORD JESUS is precious to believers as a great High-priest. As an high-priest he made a compleat atonement for sin by his propitiatory sacrifice on the cross, and he still makes intercession for the transgressors on his throne in Heaven. It was his sacrifice that satisfied the demands of the law, and justice of  
GOD,

GOD, and rendered him reconcilable to the guilty upon terms consistent with his honour, and the rights of his government. It was by the virtue of this sacrifice that he procured pardon of sin, the favour of GOD, freedom from Hell, and eternal life for condemned obnoxious rebels. And such of you, who have ever felt the pangs of a guilty conscience, and obtained relief from JESUS CHRIST, you can tell how precious his atoning sacrifice. How did it ease your self-tormenting consciences, and heal your broken hearts! How did it change the frowns of an angry God into smiles of love, and your trembling apprehensions of vengeance into delightful hopes of mercy! How precious did JESUS appear, with a pardon in his hand, with atoning blood gushing from his opened veins, and making his cross, as it were, the key to open the gates of Heaven for your admission! Blessed Saviour! our great high-priest, thus appear to us all in thy pontifical robes dyed in thine own blood, and cause us all to feel the efficacy of thy propitiation!

Let us next turn our eyes upwards, and view this great high-priest as our Intercessor in the presence of GOD. There he appears as a lamb that was slain, bearing the memorials of his sacrifice, and putting the Father in remembrance of the blessings purchased for his people. There he urges it as his pleasure, as his authoritative will, that these blessings should in due time be conferred upon those for whom they were purchased.

chased. In this authoritative manner he could intercede even in the days of his humiliation upon earth, because of the Father's covenant-engagements with him, the accomplishment of which he has a right to demand, as well as humbly to petition: "Father, I *will*, I *will*" that those whom thou hast given me, may be "with me, &c (1)." Now how precious must CHRIST appear in this character of Intercessor! That the friendless sinner should have an all-prevailing advocate in the court of Heaven to undertake his cause! that the great high-priest should offer up the grateful incense of his own merit, with the prayers of the saints! that he should add the sanction of his authoritative will to the humble petitions of Faith! that he should urge the claims of his people, as his own claims, founded upon an unchangeable covenant with his father, of which he has fully performed the conditions required! that he should not intercede occasionally, but always appear in the holy of holies as the constant everliving Intercessor, and maintain the same interest, the same importunity at all times, even when the petitions of his people languish upon their lips! What delightful reflections are these! and how warmly may they recommend the LORD JESUS to the hearts of believers! How just is the apostle's inference, "Having an high-priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith; and let us hold fast the profession

(1) John xvii. 24.

“ fession of our faith without wavering (*m*)?”  
 “ He is able to save to the uttermost all that  
 “ come unto God by him;” for this reason,  
 “ because he ever liveth to make intercession for  
 “ them (*n*).” May each of us intrust his cause  
 to this all-prevailing advocate, and we shall  
 certainly gain it! The unchangeable promise  
 has passed his lips, “ that whatsoever we ask the  
 “ Father in faith and in his name, he will give  
 “ it us (*o*).”

Let me add, the kingly office of CHRIST is  
 precious to believers. As King he gives laws;  
 laws perfectly wise and good, and enforced with  
 the most important sanctions, everlasting re-  
 wards and punishments. And how delightful,  
 how advantageous, to live under such a govern-  
 ment! to have our duty discovered with so  
 much clearness and certainty, which frees us  
 from so many painful anxieties; and to have  
 such powerful motives to obedience, which have  
 a tendency to infuse vigor and spirit into our  
 endeavours! As King, he appoints ordinances  
 of worship. And how sweet to converse with  
 him in these ordinances, and to be freed from  
 perplexity about that manner of worship which  
 God will accept, without being exposed to that  
 question, so confounding to will-worshippers,  
 “ Who hath required this at your hands?” As  
 King, he is head over all things to his church,  
 and manages the whole creation, as is most  
 subservient

(*m*) Heb. x. 21—23.(*n*) Heb. vii. 25.(*o*) John xvi. 23.

subservient to her good. The various ranks of creatures in Heaven, Earth, and Hell are subject to his direction and controul; and they must all co-operate for the good of his people. He reclaims, confounds, subdues, or destroys their enemies, according to his pleasure. And how precious must he be in this august character to the feeble helpless believer! To have an almighty friend sitting at the helm of the universe, with the supreme management of all things in his hands; to be assured that even the most injurious enemy can do the believer no real or lasting injury, but shall at length concur to work his greatest good; and that, come what will, it shall go well with him, and he shall at last be made triumphant over all difficulty and opposition. O! what transporting considerations are here! But this is not the whole exercise of the royal power of CHRIST. He not only makes laws and ordinances, and restrains the enemies of his people, but he exercises his power inwardly upon their hearts. He is the King of souls; he reigns in the hearts of his subjects; and how infinitely dear and precious is he in this view! To feel him subdue the rebellion within, sweetly bending the stubborn heart into willing obedience, and reducing every thought into a chearful captivity to himself, writing his law upon the heart, making the dispositions of his subjects a transcript of his will, corresponding to it, like wax to the seal, how delightful is all this! O the pleasures of humble submission!

submission! How pleasant to lie as subjects at the feet of this mediatorial King without arrogating the sovereignty of ourselves, for which we are utterly insufficient! Blessed JESUS! thus reign in our hearts! thus subdue the nations to the obedience of faith! "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty! and ride prosperously, attended with majesty, truth, meekness and righteousness (*p*)."  
 "Send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies (*q*):" rule us, and subdue the rebel in our hearts.

Thus you see the Lord JESUS is precious to believers in all the views of his mediatorial office. But he is not precious to them alone. He is beloved as far as known, and the more known the more beloved: which leads me to add,

3. He is precious to all the angels of Heaven.

St *Peter* tells us that the things now reported to us by the Gospel are "things which the angels desire to look into (*r*)."  
 JESUS is the wonder of angels now in Heaven; and he was so even when he appeared in the form of a servant upon Earth. St *Paul* mentions it as one part of the great mystery of godliness, that GOD manifested in the flesh was *seen of angels* (*s*). Angels saw him and admired and loved him in the various stages of his life, from his birth to his return to his native Heaven. Hear the manner in which angels celebrated his entrance into  
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(*p*) Psalm xlv. 3, 4.

(*q*) Psalm cx. 2.

(*r*) 1 Pet. i. 12.

(*s*) 1 Tim. iii. 16.

our world. One of them spread his wings, and flew with joyful haste to a company of poor shepherds that kept their midnight watches in the field, and abruptly tells the news, of which his heart was full: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for to you is born this day, in the city of *David*, a Saviour, which is CHRIST the LORD: and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host:" Crowds of angels left their stations in the celestial court in that memorable hour, and hovered over the place where their incarnate GOD lay in a manger: JESUS, their darling, was gone down to Earth, and they must follow him, for who would not be where JESUS is? Men, ungrateful Men, were silent upon that occasion, but Angels tuned their song of praise. The astonished shepherds heard them sing, "Glory to God in the highest; on Earth peace; good-will to men (*t*)."  
 When he bringeth his first-born into the world, the Father saith, "Let all the angels of GOD worship him (*u*)."  
 This seems to intimate that all the angels crowded round the manger, where the infant-GOD lay, and paid him their humble worship. We are told, that when the Devil had finished his long process of temptations, after forty days, and had left him, the "angels came and ministered unto him (*x*)."  
 When this disagreeable companion had

(*t*) Luke ii. 10—14.

(*u*) Heb. i. 6.

(*x*) Matt. iv. 11.

had left him his old attendants were fond of renewing their service to him. In every hour of difficulty they were ready to fly to his aid. He was *seen* of angels, in his hard conflict, in the garden of *Gethsemane*; and one of them "appeared unto him from Heaven, strengthening him (y)." With what wonder, sympathy, and readiness did this angelic assistant raise his prostrate LORD from the cold ground, wipe off his bloody sweat, and support his sinking spirit with divine encouragements! But, O! ye blessed angels, ye usual spectators and adorers of the divine glories of our redeemer, with what astonishment and horror were you struck, when you saw him expire on the cross?

" Around the bloody tree  
 " Ye press'd with strong desire,  
 " That wond'rous sight to see,  
 " The Lord of life expire!  
 " And, could your eyes  
 " Have known a tear,  
 " Had dropt it there  
 " In sad surprize."

Ye also hovered round his tomb, while he lay in the prison of the grave. The weeping women and his other friends found you stationed there in their early impatient visits to the sepulchre. O what wonders then appeared to your astonished minds! Could you, that pry so deep into

(y) Luke xxii. 43.

into the secrets of Heaven, you that know so well what divine love can do, could you have thought that even divine love could have gone so far? could have laid the Lord of Glory a pale, mangled, senseless corps in the mansions of the dead? Was not this a strange surprize even to you? And, when the appointed day began to dawn, with what eager and joyful haste did ye roll away the stone, and set open the prison doors, that the rising conqueror might march forth!

“ And when array’d in light,  
 “ The shining conqueror rode,  
 “ Ye hail’d his rapturous flight  
 “ Up to the throne of God ;  
     “ And wav’d around  
     “ Your golden wings,  
     “ And struck your strings  
     “ Of sweetest sound \*.”

When he ascended on high, he was attended “ with the chariots of God, which are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels (z).” And now, when he is returned to dwell among them, JESUS is still the darling of angels. His name sounds from all their harps, and his love is the subject of their everlasting song. St *John* once heard them, and I hope we shall ere long hear them,

\* See an excellent Hymn of Dr *Doddridge*’s on 1 *Tim.* iii. 16.—  
*Seen of Angels.*

(z) Psalm lxxviii. 17, 18.

them, saying 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 (a)." This is the song of angels, as well as of the redeemed from among men.

"JESUS, the Lord, their harps employs;

"JESUS, my love, they sing:

"JESUS, the name of both our joys,

"Sounds sweet from every string †."

O my brethren, could we see what is doing in Heaven at this instant, how would it surprize, astonish, and confound us! Do you think the name of JESUS is of as little importance there as in our world? Do you think there is one lukewarm or disaffected heart there among ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands? O no! there his love is the ruling passion of every heart, and the favourite theme of every song. And is he so precious to angels? to angels, who are less interested in him, and less indebted to him? And must he not be precious to poor believers bought with his blood, and entitled to life by his death? Yes, you that believe have an angelic spirit in this respect; you love JESUS, though unseen, as well as they who see him as he is, though, alas! in a far less degree. But to bring his worth to the highest standard of all, I add,

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4. He

(a) Rev. v. 11, 12.

† Watt's Horæ Lyric.

4. He is infinitely precious to his father, who thoroughly knows him, and is an infallible judge of real worth. He proclaimed more than once from the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. Behold, says he, my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth (b)" He is called by the names of the tenderest endearment, his Son, his own Son, his dear Son, the Son of his Love. He is a stone, disallowed indeed of men; if their approbation were the true standard of merit, he must be looked upon as a very worthless, insignificant being, unworthy of their thoughts and affections. But let men form what estimate of him they please, he is "chosen of God, and precious." And shall not the love of the omniscient God have weight with believers to love him too? Yes, the apostle expressly draws the consequence; he is precious to God, therefore to you that believe he is precious. It is the characteristic of even the meanest believer, that he is God-like. He is a partaker of the divine nature, and therefore views things, in some measure, as God does; and is affected towards them as God is, though there be an infinite difference as to the degree. He prevailingly loves what God loves, and that because God loves it.

And now, my hearers, what think you of CHRIST? Will you not think of him as believers

(b) II. Cor. xiii. 1.

lievers do? If so, he will be precious to your hearts above all things for the future. Or if you disregard this standard of excellence, as being but the estimate of fallible creatures, will you not think of him as angels do; angels, those bright intelligences, to whom he reveals his unveiled glories, who are more capable of perceiving and judging of him, and who therefore must know him better than you; angels, who have had a long acquaintance with him at home, if I may so speak, for near six thousand years, as God, *i. e.* ever since their creation, and for near two thousand years as God-man? Since angels then, who know him so thoroughly, love him so highly, certainly you may safely venture to love him; you might safely venture to love him *implicitly*, upon their word. He died for you, which is more than ever he did for them, and will you not love him after all this love? It is not the mode to think much of him in our world, but it is the mode in Heaven. Yes, blessed be God, if he be despised and rejected of Men, he is not despised and rejected of Angels. Angels; that know him best, love him above all, and, as far as their capacity will allow, do justice to his merit: And this is a very comfortable thought to a heart broken with a sense of the neglect and contempt he meets with among men. Blessed JESUS! may not one congregation be got together even upon our guilty earth, that shall in this respect be like the angels, all

lovers of thee? O! why should this be impossible, while they are all so much in need of thee, all so much obliged to thee, and thou art so lovely in thyself? Why, my brethren, should not this congregation be made up of such, and such only, as are lovers of JESUS? Why should he not be precious to every one of you, rich and poor, old and young, white and black? What reason can any one of you give why you in particular should neglect him? I am sure you can give none. And will you, without any reason, dissent from all the angels in Heaven, in a point of which they must be the most competent judges? Will you differ from them, and agree in your sentiments of CHRIST with the ghosts of Hell, his implacable, but conquered and miserable enemies?

If all this has no weight with you, let me ask you farther, Will you not agree to that estimate of JESUS which his father has of him? Will you run counter to the supreme reason? Will you set up yourselves as wiser than omniscience? How must *Jehovah* resent it to see a worm at his foot-stool daring to despise him, whom he loves so highly? O let him be precious to you, because he is so to God, who knows him best—

—But I am shocked at my own attempt—  
 O precious JESUS! are matters come to that pass in our world that creatures bought with thy blood, creatures that owe all their hopes to thee should stand in need of persuasions to love thee? What horror attends the thought! How—  
 ever,

ever, blessed be God, there are some, even among men, to whom he is precious. This world is not entirely peopled with the despisers of CHRIST. To as many of you as believe he is precious, though to none else.

Would you know the reason of this? I will tell you: none but believers have eyes to see his glory, none but they are sensible of their need of him, and none but they have learned from experience how precious he is.

1. None but believers have eyes to see the glory of CHRIST. As the knowledge of CHRIST is entirely from revelation, an avowed unbeliever, who rejects that revelation, can have no right knowledge of him, and therefore must be entirely indifferent towards him, as one unknown, or must despise and abhor him as an enthusiast or impostor. But one, who is not an unbeliever in profession or speculation, may yet be destitute of that faith which constitutes a true believer, and which renders JESUS precious to the soul. Even devils are very orthodox in speculation: Devils believe, and tremble; and they could cry out, "What have we to do with thee, JESUS of Nazareth? We know thee, who thou art; even the holy One of God (c)." And there are crowds among us who believe, after a fashion, that CHRIST is the true Messiah, who yet shew by their practices that they neglect him in their hearts, and are not believers in the full import of the cha-

L 3 character.

(c) Mark i. 24.

racter. True faith includes not only a speculative knowledge and belief, but a clear, affecting, realizing view, and an hearty approbation of the things known and believed concerning JESUS CHRIST; and such a view, such an approbation, cannot be produced by any human means, but only by the enlightening influence of the holy Spirit shining into the heart. Without such a faith as this the mind is all dark and blind as to the glory of JESUS CHRIST; it can see no beauty in him, that he should be desired. Honourable and sublime speculations concerning him may hover in the understanding, and the tongue may pronounce many pompous panegyrics in his praise, but the understanding has no realizing, affecting views of his excellency; nor does the heart delight in him and love him as infinitely precious and lovely. The god of this world, the prince of darkness, has blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of CHRIST should shine into them. But as to the enlightened believer, God, who first commanded light to shine out of darkness, has shined into his heart, to give him the light of the knowledge of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST. This divine illumination pierces the cloud that obscured his understanding, and enables him to view the LORD JESUS in a strong and striking light; a light entirely different from that of the crowd around him; a light, in which it is impossible to view this glorious object

object without loving him. A believer and an unbeliever may be equally orthodox in speculation, and have the same notions in theory concerning JESUS CHRIST, and yet it is certainly true, that their views of him are vastly different. Believers! do you think that, if the Christ-despising multitude around you had the same views of his worth and preciousness which you have; they could neglect him as they do? It is impossible. You could once neglect him, as others do now; you were no more charmed with his beauty than they. But O! when you were brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light, when the glories of the neglected Saviour broke in upon your astonished minds, then was it possible for you to withhold your love from him? Were not your hearts captivated with delightful violence? You could no more resist. Did not your hearts then as naturally and freely love him, whom they had once disgusted, as ever they loved a child or a friend, or the sweetest created enjoyment? The improving your reason into faith is setting the disordered eye of the mind right, that it may be able to see this object, and when once you viewed it with this eye of reason restored and improved, how did the precious stone sparkle before you, and charm you with its brilliancy and excellence? CHRIST is one of those things unseen and hoped for, of which St Paul says, "Faith is the substance and evidence (d)." Faith

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gives

(d) Heb. xi. 1.

gives CHRIST a present *subsistence* \* in the mind, not as a majestic phantom, but as the most glorious and important reality ; and this faith is a clear affecting demonstration, or *conviction* †, of his existence, and of his being in reality what his word represents him. It is by such a faith, that is, under its habitual influence, that the believer lives ; and hence, while he lives, JESUS is still precious to him.

2. None but believers are properly sensible of their need of CHRIST. They are deeply sensible of their ignorance and the disorder of their understanding, and therefore they are sensible of their want of both the external and internal instructions of this divine prophet. But as to others, they are puffed up with intellectual pride, and apprehend themselves in very little need of religious instructions, and therefore they think but very slightly of him. Believers feel themselves guilty, destitute of all righteousness, and incapable of making atonement for their sins, or recommending themselves to GOD, and therefore the satisfaction and righteousness of JESUS CHRIST are most precious to them, and they rejoice in him as their all-prevailing intercessor. But as to the unbelieving crowd, they have no such mortifying thoughts of themselves. They have so many excuses to make for their sins, that they bring down their guilt to a very trifling thing, hardly worthy of divine resentment ; and they magnify their good works

to

\* ὑποστασις.

† ἐπιγνοσις.

to such an height that they imagine they will nearly balance their bad, and procure them some favour at least from GOD, and therefore they must look upon this high-priest as needless. They also love to be free from the restraints of religion, and to have the command of themselves. They would usurp the power of self-government, and make their own pleasure their rule, and therefore the LORD JESUS CHRIST, as a King, is so far from being precious, that he is very unacceptable to such obstinate, headstrong rebels. They choose to have no law-giver, but their own wills; and therefore they trample upon his laws, and, as it were, form insurrections against his government. But the poor believer, sensible of his incapacity for self-government, loves to be under direction, and delights to feel the dependent, submissive, pliant spirit of a subject. He counts it a mercy not to have the management of himself, and feels his need of this mediatorial King to rule him. He hates the rebel within, hates every insurrection of sin, and longs to have it entirely subdued, and every thought, every motion of his soul, brought into captivity to the obedience of CHRIST, and therefore he feels the need of his royal power to make an entire conquest of his hostile spirit. His commands are not uneasy impositions, but most acceptable and friendly directions to him; and the prohibitions of his law are not painful restraints, but a kind of privileges in his esteem. The language of his heart

heart is, "Precious JESUS! be thou my King. I love  
 " to live in humble subjection to thee. I would  
 " voluntarily submit myself to thy controul and  
 " direction. Thy will, not mine, be done!  
 " O subdue every rebellious principle within,  
 " and make me all resignation and chearful  
 " obedience to thee!" To such a soul it is  
 no wonder JESUS should be exceeding precious :  
 but O how different is this spirit from that  
 which generally prevails in the world ! Let me  
 add but one reason more why JESUS is precious  
 to believers, and them only ; namely,

3. None but believers have known by experience how precious he is. They, and only they, can reflect upon the glorious views of him, which themselves have had, to captivate their hearts forever to him. They, and only they, have known what it is to feel a bleeding heart healed by his gentle hand, and a clamorous anguishing conscience pacified by his atoning blood. They, and only they, know by experience how sweet it is to feel his love shed abroad in their hearts, to feel an heart, ravished with his glory, pant, and long, and breathe after him, and exerting the various acts of Faith, Desire, Joy, and Hope towards him. They, and only they, know by experience how pleasant it is to converse with him in his ordinances, and to spend an hour of devotion in some retirement, as it were, in his company. They, and only they, have experienced the exertions of his royal power, conquering their  
 mightiest.

mightiest sins, and sweetly subduing them to himself. These are, in some measure, matters of experience with every true believer, and therefore it is no wonder JESUS should be precious to them. But as to the unbelieving multitude, poor creatures! they are entire strangers to these things. They may have some superficial notions of them floating in their heads, but they have never felt them in their hearts, and therefore the infinitely precious LORD JESUS is a worthless, insignificant Being to them: and thus, alas! it will be with the unhappy creatures, until Experience become their teacher; until they *taste* for themselves *that the LORD is gracious* (e).

There is an interesting question, which, I doubt not, has risen in the minds of such of you as have heard what has been said with a particular application to yourselves, and keeps you in a painful suspense; with an answer to which I shall conclude: "Am I indeed a true  
 " believer? may some of you say; and is  
 " CHRIST precious to me? My satisfaction in  
 " this sweet subject is vastly abated, till this  
 " question is solved. Sometimes, I humbly  
 " think, the evidence is in my favour, and I  
 " begin to hope that he is indeed precious to my  
 " soul; but alas! my love for him soon lan-  
 " guishes, and then my doubts and fears re-  
 " turn, and I know not what to do, nor what  
 " to think of myself." Do not some of you,  
 my

(e) 1 Peter ii. 3.

my brethren, long to have this perplexing case cleared up? O what would you not give, if you might return home this evening fully satisfied in this point? Well, I would willingly help you, for experience has taught me to sympathize with you under this difficulty. O my heart! how often hast thou been suspicious of thyself in this respect! The readiest way I can now take to clear up the matter is to answer another question, naturally resulting from my subject, and that is, "How does that high esteem which a believer has for JESUS CHRIST discover itself? Or, how does he shew that CHRIST is indeed precious to him?" I answer, he shews it various ways, particularly by his high affectionate thoughts of him, which often rise in his mind, and always find welcome there. He discovers that JESUS is precious to him by hating and resisting whatever is displeasing to him, and by parting with every thing that comes in competition with him. He will let all go, rather than part with CHRIST. Honour, reputation, ease, riches, pleasure, and even life itself are nothing to him in comparison of CHRIST, and he will run the risque of all; nay, will actually lose all, if he may but win CHRIST. He discovers his high esteem for him by the pleasure he takes in feeling his heart suitably affected towards him, and by his uneasiness when it is otherwise. O! when he can love JESUS, when his thoughts affectionately clasp round him, and when he has an heart to serve him,

him, then he is happy, his soul is well, and he is lively and chearful. But alas! when it is otherwise with him, when his love languishes, when his heart hardens, when it becomes out of order for his service, then he grows uneasy and discontented, and cannot be at rest. When JESUS favours him with his gracious presence, and revives him with his influence, how does he rejoice! But when his beloved withdraws himself and is gone, how does he lament his absence, and long for his return! He weeps and cries like a bereaved, deserted orphan, and moans like a loving turtle in the absence of its mate. Because CHRIST is so precious to him, he cannot bear the thought of parting with him, and the least jealousy of his love pierces his very heart. Because he loves him he longs for the full enjoyment of him, and is ravished with the prospect of it. Because CHRIST is precious to him his interests are so too, and he longs to see his kingdom flourish, and all men fired with his love. Because he loves him he loves his ordinances; loves to hear, because it is the word of JESUS; loves to pray, because it is maintaining intercourse with JESUS; loves to sit at his table, because it is a memorial of JESUS; and loves his people, because they love JESUS. Whatever has a relation to his precious Saviour is for that reason precious to him; and when he feels any thing of a contrary disposition, alas! it grieves him, and makes him abhor himself. These things are sufficient

to

shew that the LORD JESUS has his heart, and is indeed precious to him : and is not this the very picture of some trembling doubting souls among you ? If it be, take courage. After so many vain searches, you have at length discovered the welcome secret, that CHRIST is indeed precious to you : and if so, you may be sure that you are precious to him. " You shall be mine, saith the LORD, in the day that I make up my jewels (*f*). " If you are now satisfied, after thorough trial of the case, retain your hope, and let not every discouraging appearance renew your jealousies again : labour to be steady and firm Christians, and do not stagger through unbelief.

But alas ! I fear that many of you know nothing experimentally of the exercises of a believing heart, which I have been describing, and consequently that CHRIST is not precious to you. If this is the case you may be sure you are hateful to him. He is angry with the wicked every day. " Those that honour him he will honour ; but they that despise him shall be lightly esteemed (*g*). " And what will you do if CHRIST should become your enemy and fight against you ? If this precious stone should become a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to you, over which you will fall into ruin, O how dreadful will the fall be ! What must you expect but to lie down in unutterable and everlasting sorrows !

## S E R M O N

(*f*) Mal. iii. 17.(*g*) 1 Sam. ii. 30.



# S E R M O N XV.

## The Danger of Lukewarmness in Religion.



### REVELATION III. 15, 16.

*I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.*

**T**HE soul of man is endowed with such active powers that it cannot be idle; and, if we look round the world, we see it all alive and busy in some pursuit or other. What vigorous action, what labour and toil, what hurry, noise, and commotion about the necessaries of life, about riches, and honours! Here men are in earnest: Here there is no dissimulation, no indifferency about the event. They sincerely desire, and eagerly strive for these transient delights, or vain embellishments of a mortal life.

And may we infer farther that creatures, thus formed for action, and thus laborious and unwearied in these inferior pursuits; are proportionably

portionably vigorous and in earnest in matters of infinitely greater importance? May we conclude that they proportion their labour and activity to the nature of things, and that they are most in earnest where they are most concerned? A stranger to our world, that could conclude nothing concerning the conduct of mankind but from the generous presumptions of his own charitable heart, might persuade himself that this is the case. But one that has been but a little while conversant with them, and taken the least notice of their temper and practice with regard to that most interesting thing *Religion*, must know it is quite otherwise. For look round you, and what do you see? Here and there indeed you may see a few unfashionable creatures, who act as if they looked upon Religion to be the most interesting concern, and who seem determined, let others do as they will, to make sure of salvation, whatever become of them in other respects. But as to the generality they are very indifferent about it. They will not indeed renounce all religion entirely; they will make some little profession of the religion that happens to be most modish and reputable in their country, and they will conform to some of its institutions, but it is a matter of indifferency with them, and they are but little concerned about it; or, in the language of my text, they are "lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot."

This threatening, "I will spue thee out of  
" my

" my mouth," has been long ago executed with a dreadful severity upon the *Laodicean* church, and it is now succeeded by a mungrel race of Pagans and Mahometans, and the name of CHRIST is not heard among them. But, tho' this church has been demolished for so many hundreds of years, that lukewarmness of spirit in religion which brought this judgment upon them still lives, and possesses the Christians of our age: it may therefore be expedient for us to consider CHRIST's friendly warning to them, that we may escape their doom.

The epistles to the seven churches in *Asia* are introduced with this solemn and striking preface, " I know thy works:" that is to say, your character is drawn by one that thoroughly knows you; one who inspects all your conduct, and takes notice of you when you take no notice of yourselves; one that cannot be imposed upon by an empty profession and artifice, but searches the heart and the reins. O that this truth were deeply impressed upon our hearts, for surely we could not trifle and offend, while sensible that we are under the eye of our judge!

" I know thy works," says he to the *Laodicean* church, " that thou art neither cold nor hot." This church was in a very bad condition, and CHRIST reproves her with the greatest severity\*: and yet we do not find her

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charged

\* She was as loathsome to him as lukewarm water to the stomach, and he characterises her as " wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." What condition can be more deplorable and dangerous!

charged with the practice or toleration of any gross immoralities, as some of the other churches were. She is not censured for indulging fornication among her members, or communicating with idolaters in eating things sacrificed to idols, like some of the rest. She was free from the infection of the *Nicolaitans*, which had spread among them. What then is her charge? It is a subtle, latent wickedness, that has no shocking appearance, that makes no gross blemish in the outward character of a professor in the view of others, and may escape his own notice; it is "Thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot:" as if our LORD had said, "Thou dost not entirely renounce and openly disregard the Christian religion, and thou dost not make it a serious business, and mind it as thy grand concern. Thou hast a form of godliness, but deniest the power. All thy religion is a dull, languid thing, a meer indifferency; thine *heart* is not in it; it is not animated with the fervour of thy *spirit*. Thou hast neither the coldness of the profligate sinner, nor the sacred fire and life of the true Christian, but thou keepest in a sort of medium between them. In some things thou resemblest the one, in other things the other; as lukewarmness partakes of the nature both of heat and cold."

Now such a lukewarmness is an eternal solecism in religion: it is the most absurd and inconsistent thing imaginable; more so than avowed

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ed impiety, or a professed rejection of all religion: therefore says CHRIST, " I would thou wert cold or hot ;" *i. e.* " You might be any thing more consistently than what you are. If you looked upon religion as a cheat, and openly rejected the profession of it, it would not be strange that you should be careless about it, and disregard it in practice. But to own it true, and make a profession of it, and yet be lukewarm and indifferent about it, this is the most absurd conduct that can be conceived; for, if it be true, it is certainly the *most important and interesting* truth in all the world, and requires the utmost exertion of all your powers."

When CHRIST expresses his abhorrence of lukewarmness in the form of a wish, " I would thou wert cold or hot," we are not to suppose his meaning to be, that coldness or fervour in religion are equally acceptable, or that coldness is at all acceptable to him, for reason and revelation concur to assure us that the open rejection and avowed contempt of religion is an aggravated wickedness, as well as an hypocritical profession. But our LORD's design is to express in the strongest manner possible how odious and abominable their lukewarmness was to him; as if he should say, " Your state is so bad that you cannot change for the worse; I would rather you were any thing than what you are." You are to observe that the lukewarm professor is in *reality* wicked and cor-

rupt at *heart*, a slave to sin, and an enemy to GOD, as well as the avowed sinner, and therefore they are both hateful in the sight of GOD, and both in a state of condemnation. But there are some aggravations peculiar to the lukewarm professor that render him peculiarly odious; as, 1. He adds the sin of an hypocritical profession to his other sins. The wickedness of real irreligion, and the wickedness of falsely pretending to be religious meet and centre in him at once. 2. To all this he adds the guilt of presumption, pride, and self-flattery, imagining he is in a safe state and in favour with GOD; whereas he that makes no pretensions to religion has no such umbrage for this conceit and delusion. Thus the miserable *Laodiceans* "thought themselves rich, and increased in goods, and in need of nothing." 3. Hence it follows that the lukewarm professor is in the most dangerous condition, as he is not liable to conviction, nor so likely to be brought to repentance. Thus publicans and harlots received the gospel more readily than the self-righteous Pharisees. 4. The honour of GOD and religion is more injured by the negligent, unconscientious behaviour of these *Laodiceans*, than by the vices of those who make no pretensions to religion, with whom therefore its honour has no connection. On these accounts you see lukewarmness is more aggravatedly sinful and dangerous than entire coldness about religion.

So then, says CHRIST, "Because thou art  
" lukewarm;

“lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth:” this is their doom: as if he should say, “As lukewarm water is more disagreeable to the stomach than either cold or hot, so you of all others are the most abominable to me. I am quite sick of such professors, and I will cast them out of my church and reject them forever.”

My present design is to expose the peculiar absurdity and wickedness of lukewarmness or indifferency in religion; a disease that has spread its deadly contagion far and wide among us, and calls for a speedy cure. And let me previously observe to you, that, if I do not offer you sufficient arguments to convince your own reason of the absurdity and wickedness of such a temper, then you may still indulge it; but that if my arguments are sufficient, then shake off your sloth, and be fervent in spirit, and if you neglect your duty be it at your peril.

In illustrating this point I shall proceed upon this plain principle, *That Religion is, of all things, the most important in itself, and the most interesting to us.* This we cannot deny, without openly pronouncing it an imposture. If there be a God, as Religion teaches us, he is the most glorious, the most venerable, and the most lovely Being; and nothing can be so important to us as his favour, and nothing so terrible as his displeasure. If he be our Maker, our Benefactor, our Law-giver and Judge, it must be our greatest concern to serve him with all

our might. If JESUS CHRIST be such a Saviour as our Religion represents, and we profess to believe, he demands our warmest love and most lively services. If Eternity, if Heaven and Hell, and the final Judgment, are realities, they are certainly the most august, the most awful, important, and interesting realities; and, in comparison of them, the most weighty concerns of the present life are but trifles, dreams, and shadows. If prayer, and other religious exercises are our duty, certainly they require all the vigour of our souls; and nothing can be more absurd or incongruous than to perform them in a languid, spiritless manner, as if we knew not what we are about. If there be any life within us, these are proper objects to call it forth; if our souls are endowed with active powers, here are objects that demand their utmost exertion. Here we can never be so much in earnest as the case requires. Trifle about any thing, but O do not trifle here! Be careless and indifferent about crowns and kingdoms, about health, life, and all the world, but O be not careless and indifferent about such immense concerns as these!

But to be more particular: let us take a view of a lukewarm temper in various attitudes, or with respect to several objects, particularly towards GOD—towards JESUS CHRIST—a future state of happiness or misery—and in the duties of religion. And in each of these views we cannot but be shocked at so monstrous a temper,

per, especially if we consider our difficulties and dangers in a religious life, and the eagerness and activity of mankind in inferior pursuits.

I. Consider who and what God is. He is the original uncreated beauty, the sum total of all natural and moral perfections, the origin of all the excellencies that are scattered through this glorious universe; he is the supreme good, and the only proper portion for our immortal spirits. He also sustains the most majestic and endearing relations to us; our father, our preserver and benefactor, our law-giver, and our judge. And is such a Being to be put off with heartless, lukewarm services? What can be more absurd or impious than to dishonour supreme excellency and beauty with a languid love and esteem; to trifle in the presence of the most venerable majesty; to treat the best of Beings with indifferency; to be careless about our duty to such a father; to return such a benefactor only insipid complimentary expressions of gratitude; to be dull and spiritless in obedience to such a law-giver; and to be indifferent about the favour or displeasure of such a judge? I appeal to Heaven and Earth, if this be not the most shocking conduct imaginable. Does not your reason pronounce it horrid and most daringly wicked? And yet thus is the great and blessed God treated by the generality of mankind. It is most astonishing that he should bear with such treatment so long, and

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that mankind themselves are not shocked at it. But such the case really is. And are there not some lukewarm *Laodiceans* in this assembly? **JESUS** knows your works, that you are neither cold nor hot, and it is fit you should also know them. May you not be convinced upon a little enquiry that your hearts are habitually indifferent towards **GOD**? You may indeed entertain a speculative esteem or a good opinion of him, but are your souls alive towards him? Do they burn with his love? And are you fervent in spirit when you are serving him? Some of you, I hope, amid all your infirmities, can give comfortable answers to these enquiries. But alas! how few! But yet as to such of you as are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, you are the most abominable creatures upon earth to an holy **GOD**. "Be zealous, be warm\*, there-fore, and repent" (v. 19.)

2. Is lukewarmness a proper temper towards **JESUS CHRIST**? Is this a suitable return for that love which brought him down from his native paradise into our wretched world? That love which kept his mind for thirty-three painful and tedious years intent upon this one object, the salvation of sinners? That love which rendered him cheerfully patient of the shame, the curse, the tortures of crucifixion, and all the agonies of the most painful death? That love which makes him the sinner's friend still in the courts of Heaven where he appears as our pre-  
vailing

\* Ζηλῶσθε.

vailing advocate and intercessor? Blessed JESUS! is lukewarmness a proper return to thee for all this kindness? No, methinks devils cannot treat thee worse. My fellow-mortals, my fellow-sinners, who are the objects of all this love, can you put him off with languid devotions and faint services? Then every grateful and generous passion is extinct in your souls, and you are qualified to venture upon every form of ingratitude and baseness. O was CHRIST indifferent about your salvation? Was his love lukewarm towards you? No, your salvation was the object of his most intense application night and day through the whole course of his life, and it lay nearest his heart in the agonies of death. For this " he had a baptism to be " baptized with," a baptism, an immersion in tears and blood; " and how am I straitened, says he, " till it be accomplished!" For this, " with desire he desired to eat his last passover," because it introduced the last scene of his sufferings. His love! what shall I say of it? What language can describe its strength and ardor? " His love was strong as death; the coals thereof were coals of fire, which had a most vehement flame: many waters could not quench " it, nor the floods drown it (a)." Never did a tender mother love her sucking child with a love equal to his. Never was a father more earnest to rescue an only son from the hands of a murderer, or to pluck him out of the fire,

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(a) Cant. viii. 6, 7.

than Jesus was to save perishing sinners. Now to neglect him after all; to forget him; or to think of him with indifferency, as though he were a Being of but little importance, and we but little obliged to him, what is all this but the most unnatural, barbarous ingratitude, and the most shocking wickedness? Do you not expect everlasting happiness from him purchased at the expence of his blood? And can you hope for such an immense blessing from him without feeling yourselves most sensibly obliged to him? Can you hope he will do so much for you, and can you be content to do nothing for him, or to go through his service with lukewarmness and languor, as if you cared not how you hurried through it, or how little you had to do with it? Can any thing be more absurd or impious than this? Methinks you may defy Hell to shew a worse temper. May not CHRIST justly wish you were either cold or hot; wish you were any thing, rather than thus lukewarm towards him under a profession of friendship? Alas! my brethren, if this be your habitual temper, instead of being saved by him you may expect he will reject you with the most nauseating disgust and abhorrence. But,

3. Is lukewarmness and indifferency a suitable temper with respect to a future state of happiness or misery? Is it a suitable temper with respect to an happiness far exceeding the utmost bounds of our present thoughts and wishes; an

an happiness equal to the largest capacities of our souls in their most improved and perfected state; an happiness beyond the grave, when all the enjoyments of this transitory life have taken an eternal flight from us, and leave us hungry and famishing forever, if these be our only portion; an happiness that will last as long as our immortal spirits, and never fade or fly from us? Or are lukewarmness and indifferency a suitable temper with respect to a misery beyond expression, beyond conception dreadful; a misery inflicted by a God of almighty power and inexorable justice upon a number of obstinate, incorrigible rebels for numberless, wilful, and daring provocations, inflicted on purpose to shew his wrath and make his power known; a misery proceeding from the united fury of divine indignation, of turbulent passions, of a guilty conscience, of malicious, tormenting devils; a misery (who can bear up under the horror of the thought!) that shall last as long as the eternal God shall live to inflict it; as long as sin shall continue evil to deserve it; as long as an immortal spirit shall endure to bear it; a misery that shall never be mitigated, never intermitted, never, never, never see an end? And remember that a state of happiness or misery is not far remote from us, but near us, just before us; the next year, the next hour, or the next moment, we may enter into it; it is a state for which we are now candidates, now upon trial; now our eternal All lies at stake:  
and

and, O sirs, does an inactive, careless posture become us in such a situation? Is a state of such happiness, or such misery; is such a state, just—just before us, a matter of indifferency to us? O can you be lukewarm about such matters? Was ever such prodigious stupidity seen under the canopy of Heaven, or even in the regions of Hell, which abound with monstrous and horrid dispositions? No, the hardiest ghost below cannot make light of these things. Mortals! can you trifle about them? Well, trifle a little longer, and your trifling will be over forever. You may be indifferent about the improving of your time; but time is not indifferent whether to pass by or not; it is determined to continue its rapid course, and hurry you into the ocean of Eternity, though you should continue sleeping and dreaming thro' all the passage. Therefore awake, arise; exert yourselves before your doom be unchangeably fixed. If you have any fire within you, here let it burn; if you have any active powers, here let them be exerted; here or no where, and on no occasion. Be active, be in earnest where you should be; or debase and sink yourselves into stocks and stones, and escape the curse of being reasonable and active creatures. Let the criminal condemned to die to-morrow be indifferent about a reprieve or a pardon; let a drowning man be careless about catching at the only plank that can save him; but O do not you be careless and indifferent about eternity, and such amazing realities

realities as Heaven and Hell. If you disbelieve these things you are infidels: if you believe these things, and yet are unaffected with them, you are worse than infidels; you are a sort of shocking singularities, and prodigies in nature. Not Hell itself can find a precedent of such a conduct. The devils believe, and tremble; you believe, and trifle; trifle with things whose very names strike solemnity and awe through Heaven and Hell. But,

4. Let us see how this lukewarm temper agrees with the duties of religion. And as I cannot particularize them all I shall only mention an instance or two. View a lukewarm professor in prayer; he pays to an omniscient God the compliment of a bended knee, as though he could impose upon him with such an empty pretence. When he is addressing the supreme Majesty of Heaven and Earth he hardly ever recollects in whose presence he is, or whom he is speaking to, but seems as if he were worshipping without an object, or pouring out empty words into the air: perhaps through the whole prayer he had not so much as one solemn, affecting thought of that God whose name he so often invoked. Here is a criminal petitioning for pardon so carelessly that he scarcely knows what he is about. Here is a needy, famishing beggar pleading for such immense blessings as everlasting salvation, and all the joys of Heaven so lukewarmly and thoughtlessly as if he cared not whether his requests were granted

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or not. Here is an obnoxious offender confessing his sins with an heart untouched with sorrow; worshipping the living God with a dead heart; making great requests, but he forgets them as soon as he rises from his knees, and is not at all inquisitive what became of them, and whether they were accepted or not. And can there be a more shocking, impious, and daring conduct than this? To trifle in the royal presence would not be such an audacious affront. For a criminal to catch flies or sport with a feather when pleading with his judge for his pardon would be but a faint shadow of such religious trifling! What are such prayers but solemn mockeries and disguised insults? And yet, is not this the usual method in which many of you address the great God? The words proceed no farther than from your tongue: you do not pour them out from the bottom of your hearts; they have no life or spirit in them, and you hardly ever reflect upon their meaning. And when you have talked away to GOD in this manner you will have it pass for a prayer. But surely such prayers must bring down a curse upon you instead of a blessing: such sacrifices must be "an abomination to the LORD (b);" and it is astonishing that he has not mingled your blood with your sacrifices and sent you from your knees to Hell, from thoughtless, unmeaning prayer to real blasphemy and torture.

The next instance I shall mention is with regard

(b) Prov. xv. 8;

gard to the word of GOD. You own it divine; you profess it the standard of your religion, and the most excellent book in the world. Now if this be the case it is GOD that speaks to you; it is GOD that sends you an epistle when you are reading or hearing his word. How impious and provoking then must it be to neglect it, to let it lie by you as an antiquated, useles book, or to read it in a careless, superficial manner, and hear it with an inattentive, wandering mind? How would you take it if when you spoke to your servant about his own interest he should turn away from you, and not regard you? Or if you should write a letter to your son and he should not so much as carefully read it, or labour to understand it? And do not some of you treat the sacred oracles in this manner? You make but little use of your Bible, but to teach your children to read? Or if you read or hear its contents yourselves are you not unaffected with them? O one would think you would be all attention and reverence to every word: you would drink it in and thirst for it as new-born babes for their mother's milk: you would feel its energy, and acquire the character of that happy man to whom the GOD of Heaven vouchsafes to look, you would tremble at his word. It reveals the only method of your salvation; it contains the only charter of all your blessings; in short, you have the nearest personal interest in it, and can you be unconcerned hearers of it? I am  
sure

sure your reason and conscience must condemn such stupidity and indifferency as incongruous and outrageously wicked.

And now let me remind you of the observation I made when entering upon this subject, that if I should not offer sufficient matter of conviction you might go on in your lukewarmness; but if your own reason should be fully convinced that such a temper is most wicked and unreasonable then you might indulge it at your peril. What do you say now in the issue? Ye modern *Laodiceans*, are you not yet struck with horror at the thought of that insipid, formal, spiritless religion you have hitherto been contented with? And do you not see the necessity of following the advice of CHRIST to the *Laodicean* church, "Be zealous," be fervent for the future, "and repent," bitterly repent of what is past? To urge this the more I have two considerations in reserve of no small weight. 1. Consider the difficulties and dangers in your way. O sirs, if you knew the difficulty of the work of your salvation, and the great danger of miscarrying in it, you could not be so indifferent about it, nor could you flatter yourselves such languid endeavours will ever succeed. It is a labour, a striving, a race, a warfare: so it is called in the sacred writings: but would there be any propriety in these expressions if it were a course of sloth and inactivity? Consider, you have strong lusts to be subdued, an hard heart to be broken, a variety

variety of graces which you are entirely destitute of to be implanted and cherished, and that in an unnatural soil where they will not grow without careful cultivation, and that you have many temptations to be encountered and resisted: in short, you must be made new men, quite other creatures than you now are. And O! can this work be successfully performed while you make such faint and feeble efforts? Indeed God is the agent, and all your best endeavours can never effect the blessed revolution without him. But his assistance is not to be expected in the neglect, or careless use of means, nor is it intended to encourage idleness, but activity and labour, and when he comes to work he will soon inflame your hearts, and put an end to your lukewarmness. Again, your dangers are also great and numerous; you are in danger from presumption and from despondency; from coldness, from lukewarmness, and from false fires and enthusiastic heats; in danger from self-righteousness, and from open wickedness; from your own corrupt hearts, from this ensnaring world, and from the temptations of the Devil: you are in great danger of sleeping on in security without ever being thoroughly awakened; or, if you should be awakened you, are in danger of resting short of vital religion, and in either of these cases you are undone forever: in a word, dangers crowd thick around you on every hand, from every quarter; dangers, into which thousands, mil-

lions of your fellow-men have fallen and never recovered. Indeed, all things considered, it is very doubtful whether ever you will be saved who are now lukewarm and secure: I do not mean that your success is uncertain if you be brought to use means with proper earnestness, but alas! it is awfully uncertain whether ever you will be brought to use them in this manner. And, O sirs, can you continue secure and inactive when you have such difficulties to encounter with in a work of absolute necessity, and when you are surrounded with so many and so great dangers? Alas! are you capable of such destructive madness? O that you knew the true state of the case! Such a knowledge would soon fire you with the greatest ardour, and make you all life and vigour in this important work.

2. Consider how earnest and active men are in other pursuits. Should we form a judgment of the faculties of human nature by the conduct of the generality in religion we should be apt to conclude that men are meer snails, and that they have no active powers belonging to them. But view them about other affairs and you find they are all life, fire, and hurry. What labour and toil! what schemes and contrivances! what solicitude about success! what fears of disappointment! hands, heads, hearts all busy. And all this to procure those enjoyments which at best they cannot long retain, and which the next hour may tear from them.

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To acquire a name or a diadem, to obtain riches or honours, what hardships are undergone! what dangers dared! what rivers of blood shed! how many millions of lives have been lost! and how many more endangered! In short, the world is all alive, all in motion with business. On sea and land, at home and abroad, you will find men eagerly pursuing some temporal good. They grow grey-headed and die in the attempt without reaching their end, but this disappointment does not discourage the survivors and successors; still they will continue or renew the endeavour. Now here men act like themselves, and they shew they are alive and endowed with powers of great activity. And shall they be thus zealous and laborious in pursuit of earthly vanities, and be quite indifferent and sluggish in the infinitely more important concerns of eternity? What, solicitous about a mortal body, but careless about an immortal soul! Eager in pursuit of the joys of a few years, but careless and remiss in seeking an immortality of perfect happiness! Anxious to avoid poverty, shame, sickness, pain, and all the evils, real or imaginary, of the present life; but indifferent about an whole eternity of the most intolerable misery! O the destructive folly, the daring wickedness of such a conduct! My Brethren, is Religion the only thing which demands the utmost exertion of all your powers, and alas! is that the only thing in which you will be dull and inactive?

Is everlasting happiness the only thing about which you will be remiss? Is eternal punishment the only kind of misery which you are indifferent whether you escape or not? Is GOD the only good which you pursue with faint and lazy desires? How preposterous, how absurd is this! You can love the world; you can love a father, a child, or a friend; nay, you can love that abominable, hateful thing, sin: these you can love with ardor, serve with pleasure, and pursue with eagerness and with all your might, but the ever-blessed GOD, and the LORD JESUS, your best friend, you put off with a lukewarm heart and spiritless services. O inexpressibly monstrous! LORD, what is this that has befallen thine own offspring that they are so disaffected towards thee? Blessed JESUS, what hast thou done that thou shouldst be treated thus? O sinners! what will be the consequence of such a conduct? Will that GOD take you into the bosom of his love, will that JESUS save you by his blood, whom you make so light of? No, you may go and seek a Heaven where you can find it; GOD will give you none. Go, shift for yourselves, or look out for a Saviour where you will; JESUS will have nothing to do with you, except to take care to inflict proper punishment upon you if you retain this lukewarm temper towards him. Hence, by way of improvement, learn,

1. The vanity and wickedness of a lukewarm religion. . . Though you should profess the best religion

religion that ever came from Heaven, it will not save you; nay, it will condemn you with peculiar aggravations if you are lukewarm in it. This spirit of indifferency diffused through it turns it all into deadly poison. Your religious duties are all abominable to God while the vigor of your spirits is not exerted in them. Your prayers are insults, and he will answer them as such by terrible things in righteousness. And do any of you hope to be saved by such a religion? I tell you from the God of truth it will be so far from saving you that it will certainly ruin you forever: continue as you are till the last, and you will be as certainly damned to all eternity as *Judas*, or *Beelzebub*, or any ghost in Hell. But alas!

2. How common, how fashionable is this lukewarm religion! This is the prevailing, epidemical sin of our age and country, and it is well if it has not the same fatal effect upon us as it had upon *Laodicea*: *Laodicea* lost its Liberty, its Religion, and its All. Therefore let *Virginia* hear and fear, and do no more so wickedly. We have thousands of Christians, such as they are; as many Christians as *white men*. But alas! they are generally of the *Laodicean* stamp; they are neither cold nor hot. But it is our first concern to know how it is with ourselves, therefore let this enquiry go round this congregation. Are you not such lukewarm Christians? Are there any fire and life in your devotions? Or are not all your active powers en-

grossed by other pursuits? Impartially make the enquiry, for infinitely more depends upon it than upon your temporal life.

3. If you have hitherto been possessed with this *Laodicean* spirit I beseech you indulge it no longer. You have seen that it mars all your religion, and will end in your eternal ruin: and I hope you are not so hardened as to be proof against the energy of this consideration. Why halt you so long between two opinions? "I would you were cold or hot." Either make thorough work of religion, or do not pretend to it. Why should you profess a religion which is but an insipid indifferency with you? Such a religion is good for nothing. Therefore awake, arise, exert yourselves. Strive to enter in at the strait gate; strive earnestly, or you are shut out forever. Infuse heart and spirit into your religion. Whatever your hand findeth to do, do it with your might. Now, this moment, while my voice sounds in your ears, now begin the vigorous enterprize. Now collect all the vigour of your souls, and breathe it out in such a prayer as this, "LORD, fire this heart with thy love." Prayer is a proper introduction: for let me remind you of what I should never forget, that God is the only author of this sacred fire; it is only he that can quicken you. Therefore, ye poor careless creatures, fly to him in an agony of importunity, and never desist, never grow weary till you prevail.

4. And lastly, Let the best of us lament our lukewarmness,

lukewarmness, and earnestly seek more fervour of spirit. Some of you have a little life; you enjoy some warm and vigorous moments, and O they are divinely sweet. But reflect how soon your spirits flag, your devotion cools, and your zeal languishes. Think of this, and be humble. Think of this, and apply for more life. You know where to apply. CHRIST is your life: therefore cry to him for the communications of it. "LORD JESUS! a little more life, a little more vital heat to a languishing soul." Take this method, "and you shall run, and not be weary; you shall walk, and not faint(c)."

(c) Isa. xl. 31.





# S E R M O N XVI.

The Divine Government the Joy of our World.



## P S A L M XCVII. I.

*The LORD reigneth, let the Earth rejoice; let the multitude of the Isles be glad thereof.*


**W**ISE and good rulers are justly accounted an extensive blessing to their subjects. In a government, where Wisdom sits at the helm, and Justice, tempered with clemency, holds the balance of retribution, liberty and property are secured, encroaching ambition is checked, helpless innocence is protected, and universal order is established, and consequently peace and happiness diffuse their streams through the land. In such a situation every heart must rejoice, every countenance look chearful, and every bosom glow with gratitude to the happy instruments of such extended beneficence.

But on the other hand, "Wo to thee, O land, when thy king is a child (a)," weak, injudicious,

(a) Eccles. x. 16.

injudicious, humourfome, and peevish. This is the denunciation of *Solomon*, a sage philosopher, and an opulent king, whose station, capacity, and inclination conspired to give him the deepest skill in politics; and this denunciation has been accomplished in every age. Empires have fallen, Liberty has been fettered, Property has been invaded, the lives of men have been arbitrarily taken away, and Misery and Desolation have broken in like a flood, when the government has been intrusted in the hands of Tyranny, of Luxury, or Rashness; and the advantages of climate and soil, and all others which Nature could bestow, have not been able to make the subjects happy under the baleful influence of such an administration.

It has frequently been the unhappy fate of nations to be enslaved to such rulers; but such is the unavoidable imperfection of all human governments, that when, like our own, they are managed by the best hands, they are attended with many calamities, and cannot answer several valuable ends; and from both these considerations we may infer the necessity of a divine government over the whole universe, and particularly over the earth, in which we are more especially concerned. Without this supreme universal monarch the affairs of this world would fall into confusion, and the concerns of the next could not be managed at all. The capacities of the wisest of men are scanty, and not equal to all the purposes of government,

vernment, and hence many affairs of importance will be unavoidably misconducted; and dangerous plots and aggravated crimes may be undiscovered for want of knowledge, or pass unpunished for want of power. A wise and good ruler may be diffusing among his subjects all that happiness which can result from the imperfect administration of mortals, but he may be tumbled from his throne, and his government thrown into the greatest disorder by a more powerful invader; so that the best ruler could not make his subjects lastingly happy, unless he were universal monarch of the globe (a province too great for any mortal) and above the reach of the ambitious power of others. Further, human dominion cannot extend to the souls and consciences of men: civil rulers can neither know nor govern them, and yet these must be governed and brought into subjection to the eternal laws of reason, otherwise tranquillity cannot subsist on earth, and especially the great purposes of religion which regard a future state cannot be answered.

Men are placed here to be formed by a proper education for another world, for another class, and other employments, but civil rulers cannot form them for these important ends, and therefore they must be under the government of one who has access to their spirits, and can manage them as he pleases.

Deeply impress with these and other considerations which shall be presently mentioned,  
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the Psalmist is transported into this reflection,  
 " The LORD reigneth, let the earth rejoice :  
 " let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof."

The Psalmist seems to have the mediatorial empire of grace erected by *Immanuel* more immediately in view, and this indeed deserves our special notice; but no doubt he included the divine government *in general*, which is a just ground of universal joy; and in this latitude I shall consider the text.

Persons in a transport are apt to speak abruptly, and omit the particles of connection and inference usual in calm reasoning. Thus the Psalmist cries out, " The LORD reigneth, let the earth rejoice : let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof!" but if we reduce the passage into an argumentative form it will stand thus, " The LORD reigneth, *therefore* let the earth rejoice ; and let the multitude of the isles be glad *upon this account*."

The *earth* may here signify, by an usual *metonymy*, the rational inhabitants of the earth, who are especially concerned in the divine government; or, by a beautiful poetical *prosopopæia* it may signify the inanimate globe of the earth, and then it intimates that the divine government is so important a blessing that even the inanimate and senseless creation would rejoice in it were it capable of such passions\*.

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\* By the same figure the inanimate parts of the creation are called upon to praise the LORD, *Psalms* cxlviii. and are said to *travail* and *groan* under the sin of man; *Rom.* viii. 22.

The *isles* may likewise be taken *figuratively* for their inhabitants, particularly the *Gentiles* who resided in them, or *literally* for tracts of land surrounded with water.

My present design is,

To illustrate this glorious truth, *That Jehovah's supreme government is a just cause of universal joy.*

For that end I shall consider the divine government in various views, as legislative, providential, mediatorial, and judicial; and shew that in each of these views the divine government is matter of universal joy.

I. The LORD reigneth upon a throne of legislation, "let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof."

He is the one supreme law-giver (*b*), and is perfectly qualified for that important trust. Nothing tends more to the advantage of civil society than to have good laws established, according to which mankind are to conduct themselves, and according to which their rulers will deal with them. Now the supreme and universal King has enacted and published the best laws for the government of the moral world, and of the human race in particular.

Let the earth then rejoice that God has clearly revealed his will to us, and not left us in inextricable perplexities about our duty to him and mankind. Human reason, or the light of Nature gives us some intimations of the duties  
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(*b*) Jam. iv. 12.

of morality even in our degenerate state, and for this information we should bless God; but alas! these discoveries are very imperfect, and we need supernatural revelation to make known to us the way of life. Accordingly the LORD has favoured us with the sacred Oracles as a supplement to the feeble light of Nature, and in them we are fully taught what is good, and what the LORD requireth of us. And what cause of joy is this! How painful are the anxieties that attend uncertainty about matters of duty! How distressing a doubtful, fluctuating mind in an affair of such tremendous importance! This, no doubt, some of you that are conscientious have had the experience of, in particular cases, when you were at a loss to apply to them the general directions in sacred Scripture.

Again, "Let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad that these laws are suitably enforced with proper sanctions." The sanctions are such as become a God of infinite wisdom, almighty power, inexorable justice, untainted holiness, and unbounded goodness and grace, and such as are agreeable to the nature of reasonable creatures formed for an immortal duration. The rewards of obedience in the divine legislation are not such toys as posts of honour and profit, crowns and empires, which are the highest rewards that civil rulers can promise or bestow, but rational peace and serenity of mind, undaunted bravery under the

the frowns of adversity, a chearful confidence in the divine guardianship under all the calamities of life, and in the future world an entire exemption from all sorrow, and from sin, the fruitful source of all our afflictions; the possession of every good, the enjoyment of the divine presence, of the society of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect; in short, the fruition of an happiness above our present wishes, and equal to our then mature faculties, and all this for ever: these are the rewards of evangelical obedience, not indeed for its own sake, but upon the account of the righteousness of the blessed Jesus; and if these fail to allure men to obedience what can prevail? And how happy is it to live under a government, where virtue and religion, which in their own nature tend to our happiness, are enforced with such resistless arguments! On the other hand, the penalty annexed by the divine Lawgiver to disobedience is proportionably dreadful. To pine and languish under the secret curse of angry Heaven, which, like a contagious poison, diffuses itself through all the enjoyments of the wicked (c); to sweat under the agonies of a guilty conscience in this world, and in the future world to be banished from the beatific presence of God and all the joys of Heaven; to feel the anguish and remorse of guilty reflections; to burn in unquenchable fire; to consume a miserable eternity in the horrid society

(c) Mal. ii. 2.

of malignant ghosts; and all this without the least rational expectation; nay, without so much as a deluded hope of deliverance, or the mitigation of torture, through the revolutions of endless ages, all this is a faint representation of the penalty annexed to disobedience; and it is a penalty worthy a God to inflict, and equal to the infinite malignity of sin. And "let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad," on account not only of the promissory sanction of the law but also of this tremendous penalty, for it flows not only from justice but from goodness as well as its promise. The penalty is not annexed to the law, nor will it be executed from a malignant pleasure in the misery of the creature, but it is annexed from a regard to the happiness of mankind, and will be executed upon individuals for the extensive good of the whole as well as for the honourable display of the divine purity and justice. A penalty is primarily intended to deter men from disobedience: now disobedience tends in its own nature to make us miserable; it renders it impossible in the nature of things that we should be happy in the enjoyment of God and the employments of Heaven, which are eternally and immutably contrary to sinful dispositions; and it fills us with those malignant and unruly passions which cannot but make us uneasy. Hence it follows; that, since the penalty tends to deter us from sin, and since sin naturally tends to make us miserable, therefore the  
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the penalty is a kind of gracious inclosure round the pit of Misery to keep us from falling into it: it is a friendly admonition not to drink poison; it is, in a word, a kind restraint upon us in our career to ruin; and indeed it is a blessing we could not spare, for we find that, notwithstanding the terror of the threatening, men will run on in sin; and with how much more horrid alacrity and infernal zeal would they continue their course if there were no divine threatening to check and withhold them? The earth may also rejoice for the execution of the penalty of the divine law against sin, for the conspicuous punishment of the disobedient may serve as a loud warning to all rational Beings that now exist, or that may hereafter be created, not to offend against God; and thus it may be the mean of preserving them in obedience, and so promote the general good; and it may be that the number of those that shall be punished of the human and angelic natures, when compared to the number of reasonable Beings that shall be confirmed in holiness and happiness by observing their doom, may bear no more proportion than the number of criminals executed in a government as public examples does to all the subjects of it; and consequently such punishment may be vindicated on the same principles. Farther, justice is an amiable attribute in itself, and it appears so to all rational Beings but criminals, whose interest it is that it should not be displayed, and therefore the infliction of just

punishment should be matter of general joy since it is amiable in itself. So it is in human governments: while we are innocent we approve of the conduct of our magistrates in inflicting capital punishment upon notorious malefactors, though the malefactors themselves view it with horror. But to proceed :

" Let the earth rejoice ; let the multitude of the isles be glad," that the divine laws reach the inner man, and have power upon the hearts and consciences of men. Human laws can only smooth our external conduct at best, but the heart in the mean time may be disloyal and wicked. Now this defect is supplied by the laws of the King of Heaven, which are spiritual. They require a compleat uniformity and self-consistency in us that heart and life may agree, and therefore they are wisely framed to make us entirely good. They have also an inimitable power upon the consciences of men. Should all the world acquit us, yet we cannot acquit ourselves when we violate them. The consciousness of a crime has made many a hardy offender sweat and agonize with remorse, though no human eye could witness to his offence. Now what cause of joy is it that these laws are quick and powerful, and that they are attended with almighty energy, which in some measure intimidates and restrains the most audacious, and inspires the conscientious with a pious fear of offending !

II. " The LORD reigneth by his providence,  
" let

" let the earth therefore rejoice, and the multitudes of the isles be glad thereof."

The providence of God is well described in our shorter *Catechism*, " It is his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions."

To particularize all the instances of providential government which may be matter of joy to the earth would be endless, therefore I shall only mention the following.

" Let the earth rejoice, and the multitude of the isles be glad," that the LORD reigneth over the kingdoms of the earth, and manages all their affairs according to his sovereign and wise pleasure. We sometimes hear of wars and rumours of wars, of thrones tottering, and kingdoms falling, of the nations tumultuously raging and dashing in angry conflict like the waves of the boisterous ocean. In such a juncture we may say, " The floods have lifted up, O LORD, the floods have lifted up their voice: the floods lift up their waves. But the LORD reigneth, therefore the world shall be established that it cannot be moved. The LORD on high is mightier than the noise of many waters; yea, than the mighty waves of the sea (d)." Sometimes the ambition of foreign power, or the encroachments of domestic tyranny may threaten our liberties, and Persecution may seem ready to discharge its artillery against the church of God, while every

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(d) Psalm xciii.

pious heart trembles for the ark, lest it should be carried into the land of its enemies. But the LORD reigneth! let the earth, let the church rejoice; "the eternal God is her refuge, and "underneath her are the everlasting arms (d)." He will overrule the various revolutions of the world for her good. He will give kings for her ransom, *Æthiopia* and *Seba* for her; and the united powers of Earth and Hell shall not prevail against her. Though the frame of Nature should be unhinged we may find refuge in our God. Yet it must be owned that the LORD for the chastisement of his people may suffer their enemies to break in upon them, and may cast them into the furnace of affliction. But let the earth rejoice, let the church be glad that the LORD reigneth over her most powerful enemies, and that they are but executing his will even when they have no regard to it, but are gratifying their own ambition. They are but a rod in the hand of a tender father who corrects only to amend, and when he has used the rod for this gracious purpose he will lay it aside. In this language the Almighty speaks of the haughty *Assyrian* monarch who had pushed his conquests so far and wide (e). "O " *Assyrian*, the rod of mine anger, &c. I will " give him my commission, and send him against " the Jews, my favourite people, because they " are degenerated into an hypocritical nation, " and he shall execute my orders." " Howbeit, he

(d) Deut. xxxiii. 27.

(e) Isa. x. 5, 6, 7.

he meaneth not so; it is far from his heart to obey my will in this expedition, but his only design is to aggrandize himself and to destroy and cut off nations not a few." And when this instrument of the divine vengeance arrogates to himself the honour of his own successes with what just insult and disdain does the King of kings speak of him (f)? " Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith? As if the rod should shake itself against him that lifteth it up," &c. The design of God in these chastisements is to purge away the iniquity of his people, and this is all the fruit of them to take away their sin; and when this gracious design is answered they shall be removed; " and the rod of the wicked shall not always lie upon the lot of the righteous (g)." Now what cause of universal joy is this that One infinitely wise sits at the helm, and can steer the feeble vessel of his church through all the outrageous storms of this unfriendly climate and tempestuous ocean! He may seem at times to lie asleep, but in the article of extreme danger he will awake and still the winds and the sea with his sovereign mandate, " Peace, be still." Men may form deep and politic schemes, and purpose their accomplishment in defiance of Heaven, " but GOD disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprize. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and the counsel of

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(f) Ver. 12—15.

(g) Psalm cxxv. 3.

" the froward is carried headlong (*b*). " This was exemplified in the case of *Ahitophel* (*i*). " The hearts of men, yea of kings, are in the " hand of the LORD, and he turneth them " whithersoever he pleases (*k*). " And how joyful a thought this, that we are not at the arbitrary disposal of our fellow-mortals, and that affairs are not managed according to their capricious pleasure, but that our God is in the Heaven, and doeth whatsoever he pleaseth (*l*) !

Again, the church may be endangered by intestine divisions and offences. The professors of religion may stumble and fall, and so wound the hearts of the friends of *Zion*, and give matter of triumph and insult to its enemies. Some may apostatize, and return like the dog to his vomit. A general lukewarmness may diffuse itself through the church, and even those who retain their integrity in the main may feel the contagion. Divisions and animosities may be inflamed, mutual love may be extinguished, and a spirit of discord succeed in its place. A most melancholy case this, and too much like our own ; and our hearts sink at times beneath the burden. But " the LORD reigneth ; let the " earth be glad. " He can reduce this confusion into order, and " make the wrath of man to " praise him, and restrain the remainder of " it (*m*). " It is the peculiarity of divine wisdom  
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(*b*) Job v. 12, 13.

(*i*) 2 Sam. xvii. 14.

(*k*) Prov. xxi. 1. see also Chap. xvi. 1, 9. and xix. 21.

(*l*) Psalm cxy. 3.

(*m*) Psalm lxxvi. 10.

to educe good out of evil, and let us rejoice in it. God is supreme, and therefore can controul all the wicked passions of the mind. He has the residue of the spirit, and can rekindle the languishing flame of devotion. And O let us apply to him with the most vigorous and unwearied importunity for so necessary a blessing!

Again, we are exposed to numberless accidental and unforeseen dangers which we cannot prevent nor encounter. Sickness and death may proceed from a thousand unsuspected causes. Our friends, our estates, and in short all our earthly enjoyments may be torn from us by a variety of accidents. We walk, as it were, in the dark, and may tread on remediless dangers ere we are aware. "But the LORD reigneth!" "let the earth be glad!" Contingent events are at his disposal, and necessity at his controul. The smallest things are not beneath the notice of his providence, and the greatest are not above it. Diseases and misfortunes that seem to happen by chance are commissioned by the LORD of all, and they that result evidently from natural causes are sent by his almighty will. He says to one, Go, and it goeth; and to another, Come, and it cometh. He orders the devastations that are made by the most outrageous elements. If flames lay our houses in ashes they are kindled by his breath. If hurricanes sweep through our land, and carry desolation along with them, they perform his will, and can do nothing beyond it. His hand hurls

the thunder, and directs it where to strike. An arrow or a bullet shot at a venture in the heat of battle is carried to its mark by divine direction. How wretched a world would this be were it not under the wise management of divine Providence! If Chance or blind Fate were its rulers what desolations would crowd upon us every moment! we should soon be crushed in the ruins of a falling world. Every wind that blows might blast us with death, and fire and water would mingle in a blended chaos, and bury us in their destruction. But so extensive is the care of Providence that even the sparrows may find safety in it, and we cannot lose so much as a hair of our heads without its permission (n). And how much more then are our persons and our affairs of importance under its guardianship and direction?

Again, we are in perpetual danger from the malignant agency of infernal spirits, who watch all opportunities to ruin the souls, bodies, and estates of men. These subtil spirits can inject insinuating thoughts into our minds, and present such images to the fancy as may allure the soul to sin. This is repeatedly asserted in Scripture, and attested by the melancholy experience of multitudes in all ages. That they have power also in the material world to raise storms and tempests, and to ruin men's estates, and inflict diseases on their bodies, is plain from the case of *Job*, and many in our Saviour's time; and from  
*Satan's*

(n) Matt. x. 29, 30, 31.

*Satan's* being " called the prince of the power of  
 " the air, and his associates spiritual wickednesses  
 " in high places." And what horrid devastations  
 would these powerful and malicious Beings  
 spread through the world if they were not un-  
 der the controul of divine Providence! They  
 would perpetually haunt our minds with in-  
 snaring or terrifying images, would meet us  
 with temptations at every turn, and lead us  
 willing captives to Hell. They would also strip  
 us of all temporal enjoyments, torture our bo-  
 dies with grievous pains, or moulder them into  
 dust with consuming and loathsome diseases.  
 " But the LORD reigneth ! let the earth be glad !"  
 He keeps the infernal lions in chains, and re-  
 strains their rage. He sees all their subtil plots  
 and machinations against his feeble sheep, and  
 baffles them all. " He will not suffer his peo-  
 " ple to be tempted above what they are able to  
 " bear, but with the temptation will also make  
 " a way to escape (o)." " And when he suffers  
 " them to be buffeted his grace shall be suffi-  
 " cient for them, &c (p)." " He hath also (as  
*Satan* himself confessed with regard to *Job*)  
 " made an hedge about us, and about our  
 " houses, and about all that we have on every  
 " side (q) : " and hence we live and enjoy the  
 blessings of life. What cause of grateful joy is this!  
 Who would not rather die than live in a world  
 ungoverned by divine Providence ! This earth  
 would

(o) 1 Cor. x. 13.

(p) 2 Cor. xii. 7,9.

(q) Job i. 10.

would soon be turned into a Hell, if the infernal armies were let loose upon it.

III. The LORD reigneth upon a throne of Grace! "let the earth rejoice, and the multitude of the isles be glad."

It is the mediatorial government of the Messiah which the Psalmist had more immediately in view, and this is the principal cause of joy to the earth and its guilty inhabitants. This is a kind of government peculiar to the human race: the upright angels do not need it, and the fallen angels are not favoured with it. This is invested in the person of *Immanuel*, "who is made head over all things to his church (r); to whom all power in Heaven and Earth is given (s)." This is the kingdom described in such august language in *Dan. ii. ver. 44, 45, and vii. 14. Luke i. 32, 33.* Hence that JESUS, who was mocked with a crown of thorns, and condemned as a criminal at *Pilate's* bar, wears on his vesture and on his thigh this majestic inscription, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (t). And behold I bring you glad tidings, this kingdom of GOD is come unto you, and you are called to become its subjects, and share in its blessings. Wherever the gospel is preached there *Jehovah* sits upon a mercy-seat in majesty tempered with condescending grace. From thence he invites rebels that had rejected his government to return to their

(r) Ephes. i. 22.

(s) Matt. xi. 27. and xxviii. 18.

(t) Rev. xix. 16.

their allegiance, and passes an act of grace upon all that comply with the invitation. To his throne of grace he invites all to come, and offers them the richest blessings. From thence he publishes peace on earth, and good-will towards men. From thence he offers pardon to all that will submit to his government, and renounce their sins, those weapons of rebellion. From thence he distributes the influences of his Spirit to subdue obstinate hearts into chearful submission, to support his subjects under every burden, and furnish them with strength for the spiritual warfare. He subdues their rebellious corruptions, animates their languishing graces, and protects them from their spiritual enemies\*. He enacts laws for the regulation of his church, appoints ordinances for her edification, and qualifies ministers to dispense them. " He hath ascended up on high; he hath received gifts for men, and these he hath distributed, and given some, prophets; and some, apostles; 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 (u)." And it is by virtue of authority derived from him that his ministers now officiate, and you receive his ordinances at their hands. Now how happy are we, that we live under the mediatorial administration! under the empire of Grace! " Let  
" the

\* See his reign most beautifully described under the type of *Solomon*. Psalm lxxii. (u) Ephes. iv. 8, 11, 12.

“ the earth rejoice ; let the multitude of the  
 “ isles be glad upon this account.” And let us  
 pray that all nations may become the willing  
 subjects of our gracious sovereign. If this ad-  
 ministration of grace had not been erected, in  
 what a miserable situation should we have  
 been ! guilty, miserable, and hopeless ! Let us  
 rejoice that the King of Heaven, from whom  
 we had revolted, has not suffered us to perish  
 without remedy in our unnatural rebellion, but  
 holds out the sceptre of his grace to us that we  
 may touch it and live.

IV. And lastly, the LORD will reign ere long  
 upon a throne of universal judgment conspicu-  
 ous to the assembled universe, “ let the earth  
 “ therefore rejoice, and the multitude of the  
 “ isles be glad.”

Here I may borrow the inimitable language  
 of the Psalmist (*w*) : “ The LORD shall judge  
 “ the people righteously. Let the Heavens re-  
 “ joice, and let the Earth be glad : let the sea  
 “ roar, and the fulness thereof : let the fields  
 “ be joyful, and all that is therein : then shall  
 “ all the trees of the wood rejoice before the  
 “ LORD, for he cometh ! for he cometh to judge  
 “ the earth. He shall judge the world with  
 “ righteousness and the people with his truth.”  
 This will indeed be a day of insupportable ter-  
 ror to his enemies (*x*), but on many accounts  
 it will prove a day of joy and triumph.

This day will unfold all the mysteries of di-  
 vine

(*w*) Psalm xcvi. 10—13.

(*x*) Rev. vi. 15, 16.

vine Providence, which are now unsearchable. There are many dispensations now for which we cannot account. Many blessings are bestowed, many calamities fall, and many events happen, of which mortals cannot see the reason. Prosperity is the lot of some who seem the peculiar objects of divine vengeance, and many groan under afflictions who seem more proper objects of providential beneficence. We are often led into ways, the end of which we cannot see, and are bewildered in various perplexities about the designs of divine Providence towards us. Hence also Impiety takes occasion to cavil at the ways of God as not equal, and to censure his government as weakly administered. But in that day all his ways will appear to be judgment. The clouds and darkness that now surround them will vanish, and the beams of Wisdom, Goodness, and Justice will shine illustrious before the whole universe, and every creature shall join the plaudit, "He hath done all things well!" Now we can at best but see a few links in the chain of providence, but then we shall see it all entire and compleat: then the whole system will be exposed to view at once, which will discover the strange symmetry, connections, dependencies, and references of all the parts, without which we can no more judge of the excellency of the procedure than a rustic could tell the use of the several parts of a watch, if he saw them scattered in various places. Let the earth therefore be glad in expectation of this glorious discovery.

Again,

Again, let the earth rejoice that in that day the present unequal distributions of Providence will be forever adjusted, and regulated according to the strictest justice. This is not the place or season for retribution, and therefore we need not be surpris'd that the blessings and calamities of this life are not disposed according to mens real characters; but then every man shall be dealt with according to his works. Oppressed innocence will be redress'd, and insolence forever mortified. Calumny will be confuted, and flattery expos'd. *Lazarus* shall be comforted, and *Dives* tormented. Impious kings shall be driven into the infernal pit, while pious beggars shall be advanced to the heights of happiness. In short, all matters will then be set right, and therefore let the earth rejoice.

Again, let the earth rejoice that in that day the righteous shall be compleatly delivered from all sin and sorrow, and advanced to the perfection of heavenly happiness. Then they shall enter upon the full fruition of that bliss, which is now the object of all their anxious hopes and earnest labours.

But we must change the scene into tragedy, and take a view of trembling criminals hearing their dreadful doom, and sinking to Hell with horrible anguish. And must the earth rejoice in this too? Yes, but with a solemn tremendous joy. Even the condemnation and everlasting misery of these is right and just, is amiable and glorious, and God, Angels, and Saints will at  
the

the great day rejoice in it. The awful grandeur of justice will be illustrated in it, and this is matter of joy. The punishment of irremediable impenitents will be an effectual warning to all reasonable Beings, and to all future creations, as has been observed; and by it they will be deterred from disobedience, and this is the cause of joy. These criminals will then be beyond repentance and reformation, and therefore it is impossible in the nature of things they should be happy; and why then should Heaven be incumbered with them? Is it not cause of joy that they should be confined in prison who have made themselves unfit for society? In the present state sinners are objects of our compassion and sorrow, and the whole creation mourns for them (y); but God will then rejoice in their ruin, and laugh at their calamity (z); and all dutiful creatures will join in his joy.

Thus you see that the LORD reigneth. And who, poor feeble saints, who is this that sustains this universal government, and rules the whole creation according to his pleasure? It is your Father, your Saviour, your Friend! It is he that entertains a tenderer regard to you than ever glowed in an human breast. And can you be so foolish as to regard the surmises of unbelief? Can you force yourselves to fear that he will ever leave or forsake you? Can you suspect that he will suffer you to fall an helpless prey to  
your

(y) Rom. viii. 22.

(z) Prov. i. 26.

your enemies? No, your LORD reigneth, therefore rejoice. "Rejoice in the LORD alway; and" again I say rejoice." While he keeps the throne of the universe you shall be safe and happy. Your Father is greater than all, and none can pluck you out of his hands. Remember he sits upon a throne of grace, therefore come to him with boldness. You may smile at calamity and confusion, and rejoice amid the ruins of the world. You may borrow the language of *David*, *Psalms* xlvi. or of *Habbakuk*, ch. iii. ver. 17, 18. Remember also, that as he is a King he demands your chearful obedience, and therefore make his service the business of your life.

And, unhappy sinners! let me ask you, Who is this that reigns King of the universe? Why, it is HE whom you have rejected from being King over you, it is he against whom you have rebelled, and who is therefore your just enemy. And are you able to make good your cause against him who has universal nature at his nod? How dreadful is your situation! That which may make the earth rejoice may make you fear and tremble. The LORD reigneth, let sinners tremble. You must fall before him, if you will not chearfully submit to his government. Let me therefore renew the usual neglected declaration, "He sits upon a throne of grace." Let me once more in his name proclaim reconciliation! reconciliation! in your ears, and invite you to return to your allegiance. Lay down your arms, forsake your sins. Hasten, hasten  
to

to him. The sword of his justice now hangs over your heads while I am managing the treaty with you, and therefore delay not. Yield! yield, or die; surrender, or perish. You have no other alternative. Submit, and you may join the general joy at his government. You upon earth, and devils and damned ghosts in hell are the only Beings that are sorry for it; but upon your submission your sorrow shall be turned into joy, and you shall exult "when the LORD of all comes to judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth (22)."

(22) Psalm xcvi. 13.





# S E R M O N XVII.

The Name of GOD proclaimed by himself.



E X O D U S XXXIII. 18, 19.

*And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy Glory. And he said, I will make all my Goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee—*

With CHAP. XXXIV. 6, 7.

*And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth; keeping Mercy for Thousands, forgiving Iniquity and Transgression and Sin, and that will by no means clear the Guilty.*

 T is a very natural and proper enquiry for a creature, "Where is God my Maker?" And an heart that loves him must long to know more of him, and is ever ready to join with *Moses* in his petition, "Shew me, I pray thee, thy glory;" or, "Reveal thyself to me\*." That thou art,

\* Εμφανισαν μοι σεαυτον. LXX.

I infer from my own existence, and from thy numerous works all around me; and that thou art *glorious* I learn from the display of thy perfections in thy vast creation, and in the government of the world thou hast made. But, alas! how small a portion of GOD is known in the earth? How faintly does thy glory shine in the feeble eyes of mortals? My knowledge of things in the present state of flesh and blood depends in a great measure upon the senses, but GOD is a spirit invisible to eyes of flesh, and imperceptible through the gross medium of sensation. How and when shall I know thee as thou art, thou great, thou dear Unknown? In what a strange situation am I! I am surrounded with thy omnipresence, yet I cannot perceive thee: thou art as near me as I am to myself; "thou knowest my rising up" and my sitting down; thou understandest "my thoughts afar off; thou penetratest my" very essence, and knowest me altogether (a);" but to me thou dwellest in impervious darkness, or, which is the same, in light inaccessible. "O that I knew where I might find him! Behold I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him (b)." I see his perfections beaming upon me from all his works, and his providence ever-active ruling the

(a) Psalm cxxxix. 1, &amp;c.

(b) Job xxiii. 3—9.

the vast universe, and diffusing life, motion, and vigour through the whole: the virtue of his wisdom, power, and goodness,

- “ Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breez ;
- “ Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees ;
- “ Lives in all life, extends through all extent ;
- “ Spreads undivided, operates unspent ;
- “ Inspires our soul, informs our vital part” —†

But where is the great Agent himself? These are his works, and they are glorious; “ in wisdom has he made them all,” but where is the divine Artificer? From these displays of his glory, which strike my senses, I derive some ideas of him, but O! how faint and glimmering! how unlike to the all-perfect Archetype and Original! I have also heard of him by the hearing of the ear: I read his own descriptions of himself in his word; I contemplate the representations he has given of himself in his ordinances; and these are truly glorious, but they are adapted to the dark and groveling minds of mortals in this obscure region, and fall infinitely short of the original glory. I can think of him; I can love him; I can converse and carry on a spiritual intercourse with him; I feel him working in my heart; I receive sensible communications of love and grace from him; I dwell at times with unknown delight in the contemplation of his glory, and

am transported with the survey: but, alas! I cannot fully know him; I cannot dive deep into this mystery of glory: my senses cannot perceive him; and my intellectual powers in the present state are not qualified to converse with spiritual objects, and form a full acquaintance with them. O! if it would please my God to shew me his glory in its full lustre! O that he would reveal himself to me so as that my senses may assist my mind, if such a manner of revelation be possible!

Such thoughts as these may naturally rise in our minds, and probably some such thoughts possessed the mind of *Moses*, and were the occasion of his request, "I beseech thee shew me thy glory."

These chapters whence we have taken our subject of discourse present us with transactions that must seem very strange and incredible to a mind that knows nothing of communion with the Father of Spirits, and that is furnished only with modern ideas.

Here is, not an angel, but a man; not a creature only, but a sinner, a sinner once as depraved as ourselves, in intimate audience with the Deity. *Jehovah* speaks to him "face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend." *Moses* uses his interest in favour of a rebellious people, and it was so great that he prevailed: nay, to shew the force of his intercessions and to give him an encouragement to use them, God condescends to represent himself as restrained

strained by this importunate petitioner, and unable to punish the ungrateful *Israelites*, while *Moses* pleaded for them. "Let me alone, says he, that my wrath may wax hot against this people, that I may consume them (c)." *Moses* urges petition upon petition, and obtains blessing upon blessing, as though God could deny nothing to such a favourite. He first deprecates the divine wrath, that it might not immediately break out upon the *Israelites*, and cut them off (d): when he has gained this point he advances farther, and pleads that God would be their conductor through the wilderness, as he had been till that time, and lead them into the promised land. In this article God seems to put him off, and to devolve the work of conducting them upon himself; but *Moses*, sensible that he was not equal to it, insists upon the request, and with a sacred dexterity urges the divine promises to enforce it. JEHOVAH at length appears, as it were, partly prevailed upon, and promises to send his angel before him as his guide (e). But, alas! an angel cannot fill up his place, and *Moses* renews his petition to the LORD, and humbly tells him that he had rather stay, or even die where they were in the wilderness, than go up to the promised land without him. "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence (f): alas!

P 4

" the

(c) Chap. xxxii. 10.

(d) Verses 11—14.

(e) Chap. xxxii. 34. and xxxiii. 2.

(f) Chap. xxxiii. 15.

" the company of an angel and the possession  
 " of a land flowing with milk and honey will  
 " not satisfy us without thyself:" v. 15. His  
 prayers prevail for this blessing also, and JEHO-  
 VAH will not deny him any thing. O the sur-  
 prising prevalency of faith! O the efficacy of  
 the fervent prayer of a righteous man!

And now, when his people are restored unto  
 the divine favour, and God has engaged to go  
 with them, has *Moses* any thing more to ask?  
 Yes, he found he had indeed great interest  
 with God, and O! he loved him, and longed,  
 and languished for a clearer knowledge of him:  
 he found that after all his friendly interviews  
 and conferences he knew but little of his glo-  
 ry; and now, thought he, it is a proper time  
 to put in a petition for this manifestation; who  
 knows but it may be granted? Accordingly he  
 prays with a mixture of filial boldness and  
 trembling modesty, " I beseech thee, shew me  
 " thy glory:" that is to say, " Now I am in  
 " converse with thee, I perceive thou art the  
 " most glorious of all Beings; but it is but  
 " little of thy glory I as yet know. O! is it  
 " possible for a guilty mortal to receive clearer  
 " discoveries of it? If so, I pray thee favour  
 " me with a more full and bright view." This  
 petition is also granted, and the LORD promises  
 him, " I will make all my goodness pass before  
 " thee, and I will proclaim the Name of the  
 " LORD before thee."

That you may the better understand this  
 strange

strange history, I would have you observe a few things.

1st, In the earlier ages of the world it was a very common thing for God to assume some visible form, and in it to converse freely with his servants. Of this you frequently read in the history of the patriarchs, particularly of *Adam, Abraham, Jacob, &c.* It is also a tradition almost universally received in all ages, and among all nations, that God has sometimes appeared in a sensible form to mortals. You can hardly meet with one heathen writer but what you will find in him some traces of this tradition. Upon this in particular are founded the many extravagant stories of the Poets concerning the appearances of their gods. Had there been no original truth in some appearances of the true God to men, there would have been no colour for such fables, for they would have evidently appeared groundless and unnatural to every reader. This tradition therefore was no doubt originally derived from the appearances of the Deity in a corporeal form in early ages †. Sometimes God assumed an human

† These appearances were probably made in the person of the Son, and might be intended as a prelude or earnest of his assuming human nature, in the fulness of time, and his dwelling among mortals. He was the immediate Agent in the creation of the world, and the Father devolved upon him the whole oecconomy of Providence from the beginning; and hence he had frequent occasions to appear on some grand design. It cannot seem incredible, that he should thus assume some visible form, to such as believe that God was at length really *manifested in the flesh*; for this temporary apparent Incarnation cannot be deemed more strange, than his really being *made flesh, and dwelling among us.*

man shape, and appeared as a man. Thus he appeared to *Abraham* in company with two angels (*g*); and that good patriarch entertained them with food as travellers; yet one of them is repeatedly stiled the LORD, or *JEHOVAH*, the incommunicable Name of GOD (*h*), and speaks in a language proper to him only (*i*). Sometimes he appeared as a visible brightness, or a body of light, or in some other sensible form of majesty and glory. Thus he was seen by *Moses* in the bush as a burning fire; thus he attended the *Israelites* through the wilderness in the symbol of fire by night, and a cloud by day; and thus he often appeared in the tabernacle, and at the dedication of *Solomon's* temple, in some sensible form of glorious brightness, which the Jews called the *SCHECHINAH*, and looked upon as a certain symbol of the divine presence.

2dly, You are to observe that GOD, who is a spirit, cannot be perceived by the senses; nor were these sensible forms intended to represent the divine essence, which is wholly immaterial. You can no more see GOD than you can see your own soul; and a bodily form can no more represent his nature than shape or colour can represent a thought, or the affection of love. Yet,

3dly, It must be allowed that majestic and glorious emblems, or representations of GOD exhibited

(g) Gen. xviii.

(h) See verses 13, 20, 22, 26, &c.

(i) Ver. 14, 21, &c.

exhibited to the senses may help to raise our ideas of him. When the senses and the imagination assist the power of pure understanding, its ideas are more lively and impressive. And though no sensible representations can bear any strict resemblance to the divine nature, yet they may strike our minds deeply, and fill them with images of grandeur and majesty. When I see a magnificent palace, it naturally tends to give me a great idea of the owner or builder. The retinue and pomp of kings, their glittering crowns, sceptres, and other regalia, tend to inspire us with ideas of majesty. In like manner, those sensible representations of Deity, especially when attended with some rational descriptions of the divine nature, may help us to form higher conceptions of the glory of God; and the want of such representations may occasion less reverence and awe. For instance, had the description of the Deity, "the LORD God merciful and gracious," &c. been only suggested to the mind of *Moses* as an object of calm contemplation it would not have struck him with such profound reverence, nor given him such clear or impressive ideas as when it was proclaimed with a loud, majestic voice, and attended with a visible glory too bright for mortal eyes. Human nature is of such a make that it cannot but be affected with things of this nature.

Consider the matter well in the light which I have set it, and you may see something of the propriety

propriety and good tendency of these appearances, and at the same time guard yourselves against mistakes. Let me now give you what I apprehend the true history of this remarkable and illustrious appearance of God to *Moses*.

*Moses* had enjoyed frequent interviews with God, and seen many symbols of his presence and representations of his glory, but he still finds his knowledge of him very defective, and apprehends that God might give him some representation of his glory more striking and illustrious than any he had seen. Therefore, finding that now he was in great favour with him, he humbly moves this petition, "I beseech thee shew me thy glory;" "give me some more full and majestic representation of thy glory than I have hitherto seen." The LORD answers him, "I will cause all my goodness," that is, a glorious, visible representation of my goodness, which is "my glory, to pass before thee," "which may strike thy senses, and make them the medium of conveying to thy mind more illustrious and majestic ideas of my glory. And as no sensible forms can fully represent the spiritual essence and perfections of my nature, while I cause a visible representation of my glory to pass before thee, I will at the same time proclaim the Name of the LORD\*, and describe some  
" of

\* The LXX render the passage, Καλεσω τω ονοματι μου, κυριου σου; "I will call by my Name, THE LORD, before thee."

And

“ of the principal perfections which constitute  
 “ my glory and goodness. But so bright will  
 “ be the lustre of that form which I shall as-  
 “ sume, that thou art not able to see my face,  
 “ or the most splendid part of the representa-  
 “ tion; the glory is too bright to be beheld by  
 “ any mortal (k). But there is a place in a  
 “ rock where thou mayest wait, and I will cast  
 “ darkness over it till the brightest part of the  
 “ form of glory in which I shall appear is passed  
 “ by, and then I will open a medium of light,  
 “ and thou shalt see my back parts; that is,  
 “ those parts of the representation which are  
 “ less illustrious, and which pass by last: the  
 “ glory of these thou shalt be enabled to bear,  
 “ but my face shall not be seen (l).”

Thus GOD condescended to promise, and when matters were duly prepared he performs his engagement. The LORD assumed a visible form of glory, *and passed by before him, and proclaimed his Name*, which includes his perfections. Things are known by their names, and GOD is known by his attributes, therefore his Name includes his attributes. The proclamation ran in this august style, “ The LORD, the LORD  
 “ GOD,

And this is the most literal translation of the Hebrew words, קָרָאתִי בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה לְפָנָי and they are accordingly rendered, “ *Inclamabo nominatim JEHOVA ante faciem tuam,*” by Junius and Tremellius. According to this version the sense seems to be, “ When the symbol of my glory is passing by, I will give thee notice, and call by my Name THE LORD, that I may  
 “ not pass by unobserved.”

(k) Verse 20.

(l) Ver. 2—23.

" God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering,  
 " abundant in goodness and truth, keeping  
 " mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity,  
 " transgression, and sin." *Moses* was struck with  
 reverence and admiration, and bowed and  
 worshipped.

My present design is to explain the several  
 names and perfections here ascribed to God,  
 and shew that they all concur to constitute his  
 goodness. For you must observe this is the  
 connection. *Moses* prays for a view of God's  
 glory, God promises him a view of his *goodness*,  
 which intimates, that his goodness is his glory;  
 and when he describes his goodness what is the  
 description? It is " The LORD, the LORD GOD,  
 " merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abun-  
 " dant in goodness and truth, *keeping* \* mercy  
 " for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgres-  
 " sion, and sin." That these attributes belong  
 to his goodness we easily and naturally conceive;  
 but what shall we think of his punitive justice,  
 that awful and tremendous attribute, the object  
 of terror and aversion to sinners? Is that a  
 part of his goodness too? Yes, when God  
 causes his *goodness* to pass before *Moses*, he pro-  
 claims as one part of it, that " he will by no  
 " means clear the guilty, and that he visits the  
 " iniquities of the fathers upon the children to  
 " the

\* The *Hebrews* observe, that the first letter of the word **קִיַּם**  
 translated *keeping*, is much larger than usual, which shews that a  
 particular emphasis is to be laid upon it; as if he should say, " I  
 " most strictly and richly keep mercy for thousands; the treasure  
 " is immense, and can never be exhausted. "

“ the third and fourth generation.” This awful attribute is an important part of his goodness, and without it he could not be good, amiable, or glorious.

I am now about to enter upon a subject the most sublime, august, and important, that can come within the compass of human or angelic minds, the Name and Perfections of the infinite and ever-glorious God. I attempt it with trembling and reverence, and I foresee I shall finish it with shame and confusion: for “ who by  
“ searching can find out God? who can find  
“ out the Almighty unto perfection (m)?” The question of *Agur* mortifies the pride of human knowledge; “ What is his name, or what is his  
“ Son’s name, if thou canst tell (n)?” “ Such  
“ knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is  
“ high, I cannot attain unto it (o).” “ It is as  
“ high as Heaven, what can I know? deeper  
“ than Hell, what can I do? the measure  
“ thereof is longer than the earth, and broader  
“ than the sea (p).” Lend me your skill, ye Angels, who have seen his face without intermission from the first moment of your happy existence; or ye Saints above, that “ see him as  
“ he is, and know even as you are known;” inspire me with your exalted ideas, and teach me your celestial language, while I attempt to bring Heaven down to Earth, and reveal its glories to the eyes of mortals. In vain I ask;  
their

(m) Job xi. 7.

(n) Prov. xxx. 4.

(o) Psalm cxxxix. 6.

(p) Job xi. 8, 9.

their knowledge is incommunicable to the inhabitants of flesh, and none but immortals can learn the language of immortality. But why do I ask of them? O thou Father of Angels and of Men, who "canst perfect thy praise" even out of the mouths of babes and sucklings," and who canst open all the avenues of knowledge and pour thy glory upon created minds, do thou shine into my heart, to give me the light of the knowledge of thy glory: "I beseech thee shew me thy glory;" cause it to shine upon my understanding, while I try to display it to thy people, that they may behold, adore, and love.

As to you, my Brethren, I solicit your most solemn and reverential attention, while I would lead you into the knowledge of the LORD your Maker. One would think a kind of filial curiosity would inspire you with eager desires to be acquainted with your divine Parent and Original. You would not be willing to worship you know not what, or, with the *Athenians*, adore an *Unknown God*. Do you not long to know the greatest and best of Beings, the glimmerings of whose glory shine upon you from Heaven and Earth? Would you not know him in whose presence you hope to dwell, and be happy forever and ever? Come then, be all awe and attention, while I proclaim to you his Name and Perfections, "The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth ;

" truth; keeping mercy for thousands, for-  
 " giving iniquity, transgression, and sin."

We may be sure GOD has assumed to him-  
 self such names as are best adapted to describe  
 his nature, as far as mortal language can reach.  
 And every thing belonging to him is so dear  
 and important that his very Name deserves a  
 particular consideration. This is not to make  
 empty criticisms upon an arbitrary, unmeaning  
 sound, but to derive useful knowledge from a  
 word of the greatest emphasis and significancy.

The first name, in the order of the text, and  
 in its own dignity, is, " THE LORD, or JEHO-  
 " VAH;" a name here twice repeated, to shew  
 its importance, " THE LORD, THE LORD, or  
 " JEHOVAH, JEHOVAH." This is a name pec-  
 uliar to GOD, and incommunicable to the  
 most exalted creature. The Apostle tells us,  
 " There are Gods many, and Lords many (q)";  
 magistrates in particular are so called, because  
 their authority is some shadow of the divine  
 authority. But the name JEHOVAH, which is  
 rendered LORD in my text, and in all those  
 places in the Bible where it is written in CAPI-  
 TALS, I say, this name JEHOVAH is appropriated  
 to the supreme Being, and never applied to  
 any other. He claims it to himself as his pec-  
 uliar glory. Thus in *Psalms* lxxxiii. ver. 18.  
 " Thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art  
 " the most High over all the earth." And in  
*Isaiab* xlii. ver. 8. " I am the LORD," or (as it  
 VOL. II. Q is

(q) 1 Cor. viii. 6.

is in the original) יהוה, JEHOVAH; that is my name, my proper incommunicable name, "and " my glory will I not give to another;" that is, I will not allow another to share with me in the glory of wearing this name. Thus also in *Amos* iv. ver. 13. "Lo, he that formeth the " mountains, and createth the wind, that declareth to man what is in his thoughts, &c. " the LORD [יהוה] the GOD of Hosts is his " name," his distinguishing, appropriated name. There must therefore be something peculiarly sacred and significant in this name, since it is thus incommunicably appropriated to the only one GOD.

The *Jews* had such a prodigious veneration for this name as amounted to a superstitious excess. They call it *That Name*, by way of distinction, *The great Name*, *the glorious Name*, *the appropriated Name*, *the unutterable Name*, *the expounded Name\**, because they never pronounced it, except in one instance, which I shall mention presently, but always expounded it by some other: thus when the name JEHOVAH occurred in the Old Testament they always read it [אֲדֹנָי] *Adonai*, or [אֱלֹהִים] *Elohim*, the usual and less sacred names, which we translate LORD GOD. It was never pronounced by the *Jews* in reading, prayer, or the most solemn act of worship, much less in common conversation, except

\* They also distinguished it by the name of the four letters that composed it, י jodh, ה he, ו vau, ה he, and hence the *Greeks* called it τετραγράμματος, the *four-lettered Name*. See BUXTORF.

except once a year, on the great day of Atonement, and then only by the High Priest in the sanctuary, in pronouncing the benediction, but at all other times, places, and occasions, and to all other persons, the pronounciation was deemed unlawful. The benediction was that which you read in *Numbers* vi. verses 24, 25, 26. where the name JEHOVAH is thrice repeated in the *Hebrew*, "JEHOVAH bless thee, and keep thee: "JEHOVAH make his face to shine upon thee, "and be gracious to thee: JEHOVAH lift up "the light of his countenance upon thee, and "give thee peace." When this venerable name was pronounced upon this occasion, we are told by the Jewish rabbies, "that all the vast "congregation then present bowed the knee, "and fell down in the humblest prostration, "crying out, Blessed be his glorious Name forever and ever." They supposed this name had a miraculous virtue in it, and that by it *Moses* and others wrought such wonders: nay, so great was their superstition, that they thought it a kind of charm, or magical word, and that he that had it about him, and knew its true pronounciation and virtue, could perform the most surprizing things, and even shake Heaven and Earth\*.

Q 2

I

\* This name seems not to have been unknown among other nations. Hence probably is derived the name *Jovis*. *Jove*, the Latin name for the supreme God. And it is probably in allusion to this that *Varro* says, "*Deum Judæorum esse JOVEM.*" The *Moors* also call God *JUBAN*, and the *Mabometans* *HOU*, which in their language signifies the same with JEHOVAH, namely, *He who is*. See *Universal History*, Vol. III. p. 357. note T.

I do not mention these things with approbation, but only to shew that there is something peculiarly significant, important, and sacred in this name, from whence the *Jews* took occasion for such extravagant notions: and this will appear from its etymology. You know it is not my usual method to carry a great quantity of learned disquisition with me into the pulpit, or to spend your time in trifling, pedantic criticisms upon words, which may indeed have a shew of literature, and amuse those who admire what they do not understand, but can answer no valuable end in a popular audience. However at present I must take the liberty of shewing you the original meaning of the Name JEHOVAH, that I may thoroughly explain my text, and that you may know the import of a Name that will occur so often to you in reading your Bibles; for, as I told you, wherever you meet with the word LORD in large letters, it is always JEHOVAH in the original.

The Name JEHOVAH is derived from the *Hebrew* verb **יָרָה** *to be* \*; and therefore the meaning of the word JEHOVAH is, The EXISTENT, the BEING, or HE THAT IS. Thus it seems explained in *Exodus* iii. ver. 14. "I AM THAT I AM †," or, "I AM BECAUSE I AM:" that is, I exist, and have Being, in and of myself, without

\* Ab **יָרָה** vel potius **יָרָה** fuit, sunt enim istæ literæ, & (?) ejus naturæ, ut faciliè una in alteram commutetur. BYTHNER.

**יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי** †

without dependence upon any cause; and my Existence or Being is always the same, unchangeable and eternal. St *John* well explains this Name by the "Who is, who was, and who is to come," or, as the passage might be rendered, "The present Being, the past Being, and the future Being;" or, The Being THAT IS, the Being THAT WAS, and the Being THAT WILL BE †; that is, the perpetual, the eternal, and unchangeable Being. I shall only observe farther, that JEHOVAH is not a relative, but an absolute Name: there is no pronoun or relative word that is ever joined with it: we can say, *My Lord, our Lord, our God, &c.* but the *Hebrews* never say or write, *My Jehovah, our Jehovah, &c.* so that this name represents him as he is in himself, without any relation to his creatures, as he would have been, if they had never existed. He would still have been THE BEING, the absolute, independent EXISTENT, in which view he has nothing to do with his creatures, and can sustain no relation to them.

From this Name, thus explained, we learn the following glorious, incommunicable perfections of GOD; that he is self-existent and independent; that his Being is necessary; that he is eternal; and that he is unchangeable.

While I am about to enter upon these subjects, I seem to stand upon the brink of an unbounded, fathomless ocean, and tremble to

Q 3

launch

† ὁ ὢν, ὁ ἦν, ὁ ἐρχόμενος. Rev. i. 4.

launch into it; but, under the conduct of scripture and humble reason, let us make the adventure, for it is an happiness to be lost and swallowed up in such an ocean of perfection.

I. The name **JEHOVAH** implies, that **God** is *self-existent* and independent. I do not mean by this that he produced himself, for that would be a direct contradiction, and suppose him to exist, and not to exist at the same time: but I mean that the reason and ground of his existence is in his own nature, and does not at all depend upon any thing besides. Being is essential to him. He contains an infinite fulness of Being in himself, and no other Being has contributed in the least towards his existence; and hence with great propriety he assumes that strange Name, **I AM**. He is Being throughout, perfectly and universally vital, and the reason of this is intirely within his own nature.

How gloriously is he distinguished in this respect from all other Beings, even the most illustrious and powerful? Time was, when they were nothing. Angels and Arch-angels, Men and Beasts, Sun, Moon and Stars; in short, the whole universe besides were once nothing, had no being at all: and what was the reason that they ever came into being? Certainly it was not in them: when they were nothing there was no reason at all in them why they should ever be something, for in not-being there  
can

can be no reason or ground for being. The meer pleasure of GOD, the Fiat of this self-existing JEHOVAH is the only reason, and sole cause of their existence. If it had not been for him they would have continued nothing as they were: their being therefore is entirely precarious, dependent, and wholly proceeds from a cause without themselves. But JEHOVAH glories in an unborrowed, underived, independent being. Whatever he is it is his own; he owes it only to himself. What a glorious Being is this! how infinitely different from and superior to the whole system of creatures! Are you not already constrained to bow the knee before Him, and wonder, adore, and love? But,

II. Hence it follows that his existence is necessary; that is, it is impossible for him not to be. His Being does not depend upon any thing without him, nor does it depend upon his own arbitrary will, but it is essential to his nature. That he should not be is as great an impossibility as that two and two should not make four. It is impossible that any thing should be more closely connected with any thing than Being is with his essence, and it is impossible any thing should be more opposite to any thing than he is to non-existence. Since he received his Being from nothing without himself, and since the reason of his existence is

Q 4

not

not derived from any other, it follows, that unless he exists by the necessity of his own nature, he must exist without any necessity, that is, without any reason at all, which is the same as to say that nothing is the cause or ground of his existence, and what imagination can be more absurd? His Being therefore must exist by an absolute, independent necessity.

What a glorious Being is this! how infinitely distant from nothing, or a possibility of not-being! What an unbounded fund of existence, what an immense ocean of Being is here! Alas! what are we, what is the whole universe besides in this comparison? They "are nothing, less than nothing; and vanity." Our being is not only derived but arbitrary, depending entirely upon the meer pleasure of JEHOVAH. There was no necessity from our nature that we should *be* at all, and now there is no necessity that we should continue to *be*. If we exist it is not owing to us. "He made us, and not we ourselves;" and if we shall continue to be forever it is not owing to a fund of being within ourselves, but to the same God who first formed us. It is but lately since we sprung from nothing, and how near are we still to the confines of nothing! We hang over the dreadful gulph of Annihilation by a slender thread of Being sustained by the self-originated JEHOVAH. Remove him, take away his agency, and universal nature sinks into nothing at once.

Take

Take away the root, and the branches wither. Dry up the fountain, and the streams cease. If any of you are such fools as to wish in your hearts there were no God, you imprecate annihilation upon the whole universe; you wish total destruction to yourself and every thing else; you wish the extinction of all Being. All depend upon God, the uncaused cause, the only necessary Being. Suffer me here to make a digression. Is this the God whom the daring sons of men so much forget, dishonour, and disobey? Are they so entirely dependent upon him; and yet careless how they behave towards him, careless whether they love and please him? Do they owe their Being and their All entirely to him? And are they wholly in his hand? What then do they mean by withholding their thoughts and affections from him, breaking his Laws, and neglecting his Gospel? Can you find a name for such a conduct? Would it not be entirely incredible did we not see it with our eyes all around us? Sinners, what mean you by this conduct? Let the infant rend the womb that conceived it, or tear the breasts that cherish it; go, poison or destroy the bread that should feed you; dry up the streams that should allay your thirst; stop the breath that keeps you in life; do these things, or do any thing, but O! do not forget, disobey and provoke the very father of your Being, to whom you owe it that you are not as much  
nothing

nothing now as you were ten thousand years ago, and on whom you depend, not only for this and that mercy, but for your very Being, every moment of your existence, in time and eternity. He can do very well without you, but O what are you without him! a stream without a fountain, a branch without a root, an effect without a cause, a meer blank, a nothing. He indeed is self-sufficient and self-existent. It is nothing to him, as to his existence, whether creation exists or not. Let men and angels, and every creature sink to nothing, from whence they came, his Being is still secure: he enjoys an unprecarious Being of his own, necessarily, unchangeably, and eternally existent. Men and angels bow the knee, fall prostrate and adore before this Being of Beings. How mean are you in his presence! what poor, arbitrary, dependent, perishing creatures! what shadows of existence! what meer nothings! And is it not fit you should humbly acknowledge it? Can there be any thing more unnatural, any thing more foolish, any thing more audaciously wicked, than to neglect or contemn such a Being, the Being of Beings, the Being that includes all Being? I can hardly bear up under the horror of the thought.

III. The name **Jehovah** implies that God is eternal; that is, he always was, is, and ever will be. — From everlasting to everlasting he  
 " is

" is GOD (*r*)."  
" ONLY hath immortality (*s*)," in a full and absolute sense. Men and angels indeed are immortal, but it is but a kind of half-eternity they enjoy. They once were nothing, and continued in that state through an eternal duration. But as JEHOVAH never will have an end, so he never had a beginning. This follows from his necessary self-existence. If the reason of his existence be in himself, then unless he always existed he never could exist, for nothing without himself could cause him to exist. And if he exists by absolute necessity he must always exist, for absolute necessity is always the same, without any relation to time or place. Therefore he always was, and ever will be.

And what a wonderful Being is this! a Being unbegun, and that can never have an end! a Being possessed of a compleat, entire eternity. Here, my brethren, let your thoughts take wing, and fly backward and forward, and see if you can trace his existence. Fly back in thought about six thousand years, and all nature, as far as appears to us, was a meer blank, no heaven nor earth, no men nor angels. But still the great Eternal lived, lived alone, self-sufficient and self-happy. Fly forward in thought as far as the conflagration, and you will see " the heavens dissolving, and the earth  
" and

(*r*) Psalm xc. 2.

(*s*) 2 Tim. vi. 16.

" and the things that are therein burnt up : " but still JEHOVAH lives unchangeable and absolutely independent. Exert all the powers of number, add centuries to centuries, thousands to thousands, millions to millions, fly back, back, back, as far as thought can possibly carry you, still JEHOVAH exists; nay, you are even then as far from the first moment of his existence as you are now, or ever can be. Take the same prospect before you, and you will find the King eternal and immortal still the same : he is then no nearer an end than at the creation, or millions of ages before it.

What a glorious Being is this! Here again, let men and angels, and all the offspring of time bow the knee and adore. Let them lose themselves in this ocean, and spend their eternity in extatic admiration and love of this eternal JEHOVAH.

O! what a glorious portion is he to his people! Your earthly enjoyments may pass away like a shadow: your friends die, yourselves must die, and Heaven and Earth may vanish like a dream, but your GOD lives! he lives forever, to give you an happiness equal to your immortal duration. Therefore " blessed, blessed is the " people, whose GOD is the LORD ! "

But O! let sinners, let wicked men and devils tremble before him, for how dreadful an enemy is an eternal GOD! He lives forever to punish you. He lives forever to hate your sin, to resent your rebellion, and to display his justice,

tice, and while he lives you must be miserable! What a dismal situation are you in, when the eternal existence of **JEHOVAH** is an inexhaustible fund of terror to you! O how have you inverted the order of things, when you have made it your interest that the Fountain of Being should cease to be, and that with him yourselves and all other creatures should vanish into nothing! What a malignant thing is sin, that makes existence a curse, and universal annihilation a blessing! What a strange region is Hell, where Being, so sweet in itself and the capacity of all enjoyments, is become the most intolerable burden, and every wish is an imprecation of universal annihilation! Sinners, you have now time to consider these miseries and avoid them, and will you be so senseless and fool-hardy as to rush headlong into them? O! if you were but sensible what will be the consequences of your conduct in a few years, you would not need persuasions to reform it: but O the fatal blindness and stupidity of mortals who will not be convinced of these things till the conviction be too late!

IV. The Name **JEHOVAH** implies that God is unchangeable, or always the same. If he exists necessarily he must always necessarily be what he is, and cannot be any thing else. He is dependent upon none, and therefore he can be subject to no change from another; and he is infinitely perfect, and therefore cannot desire to change

change himself. So that he must be always the same thro' all duration, from eternity to eternity; the same not only as to his Being but as to his Perfections; the same in Power, Wisdom, Goodness, JUSTICE, and Happiness. Thus he represents himself in his word, as "the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning (*t*);" "the same yesterday, to-day and forever (*u*)."

What a distinguishing Perfection is this! and indeed it is in JEHOVAH only that immutability can be a perfection. The most excellent creature is capable of progressive improvements, and seems intended for it; and to fix such a creature at first in an immutable state would be to limit and restrain it from higher degrees of perfection, and keep it always in a state of infancy. But JEHOVAH is absolutely, compleatly, and infinitely perfect, at the highest summit of all possible excellency, infinitely beyond any addition to his perfection, and absolutely incapable of improvement; and consequently as there is no room for so there is no need of a change in him, and his immutability is a perpetual, invariable continuance in the highest possible degree of excellency, and therefore the highest perfection. He is the cause and the spectator of an endless variety of changes in the universe without the least change in himself. He sees worlds springing into Being, exist-  
ing

(*t*) James i. 17.(*u*) Heb. xiii. 8.

ing awhile, and then dissolving. He sees kingdoms and empires forming, rising and rushing headlong to ruin. He changes the times and the seasons; "removeth kings, and he setteth up kings (x);" and he sees the fickleness and vicissitudes of mortals; he sees generations upon generations vanishing like successive shadows; he sees them now wise, now foolish; now in pursuit of one thing, now of another; now happy, now miserable, and in a thousand different forms. He sees the revolutions in nature, the successions of the seasons, and of night and day. These and a thousand other alterations he beholds, and they are all produced or permitted by his all-ruling Providence; but all these make no change in him. His Being, his Perfections, his Counsels, and his Happiness are invariably, and eternally the same. He is not wise, good, just, or happy only at times, but he is equally, steadily, and immutably so through the whole of his infinite duration. O how unlike the fleeting offspring of Time, and especially the changing race of Man!

Since JEHOVAH is thus constant and unchangeable, how worthy is he to be chosen as our best friend! You that love him need fear no change in him. They are not small matters that will turn his heart from you. His love is fixed with judgment, and he will never see reason to reverse it. It is not a transient fit of fondness,

(x) Dan. ii. 21.

fondness, but it is deliberate, calm, and steady. You may safely trust your All in his hands, for he cannot deceive you; and whatever or whoever fail you, he will not. You live in a fickle, uncertain world; your best friends may prove treacherous or cool towards you; all your earthly comforts may wither and die around you; yea, Heaven and Earth may pass away; but your GOD is still the same. He has assured you of it with his own mouth, and pointed out to you the happy consequence of it, "I am" the LORD JEHOVAH, says he, I change not; "therefore ye sons of *Jacob* are not confumed (*y*)."

What a compleat happiness is this JEHOVAH to those who have chosen him for their portion! If an infinite GOD is now sufficient to satisfy your utmost desires, he will be so to all eternity. He is an ocean of communicative happiness that never ebbs or flows, and therefore compleatly blessed will you ever be who have an interest in him.

But O! how miserable are they who are the enemies of this JEHOVAH! Sinners, he is unchangeable, and can never lay aside his resentments against sin, or abate in his love of virtue and holiness. He will never recede from his purpose to punish impenitent rebels, nor lose his power to accomplish it. His hatred of all moral evil is not a transient passion, but a fixed, invariable, deep-rooted hatred. Therefore, if

ever

(*y*) Mal. iii. 6.

ever you be happy there must be a change in you. As you are so opposite to him there must be an alteration in the one or the other: you see it cannot be in him, and therefore it must be in you, and this you ought to labour for above all other things. Let us then have grace, "whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a consuming fire (z) "to his impenitent and implacable enemies\*.

(z) Heb. xii. 28, 29.

\* Our author has evidently not finished his subject, and I do not find it prosecuted in any of the Discourses that are come to my hands; but yet I determined to publish the Sermon, not only for its own, if I mistake not, substantial worth, but the rather as the Sermon that next follows in order may be considered as a prosecution, if not a completion of the great and glorious subject he has undertaken, particularly of his professed design in this Sermon, "of explaining the several perfections here ascribed to God, and shewing that they all concur to constitute his goodness." *The EDITOR.*





# S E R M O N XVIII.

G O D is Love.



I J O H N IV. 8.

G O D is *Love.*

**L**OVE is a gentle, pleasing theme, the noblest passion of the human breast; and the fairest ornament of the rational nature. Love is the cement of society, and the source of social happiness; and without it the great community of the rational universe would dissolve, and men and angels would turn savages, and roam apart in barbarous solitude. Love is the spring of every pleasure, for who could take pleasure in the possession of what he does not love? Love is the foundation of Religion and Morality, for what is more monstrous than religion without love to that God who is the object of it? Or who can perform social duties without feeling the endearments of those relations to which they belong? Love is the softener and polisher of human minds, and transforms Barbarians into Men. Its pleasures are refined and delicate,

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cate,

cate, and even its pains and anxieties have something in them soothing and pleasing. In a word, Love is the brightest beam of Divinity that has ever irradiated the creation; the nearest resemblance to the ever-blessed G O D ; for " G O D is Love."

" G O D is love." There is an unfathomable depth in this concise *laconic* sentence, which even the penetration of an Angel's mind cannot reach; an ineffable excellence, which even celestial eloquence cannot fully represent. " G O D is love;" not only lovely and loving, but love itself; pure, unmixt love; nothing but love; love in his nature and in his operations; the object, source, and quintessence of all love.

My present design is to recommend the Deity to your affections under the amiable idea of LOVE, and for that end to shew that his other perfections are but various modifications of love.

I. Love comprehends the various forms of divine Beneficence. *Goodness*, that extends its bounties to innumerable ranks of creatures, and diffuses happiness through the various regions of the universe, except that which is set apart for the dreadful, but salutary and benevolent purpose of confining and punishing incorrigible malefactors; *Grace*, which so richly showers its blessings upon the *undeserving* without past merit or the prospect of future compensation; *Mercy*, that commiserates and relieves

lieves the *miserable* as well as the undeserving; *Patience* and *Long-suffering*, which so long tolerate *insolent* and *provoking offenders*; what is all this beneficence in all these its different forms towards different objects, what but *Love* under various names? It is *gracious, merciful, patient* and *long-suffering Love*! Love variegated, overflowing, and unbounded! What but love was the Creator of such a world as this, so well accommodated, so richly furnished for the sustenance and comfort of its inhabitants? And what but Love has planted it so thick with an endless variety of Beings, all capable of receiving some stream of happiness from that immense fountain of it; the divine goodness? Is it not love that preserves such a huge unwieldy world as this in order and harmony from age to age, and supplies all its numerous inhabitants with every good? And O! was it not love, free rich unmerited love, that provided a SAVIOUR for the guilty children of men? It was because " God loved the world, that he " gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever " believeth in him should not perish, but have " everlasting life (a)?" O Love! what hast thou done! what wonders hast thou wrought! It was thou, almighty Love, that broughtest down the LORD of glory from his celestial throne to die upon a cross an atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. And what but love is it that peoples the heavenly world with colonies trans-

R. 3 . . . . . planted

(a) John iii. 16.

planted from this rebellious province of JEHOVAH'S dominions; that forms such miracles of glory and happiness out of the dust and the shattered polluted fragments of human nature? And what but eternal love perpetuates their bliss through an eternal duration? But it is so evident that these instances of divine goodness are only the effects of love that it is needless to attempt any farther illustration.

II. What is divine WISDOM but a modification of divine *Love*? divine love planning the best adapted schemes for communicating itself in the most advantageous, beneficent, and honourable manner, so as to promote the good of the great whole or collective system of creatures by the happiness of individuals; or to render the punishment and misery of individuals, which for important reasons of state may be sometimes necessary in a good government, subservient to the same benevolent end. Whatever traces of divine wisdom we see in *creation*; as the order and harmony of the great system of nature, its rich and various furniture, and the conspiracy of all its parts to produce the good of each other and of the whole: whatever divine wisdom appears in conducting the great scheme of *Providence* through the various ages of time; or in the more astonishing and godlike work of *Redemption*: in a word, whatever displays of divine wisdom appear in any part of the universe, they are only the signatures

natures of divine love. Why was yonder sun fixed where he is, and enriched with such extensive vital influences, but because divine love saw it was best and most conducive to the good of the system? Why were our bodies so wonderfully and fearfully made, and all their parts so well fitted for action and enjoyment, but because divine love drew the plan, and stamped its own amiable image upon them? Why was the manifold wisdom of God displayed, not only to mortals, but also to angelic *principalities and powers* (c), in the scheme of redemption, which advances at once the honours of the divine perfections and government, and the happiness of rebellious and ruined creatures, by an expedient which nothing but infinite wisdom could ever devise, the Incarnation, the Obedience, and Passion of the co-equal Son of God? Why, I say, but because divine love would otherwise be under restraint, and incapable of giving full scope to its kind propensions in a manner honourable to itself and conducive to the public good? In short, divine wisdom appears to be nothing else but the sagacity of love to discover ways and means to exercise itself to the greatest advantage; or, which is the same, divine wisdom always acts under the benign determination and conduct of love: it is the Counsellor of love to project schemes subservient to its gracious purposes; and in all its counsels love presides.

R 4

III. What

(b) Ephes. iii. 10.

III. What is divine POWER but the omnipotence of Love? Why did omnipotence exert itself in the production of this vast amazing world out of nothing? It was to open a channel in which the overflowing ocean of love might extend itself, and diffuse its streams from creature to creature, upwards as high as the most exalted arch-angel, and downwards as low as the meanest vital particle of being, and extensive as the remotest limits of the universe, and all the innumerable intermediate ranks of existences in the endless chain of nature. And why does divine Power still support this prodigious frame, but to keep the channel of love open from age to age? and for this purpose it will be exerted to all eternity. Perhaps I should assist your ideas of divine Power, if I should call it the acting Hand, the Instrument, the Servant of Love to perform its orders, and execute its gracious designs.

IV. What is the HOLINESS of GOD but Love? pure, refined, and honourable Love? What is it but the Love of Excellence, Rectitude, and moral Goodness? Holiness, in its own nature, has a tendency to promote the happiness of the universe: it is the health, the good constitution of a reasonable Being; without which it has no capacity of relishing those enjoyments which are suitable to its nature. It is no arbitrary mandate of Heaven that has established the inseparable connection between holiness and happiness,

happiness, between vice and misery: the connection is as necessary, as immutable, and as much founded in the nature of things, as that between health of body and a capacity of animal enjoyments, or between sickness and a disrelish for the most agreeable food. Every creature in the universe, as far as he is holy is happy; and as far as he is unholy he is miserable. Therefore by how much the more holy JEHOVAH is, by so much the more fit he is to communicate happiness to all that enjoy him; and consequently he is an infinite happiness, for he is infinitely holy. His taking so much care to promote holiness is but taking care of the public good. The strict exactions of his law, which contains every ingredient of the most perfect holiness, and admits of no dispensation, are but strict injunctions to his subjects to pursue that course which infallibly leads them to the most consummate happiness; and every abatement in his demands of obedience would be a licence to them to deduct so much from their happiness, and render themselves so far miserable with his consent. That mitigation of the rigor of his law, which some imagine he has made to bring it down to a level with the abilities of degenerate creatures, disabled by their voluntary wickedness, would no more contribute to their felicity than the allowing a sick man to gratify his vitiated taste by mixing a little deadly poison in his food would contribute to the recovery of his health or the preservation

preservation of his life. The penal sanctions of the divine law are but friendly warnings against danger and misery, and honest admonitions of the destructive consequences of sin, according to the unchangeable nature of things: they are threatenings which discover no malignity or ill-nature, as sinners are apt to imagine, but the infinite benevolence of the heart of God: threatenings, which are not primarily and unconditionally intended to be executed, but to prevent all occasion for their being executed, by preventing sin, the natural source, as well as the meritorious cause of every misery: threatenings, which are not executed, but as the only expedient left in a desperate case, when all other means have been used in vain, and no other method can secure the public good, or render a worthless criminal, "a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction," and fit for nothing else, of no other service to the great community of rational Beings. These are some of the ingredients and displays of the holiness of God: and what are these but so many exertions of pure love and benevolence? It is because he loves his creatures so much that he requires them to be so holy; and that very thing, against which there are so many cavils and objections, as too severe and oppressive, and a rigid restraint from the pursuit of pleasure, is the highest instance of the love of God for them, and his regard for their happiness.

Let me therefore commence advocate for  
G O D

G O D with my fellow-men, though it strikes me with horror to think there should be any occasion for it. Ye children of the most tender Father, ye subjects of the most gracious and righteous Sovereign, ye beneficiaries of divine Love, why do you harbour hard thoughts of him? Is it because his laws are so strict and tolerate you in no guilty pleasure? This appointment is the kind restraint of love: the love of so good a Being will not allow him to dispense with your observance of any thing that may contribute to your improvement and advantage, nor indulge you in any thing that is in its own nature deadly and destructive, no more than a father will suffer a favourite child to play with a viper, or a good government permit a madman to run at large armed with weapons to destroy himself and others. Do you think hard of G O D because he hates all moral evil to such a degree that he has annexed to it everlasting misery of the most exquisite kind? But what is this but an expression of his infinite hatred to every thing that is hurtful to his creatures, and his infinite regard to whatever tends to their benefit? Or has he been too rigid in exacting holiness as a necessary prerequisite to the happiness of Heaven? You may as well complain of the constitution of nature, that renders abstinence from poison necessary to the preservation of health, or that does not allow you to quench your thirst in a fever with cold water. Let me remind you once more  
that

that holiness is essential to the happiness of Heaven, and that without it you labour under a moral incapacity of enjoyment; and a *moral* incapacity will as inevitably deprive you of the pleasures of enjoyment as if it were *natural*. While unholy you can no more be happy even in the region of happiness than a stone can enjoy the pleasures of animal life, or a mere animal those of reason. "But why," you will perhaps murmur and object, "why has God formed such a heaven as cannot be universally enjoyed? Why has he not provided an happiness for every taste?" You may as well ask why he has not created a light that would be equally agreeable to every eye; to the mole and the owl, as well as to man and the eagle? Or why has he not formed light with all the properties of darkness? that is, why he has not performed contradictions? You may as well query why he has not given us equal capacities of enjoyment in sickness and in health, and furnished us with equal pleasures in both? Need I tell you that in the nature of things the low and impure pleasures which would suit the depraved taste of the wicked would be nauseous and painful to pure minds refined and sanctified; and they cannot mingle, they cannot approach each other without being destroyed. The element of water may as well be converted into a fit residence for the inhabitants of dry land, and yet retain all its properties that are suit able to its present natives; or the solid earth become

a

a fit receptacle for fishes, and yet both it and the fishes retain their usual qualities : in short, Men, Beasts, Birds, Fishes, Insects, Angels, Devils, the Inhabitants of every zone and climate, of every planet, or any other region of the universe, may as well form one society in one and the same place, and mingle their respective food and pleasures, as an heaven of happiness be prepared that would suit every taste. God has prepared the only kind of heaven that is in its own nature possible ; the only one that would be an expression of love, or afford real and extensive happiness to such of his creatures as are capable of it. The heaven of sinners would be a nuisance to all other Beings in the universe ; a private good to malefactors, at the expence of the public ; an open reward of wickedness, and a public discountenancing of all moral goodness. This would be the case upon the supposition that the heaven of sinners were possible. But the supposition is infinitely absurd ; it is as impossible as the pleasures of sickness, the sensibility of a stone, or the meridian splendors of midnight.

Therefore acknowledge, admire, and love the *beauty of the LORD*, his HOLINESS. " Give thanks, says the Psalmist, at the remembrance " of his *holiness* (c) ; " of his *holiness*, as well as of his goodness and love ; for it is the brightest modification of his love and goodness. An unholy Being, in the character of supreme magistrate

(c) Psalm xcvi, 12.

magistrate of the universe, cannot be all love, or communicate nothing but what is pleasing to all; nay, as far as he is unholy he must have a malignant disposition towards the public happiness, and be essentially deficient in benevolence.

V. What is the JUSTICE, even the PUNITIVE *Justice* of GOD, but a modification of love and goodness?

As there is no divine perfection which appears so terrible to offenders as this, which therefore they toil and sweat to disprove or explain away, I shall dwell the longer upon it. And I hope to convince you that justice is not that grim, stern, tremendous attribute which is delineated by the guilty partial imagination of sinners, who have made it their interest that there should be no such attribute in Deity, but that it is infinitely amiable and lovely, as well as awful and majestic; nay, that it is love and benevolence itself.

By the *punitive justice* of GOD I mean that perfection of his nature which executes the sentence of his law upon offenders, or inflicts upon them the punishment he had threatened to disobedience, exactly according to his own denunciation. The present world, which is a state of trial and discipline, and not of final rewards and punishments, is not the proper theatre of vindictive Justice, but of a promiscuous Providence: "All things come alike to all, and no  
" man

" man can know the love or hatred" of the Ruler of the world towards him, " by all that " is before him (*d*).<sup>a</sup> Yet sometimes, even in this life, justice arrests the guilty, and displays its illustrious terrors upon them, especially upon guilty nations that have no existence in a national capacity in the eternal world, and therefore can be punished in that capacity in this only. It was vindictive justice that deluged the old world in a flood of vengeance; that kindled the flames of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*; and that cut off the nations of *Canaan* when they " had filled up the measure of their iniquities." It is justice that arms kingdoms from age to age, and makes them the executioners of divine wrath upon one another, while they are gratifying their own ambition, avarice, or revenge. The devastations of earthquakes, inundations, plagues, epidemical sicknesses, famines, and the various calamities in which mankind have been involved, are so many displays of divine justice; and their being brought on the world according to the course of nature, and by means of secondary causes, will by no means prove that they are not so, but only that the very make and constitution of this world are so planned and formed by divine wisdom as to admit of the execution of justice at proper periods, and that all its parts are the instruments of justice to accomplish its designs. But these and all the other judgments of Heaven  
upon

(*d*) Eccles. ix. 1, 2.

upon our world are only preludes and specimens of the most perfect administration of it in a future state. There the penalty of the law will be executed upon impenitent offenders with the utmost impartiality. And Revelation assures us that the punishment will be endless in duration, and of as exquisite a kind and high degree as the utmost capacity of the subjects will admit; and consequently that it will not, like fatherly chastisements, have any tendency to their reformation or advantage, but to their entire and everlasting destruction. Now it is this display of punitive justice that appears so terrible and cruel to the guilty children of men; and therefore this is what I shall principally endeavour to vindicate, and to clothe with all the gentle and amiable glories of Love and public Benevolence.

For this end I beg you would consider, that whatever has a tendency to prevent sin tends to prevent misery also, and to promote the happiness of the world and of all the individuals in it; that good laws are absolutely necessary for the prevention of sin; that penal sanctions are essential to good laws; and that the execution of the penal sanctions upon offenders is absolutely necessary to their efficacy and good tendency; and consequently the execution of them is a display of Love and Benevolence.

Consider also, that many are excited to seek everlasting happiness, and deterred from the ways that lead down to destruction by means  
of

of the threatening of the Law ; that even those on whom they are finally executed were once in a capacity of receiving immortal advantage from them, but defeated their good influence and tendency by their own wilful obstinacy ; and that the righteous execution of these threatenings upon the incorrigible may promote the common good of the universe.

Consider farther, that criminals are incompetent judges of vindictive justice because they are Parties, and therefore we should not form an estimate of it by their prejudices, but from the judgment of the disinterested and impartial part of the creation.

Finally consider, that proceedings similar to those of the divine government are not only approved of as just in all human governments, but also loved and admired as amiable and praise-worthy, and essential to the goodness and benevolence of a Ruler.

Let us briefly illustrate these several classes of propositions.

I. " Whatever has a tendency to prevent sin  
 " tends to prevent misery also, and to promote  
 " the happiness of the universe and of all the  
 " individuals in it : good laws are absolutely  
 " necessary for the prevention of sin : penal  
 " sanctions are essential to good laws : and the  
 " seasonable execution of those sanctions is  
 " absolutely necessary to their efficacy and good  
 " tendency ; and consequently the execution

VOL. II.

S

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“ of them is a display of Love and Benevolence.”

“ Whatever has a tendency to prevent sin tends to prevent misery also,” and that for this reason, Because sin is necessarily productive of misery and destructive of happiness. Can a rational creature be happy that is disaffected to the supreme good, the only source of that kind of happiness which is adapted to a rational nature? This is as impossible as that you should enjoy animal pleasures while you disgust all animal enjoyments. Can a social creature be happy in eternal solitude, or in a state of society, while ill-affected towards the other members of society, or while they are ill-affected towards him, and he to them, “ hateful, and hating one another?” Can a creature formed capable of felicity superior to what any created good can communicate be happy in the eager pursuit of bubbles; that is, of its highest happiness in inferior enjoyments? All those dispositions of heart, and the practices resulting from them, in which *sin* consists, enmity to GOD, uneasy murmurings and insurrections against his Perfections, and the government of his Law and Providence; a churlish, malignant, envious temper towards mankind; an anxious, excessive eagerness of desire after vain, unsatisfactory enjoyments; a disrelish for the exalted pleasures of Holiness and Benevolence; what are these and the like dispositions but so many ingredients of misery, and so many abatements

batements of happiness? And consequently all measures that are taken for the prevention of sin are so many benevolent expedients for the prevention of misery and the increase of happiness.

I add, " Good laws are absolutely necessary for the prevention of sin." Indeed those dispositions and actions which are sinful and forbidden by the divine law would be of a deadly nature to the soul even if they were not forbidden, as a stab to the heart would prove mortal to the body, though there were no laws against it, and for that very reason laws have been made against it. Therefore the laws of God do not properly constitute the destructive nature of sin, but only point out and warn us against what is destructive in its own nature previous to all explicit law. And is it not absolutely necessary, and an act of the highest benevolence, that the supreme Lawgiver should warn us against this pernicious evil, and plainly inform us what it is? This is the design of his laws both natural and revealed. And without them, what sure instructor, what unerring guide, or what strong inducements to a proper conduct could we have in this most important case? Is it not necessary, is it not kind, that the supreme Legislator should interpose his authority, and lay us under the strongest obligations to avoid our own ruin? And if good laws are necessary so are penal sanctions; for,

" Penal sanctions are essential to good laws."

Laws without penalties would be only the advices of an equal or an inferior, and not the obligatory commands of authority. They might be observed or not, according to pleasure, and consequently would answer no valuable purpose. They would also be infinitely absurd in their own nature; for if what the law enjoins be reasonable, necessary, and of good tendency, is it not necessary and fit that they who do not observe it should feel the bad effects of their omission? And what is this but a penalty? But on a point so plain I need not multiply words. I appeal to the common sense of mankind, I appeal to the universal practice of all governments. Have there ever been, or can there possibly be any laws without penal sanctions? Would not such laws be exposed to perpetual insult and contempt, and be destitute of all force and energy? The common sense and universal practice of all the world in all ages remonstrate against such an absurdity. But if penal sanctions are essential to good laws, then so is their execution; for,

“ The seasonable execution of penal sanctions is absolutely necessary to their efficacy and good tendency.” Penalties denounced can have no efficacy upon the subjects of the law; that is, they cannot excite fear, and by that means deter them from disobedience, unless they are *believed*, and their execution *expected*. But they would soon cease to be believed, and their execution would no longer be expected,  
if

if in several instances they should be dispensed with, and a succession of sinners should pass with impunity. Other sinners, judging of future events by past facts, would expect the same indulgence, and therefore venture upon disobedience without any restraint from the Penalty of the Law. Here again I shall bring the matter to a quick decision by appealing to the common reason and universal practice of mankind. Would human laws have any force if the penalty was hung up as an empty terror and never executed? Would not such laws be liable to perpetual violation and insult, and become the sport of daring offenders? Would not the escapes of former offenders encourage all future generations to give themselves a loose, in hopes of the same exemption? Is it not necessary in all governments that public justice should make examples of some to warn and deter others? Have not all nations, especially the more civilized, made such examples? And have not all the impartial world commended their proceedings, as necessary to the safety and happiness of society, and expressive of their regard to the public good?

View all these things together, and methinks I may bid defiance to common sense to draw any other conclusion than that the justice of God in executing the penalties of his law upon impenitent offenders is the height of goodness and love. If love requires that all proper expedients be used for the prevention of sin; if

good laws are necessary for this end ; if penalties are essential to good laws ; and if the reasonable execution of penalties be absolutely necessary to give them their benevolent force and good tendency, does it not unavoidably follow that love itself requires both the enacting of penal sanctions to the law of God, and the execution of them upon proper subjects? Without this wholesome severity the divine laws would be less secure from contempt, and the divine government would be less favourable to the peace and happiness of the subjects than the laws and governments of mortals in all civilized nations.

“ But why does the penalty rise so high ?  
 “ Why is the execution lengthened out through  
 “ everlasting ages ? Why might not a gentler  
 “ punishment suffice ? ” This is the grand objection, and in such language as this the enmity of the rebellious heart against the justice of God generally expresses itself. But if the original design and natural tendency of the threatened penalty be to prevent sin, then by how much severer the penalty by so much the more effectual tendency has it to answer this kind design ? No punishments can rise higher than those which a righteous God has annexed to disobedience, the natural source of every misery ; and what is this but to say that no methods more effectual can be taken to prevent it than what he has actually taken ? We may therefore infer the ardor of the love of God  
 from

from the terror of his threatenings. He has denounced the greatest misery against sin, in order to restrain his creatures from running into that very misery, and threatens the loss of Heaven, in order to prevent his creatures from losing it.

I must also here repeat the common argument, which appears to me as valid as common; "that as the essence of sin consists in the breach of an obligation, the evil of sin must be exactly proportioned to the strength of the obligation;" that as we are undoubtedly under infinite obligations to a God of infinite excellency, our Maker, Ruler, and Benefactor, the evil of sin, which violates those obligations, must be infinite also; and that no punishment short of what is infinite can be adequate to the demerit of an infinite evil; and consequently sinners ought to suffer a finite punishment through an infinite duration, because that is the only way in which they are able to bear an infinite punishment. But on this common topic a few hints may suffice.

I proceed to the next set of propositions.

II. "That many are excited to the pursuit of everlasting happiness, and deterred from the ways of destruction by means of threatenings of the divine law; that even those unhappy creatures on whom they are finally executed were once in a capacity of receiving immortal advantage from them, but de-

“ feated their good influence and tendency by  
 “ their own wilful obstinacy, and that the  
 “ righteous execution of these threatenings  
 “ upon the incorrigible may promote the com-  
 “ mon good of the univerte.”

“ Many are excited to the pursuit of ever-  
 “ lasting happiness, and deterred from the  
 “ ways of destruction by means of the  
 “ threatenings of the divine Law.” I appeal to  
 experience and observation, whether the terrors  
 of the LORD are not the very first thing that  
 gives a check to sinners in their headlong career  
 to ruin? It is “ the law that worketh wrath (e);”  
 that is, an alarming apprehension of the wrath  
 of GOD against sin, and constrains them to use  
 the instituted means of deliverance. Thus even  
 the terrors of the Law are made subservient to  
 divine Love, in “ turning sinners from the er-  
 “ ror of their way, and saving souls from  
 “ death.” And could we consult the glorious  
 assembly of “ the spirits of just men made per-  
 “ fect,” they would all own that if their hea-  
 venly Father had not threatened them so severely  
 they would always have continued undutiful,  
 and consequently rendered themselves miserable;  
 and that they were saved from Hell by being  
 honestly warned of the danger of falling into  
 it. It is true there are multitudes who do not  
 receive this advantage by the penal sanctions of  
 the divine Law, but are made miserable forever  
 by the execution of them; yet it may be added,  
 “ That

(e) Rom. iv. 15.

“ That even those unhappy creatures on whom they are executed were once in a capacity of receiving infinite advantage from them, but defeated their good influence and tendency by their own wilful obstinacy.” The threatenings of the divine Law had the same good tendency in their own nature with respect to them, to deter them from disobedience and urge their pursuit of happiness, as with respect to others, and these were some of the means God appointed for their salvation. But they hardened themselves against them, and thus defeated their good tendency, and obstinately ruined themselves in defiance of warning. They forced a passage into the infernal pit through the strongest inclosures. But if they had not been thus warned they not only would not have been saved in the event, but they would not have enjoyed the means of salvation. Now their enjoying these means was in itself an inexpressible blessing, though in the issue it only aggravates their misery, and consequently the enacting those penalties to the divine Law was really an act of kindness even to them, and their abuse of the blessing does not alter its nature. The primary and direct end of a penalty is not the punishment of the subjects, but to restrain them from things injurious to themselves and others, and urge them to pursue their own interest. But when this good end is not answered by reason of their wilful folly and disobedience, then, and not till

till then, the execution is necessary for the good of others \* ; which leads me to add,

“ That the righteous execution of the  
“ threatened penalty upon the incorrigible may  
“ promote the common good of the universe.”

This world of ours is a public theatre, surrounded with numerous spectators who are interested in its affairs. Angels in particular are witnesses of the proceedings of Providence towards mankind, and thence learn the perfections of God, and the maxims of his government. Hell is also a region dreadfully conspicuous to them, and there no doubt the offended Judge intends “ to shew his wrath, and make  
“ his power known” to them as well as to mankind. Now they are held in obedience by rational motives, and not by any mechanical compulsion. And among other motives of a gentler kind no doubt this is one of no small weight,

\* Penalties operate, like final causes, by a kind of *retrospective* influence ; that is, whilst they are only threatened, and the subject expects they will be executed, should he turn disobedient, they have a powerful tendency to deter him from disobedience. But they could not have this benevolent tendency, unless they be executed upon those, on whom their primary and chief design is not obtained ; namely, the restraining of them from sin. It is enough that the offenders themselves once had an opportunity of taking warning, and reaping the advantage of the threatened penalty, while they were in a state of trial, and candidates for eternity. But it is absurd that they should receive any benefit from it, when, after sufficient trial, it appears they will take no warning, but are resolved to persist in sin, in defiance of the most tremendous penalties.

weight, namely, their observing the destructive consequences of sin upon Men and Angels, and the terrible displeasure of GOD against it. It is not at all inconsistent with their dignity and purity to suppose them swayed by this motive in a proper connection with others of a more disinterested and generous nature. Therefore the confirmation of the elect Angels in holiness and their everlasting happiness is no doubt not a little secured and promoted by the execution of righteous punishment upon some notorious hardened malefactors, both of their own order and of the human race.

The same thing may be said of "the spirits of just men made perfect;" they are happily incapable of sinning, and consequently of becoming miserable; but their incapacity arises from the clear conviction of their understanding, which has the conduct of their will; and, while sin appears to them so deadly and destructive an evil, it is impossible, according to the make of a rational nature, that they should choose it. But the consequences of sin upon the wretched creatures on whom the penalty denounced against it is executed is no doubt one thing that affords them this conviction; and so it contributes to their perseverance in obedience and happiness. Thus the joys of Heaven are secured by the pains of Hell, and even the most noxious criminals, the enemies of GOD and his creatures, are not useless in the universe, but answer the terrible but benevolent

volent end of warning all other creatures against disobedience, which would involve them in the same misery, just as the execution of a few malefactors in human governments is of extensive service to the rest of the subjects.

But as the greater part of mankind perish, it may be queried, "How is it consistent with love and goodness that the majority should be punished, and made monuments of justice, for the benefit of the smaller number?" To this I reply, that though it be equally evident from scripture and observation that the greater part of mankind go down to destruction in the smooth, broad, descending road of sin, in the ordinary ages of the world; and though Revelation assures us that the number of the apostate Angels is very great, yet I think we have no reason to conclude that the greater part of the rational creation shall be miserable; nay, it is possible the number of those on whom the penalty of the divine Law is inflicted may bear no more proportion to that of the innumerable ranks of creatures that may be retained in obedience and happiness by means of their conspicuous and exemplary punishment, than the number of criminals executed in our government for the warning of others bears to the rest of the subjects. If we consider that those who have been "redeemed from the earth," even in the ordinary ages of the world, though comparatively but few, yet absolutely are a "multitude which no man can  
" number

“ number out of every kindred, and people,  
 “ and language (*f*);” and that the elect Angels  
 are “ an *innumerable* company (*g*),” perhaps  
 much greater than the legions of Hell; if to  
 these we add the prodigious numbers that shall  
 be converted in that long and blessed season  
 when Satan shall be bound, when the Prince  
 of Peace shall reign, and when “ the kingdom  
 “ and dominion, and the greatness of the  
 “ kingdom under the whole Heaven shall be  
 “ given to the people of the saints of the most  
 “ high (*b*),” in which not only the greater  
 number of the generations that shall live in  
 that glorious millennium shall be saved, but  
 perhaps a greater number than all that perished  
 in former generations, which is very possible  
 if we consider the long continuance of that  
 time, and that the world will then be under  
 the peculiar blessing of Heaven, and conse-  
 quently mankind will multiply faster, and not  
 be diminished as they now are by the calamities  
 of War, Plagues, epidemical Sicknesses, and  
 the other judgments of God upon those times  
 of Rebellion; if we also borrow a little light  
 from the hypotheses of Philosophy, and sup-  
 pose that the other planets of our system are  
 peopled

(*f*) Rev. vii. 9.

(*g*) Heb. xii. 22. I do not forget that the original is *μυριασιν*  
*αγγελων*, “ Myriads of Angels.” But the word *μυριας* is often, I  
 think generally used in the Greek classics, not for any definite  
 number, but for a great and *innumerable* multitude. And so it is  
 used here.

(*b*) Dan. vii. 27.

peopled like our earth with proper inhabitants, and particularly with reasonable creatures, for he that made those vast bodies " made them " not in vain, he made them to be inhabited ;" if we farther suppose that each of the innumerable fixed stars is a sun, the center of habitable worlds, and that all these worlds, like our own, swarm with life, and particularly with various classes of reasonable Beings, which is not at all unlikely if we argue from parity of cases, from things well known to things less known, or from the immense overflowing Goodness, Wisdom, and Power of the great Creator, who can replenish the infinite voids of space with Being, Life, and Reason, and with equal ease produce and support ten thousand worlds as ten thousand grains; if we suppose that his creative perfections will not lie inactive forever, contented with one exertion for six days, but that he still employs and will employ them forever in causing new worlds replenished with moral agents to start into existence here and there in the endless vacancies of space; and finally, if we suppose that the flames of Hell will blaze dreadfully bright and conspicuous in the view of all present and future creations, or that the destructive nature of sin will be some way or another made known to the rational inhabitants of all worlds by the punishment inflicted upon a number of Men and Angels, and that by this means they are effectually deterred from sin, and preserved from

from the misery inseparable from it; I say, if we admit these suppositions, some of which are undoubtedly true, and the rest I think not improbable, then it will follow that the number of holy and happy creatures in the universe will be incomparably greater than that of miserable criminals; and that the punishment of the latter is one principal mean of preserving this infinite number in obedience and happiness; and consequently is highly conducive to the public happiness, and expressive of the love and goodness of the universal Ruler to the immense community of his subjects. And thus *God is love* even in the most terrible displays of his vindictive justice.

To illustrate this subject consider farther,

III. "That criminals are incompetent judges of vindictive justice." They are parties, and it is their interest there should be no such attribute as justice in the Deity. It is natural for them to flatter themselves that their crimes are small; that their Judge will suffer them to escape with impunity, or with a gentle punishment; and that if he should do otherwise he would be unmerciful, unjust, and cruel. The excess of self-love suggests to them a thousand excuses and extenuations of their guilt, and flatters them with a thousand favourable presumptions. An impenitent criminal is always an ungenerous, mean-spirited, selfish creature, and has nothing of that noble disinterested self-denial

denial and impartiality which would generously condemn himself, and approve of that sentence by which he dies. A little acquaintance with the conduct of mankind will soon make us sensible of their partiality and wrong judgments in matters where self is concerned; and particularly how unfit they are to form an estimate of justice when themselves are to stand as criminals at its bar. Now this is the case of all mankind in the affair now under consideration. They are criminals at the bar of divine justice; they are the parties to be tried; they are under the dominion of a selfish spirit; it is natural to them to palliate their own crimes, and to form flattering expectations from the clemency of their judge. And are they fit persons to prescribe to their judge how he should deal with them, or what measure of punishment he ought to inflict upon them? Sinners! dare you usurp this high province? Dare you

“ Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,

“ Rejudge his Justice, be the god of GOD ?” \*

Rather stand at the bar, ye Criminals! that is your place. Do not dare to ascend the throne; that is the place of your Judge. Stand silent, and await his righteous sentence, which is always just, always best: or, if creatures must judge of the justice of their sovereign, I  
 appeal

\* POPE'S *Essay on Man*.

appeal to the saints; I appeal to angels, those competent, disinterested judges; I appeal to every upright, impartial Being in the universe. They approve, they celebrate, they admire, and love all the displays of punitive Justice as necessary to the public good; and their judgment may be depended on: it is not misled by ignorance nor perverted by self-interest. To whom would you appeal as judges of the proceedings of Courts of Justice among men? To Malefactors in a dungeon, who have made justice their enemy, and who are therefore an enemy to it? No; but you would appeal to obedient subjects, who are not obnoxious to justice themselves but enjoy protection under its guardianship, and are sensible of its beauty and public utility? They all approve it with one voice, and would look upon a supreme magistrate without it as a very contemptible and odious character, and essentially deficient in goodness. Hence it follows, that even the punitive justice of God not only *is* in reality, but to all impartial judges *appears* to be a most amiable, engaging, and beneficent perfection, majestic indeed, but not forbidding; awful, but not sullen and hateful; terrible, but only to criminals; and destructive only to what destroys the public good. I have so far anticipated myself that I need hardly add,

IV. "That proceedings similar to those of  
" the divine government are not only approved

VOL. II.

T

" of

“ of as just in all human governments, but  
 “ also loved and admired as amiable and praise-  
 “ worthy, and essential to the Goodness and  
 “ Benevolence of a Ruler.”

Does the supreme Lawgiver annex severe penalties to his laws which render the disobedient miserable forever? So do human governments with the unanimous approbation of their subjects; they inflict punishments that affect life, and cut off the offender from civil society *forever*; and this is the only kind of *everlasting* punishment that can be endured or executed by mortals. Does JEHOVAH maintain good order in his immense empire, protect his subjects, and deter them from offending, by making examples of the guilty? And does he secure and advance the good of the whole by the conspicuous punishment of obnoxious individuals? This is done every day for the same ends in human governments, and that with universal approbation. Does he inflict punishments that are not at all intended for the reformation and advantage of the guilty sufferer, but only for the admonition and benefit of others? This is always the case in human governments when the punishment reaches to the life, for then the offender himself is put out of all capacity of reformation or personal advantage by it, but he suffers entirely for the good of others. Even criminals must be made useful to society; and this is the only use they are fit to answer. Would it be inexpedient and greatly injurious for

for a magistrate in his public character to forgive crimes and suffer criminals to escape, tho' to do so in a private character might be a virtue? Just so GOD, who is the supreme *Magistrate* of the universe, and not at all to be considered in this case as a *private* person acting only in a private character, the great GOD I say is obliged by his regard for his own honour and the benefit of his subjects to inflict proper punishments and distribute his pardoning mercy to individuals consistently with the general good of the whole. What would be *Revenge* in a *private* person, which is the ruling passion of devils, is Justice, Honour, and Benevolence itself in the supreme Ruler of the world; and a failure in this would render him not only less glorious and majestic, but less amiable, less beneficent to his creatures.

I know hardly any thing of so much importance to give us just sentiments of the proceedings of GOD with his creatures as that we should conceive of him as a moral Ruler or the supreme Magistrate of the world. And it is owing to their not considering him in this character that sinners indulge such mistaken dangerous presumptions concerning him. They choose to conceive of him under some fond and tender name, as a Being of infinite grace, the indulgent Father of his creatures, &c. All this is true; but it is equally true that he is their moral Ruler as well as their Father. His creatures are his *subjects* as well as his *children*; and

he must act the wise and righteous *Magistrate* as well as the tender *Father* towards them. His goodness is that of a *Ruler*, and not of a *private* person ; and his pardoning of sin and receiving offenders into favour are not *private* kindnesses but acts of *government*, and therefore they must be conducted with the utmost wisdom ; for a wrong step in his infinite administration, which affects such innumerable multitudes of subjects, would be an infinite evil, and might admit of no reparation.

Though I have thus enlarged upon this subject, yet I am far from exhausting my materials. But these things I hope are sufficient to convince your understandings that divine justice is not that unkind, cruel, and savage thing sinners are wont to imagine it, but that God is just, because " God is Love ;" and that he punishes not because he is the enemy but because he is the friend of his creatures, and because he loves the whole too well to let particular offenders do mischief with impunity\*.

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\* It may perhaps be objected, " That to represent *Justice* under the notion of *Love*, is to affect singularity in language, to destroy the distinction of the divine attributes, and the essential difference of things."—To which I answer, 1. That a *Catachresis* may be beautiful and emphatical, though it be always a seeming impropriety in language. Such is this representation, " Divine Justice divine Love." 2. I do not deny that God's executing righteous punishment upon the guilty may be called *Justice* ; but then it is his love to the public that excites him to do this ; and therefore his doing it may be properly denominated *Love*, as well

I shall only add, that this is the view JEHOVAH has given of himself in the clearest manifestation of his perfections that he ever made to mortals. He promises his favourite *Moses* that he would "make all his *goodness* pass before him." Observe, it is his *goodness* he intends to exhibit, and the proclamation runs thus, "The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, forgiving iniquity, &c." That these are acts or modifications of *goodness* will be easily granted. But observe it is added even in this proclamation of his *goodness*, "That he will by no means clear the guilty;" intimating that to be just and punish sin is an act of *goodness* as well as to be merciful and to forgive it.

And now when we have this copious subject in review does it not suggest to us such conclusions as these?

I. May we not conclude that the case of impenitent sinners is desperate indeed when it is not excessive rigor, not a malignity of temper, not tyranny, or a savage delight in torture that condemns them, but Goodness itself, Love itself? Even the gentler perfections of the Deity,

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those

well as *Justice*, or *Love* under the name of *Justice*, which is *Love* still. 3. I do not mean that the usual names of things should be changed, but that we should affix suitable ideas to them. We may retain the name of *Justice* still, but let us not affix ideas to it that are inconsistent with divine *Love*. Let us not look upon it as the attribute of a Tyrant, but of a wise and good Ruler.

those from which they derive their presumptuous hopes, are conspired against them, and unite their forces to render them miserable, in order to prevent greater misery from spreading through the universe. Impenitent sinners! even the unbounded Love of GOD to his creatures is your enemy. Love under the name and form of *Justice*, which is equally love still, demands your execution; and to suffer you to escape would not only be an act of injustice but an act of malignity and hostility against the whole system of rational Beings. Therefore repent and be holy, otherwise divine love will not suffer you to be happy. "GOD is love;" therefore will he confine you in the infernal prison, as a regard to the public welfare in human governments shuts up criminals in a dungeon and madmen in *Bedlam*.

II. May we not hence conclude that all the acts of the Deity may be resolved into the benevolent principle of *love*? "GOD is love;" therefore he made this vast universe, and planted it so thick with variegated life. "GOD is love;" therefore he still rules the world he has made, and inflicts chastisements and judgments upon it from every age. "GOD is love;" therefore he spared not his own son, but made him the victim of his justice. "GOD is love;" therefore he requires perfect holiness, perfect obedience from all his subjects. "GOD is love;" therefore he has enacted such tremendous sanc-  
tions

tions to his law, and executes them in their full extent upon offenders. "God is love;" therefore he has made the prison of Hell, and there confines in chains of everlasting darkness those malevolent creatures that would be nufances to society and public mischiefs if suffered to run at large. In short, whatever he does, he does it because he is Love. How amiable a view of him is this! Therefore,

III. We may certainly conclude that if God be Love, then all his creatures ought to love him. Love him, O all ye inhabitants of Heaven! But they need not my exhortation; they know him, and therefore cannot but love him. Love him, all ye inhabitants of the planetary worlds! if such there be. These also I hope need no exhortation, for we would willingly persuade ourselves that other territories of his immense empire have not rebelled against him as this earth has done. Love him, O ye children of men! To you I call; but O! I fear I shall call in vain. To love HIM who is all love is the most hopeless proposal one can make to the world. But whatever others, do love the LORD, all ye his saints! You I know cannot resist the motion. Surely your love even now is all on fire. "Love the LORD, O my soul!"  
AMEN.



# S E R M O N XIX.

## The general Resurrection.



J O H N V. 28, 29.

*The hour is coming in the which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done Good, unto the Resurrection of Life; and they that have done Evil, to the Resurrection of Damnation.*

**E**VER since sin entered into the world and death by sin this earth has been a vast grave-yard, or burying place for her children. In every age, and in every country, that sentence has been executing, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." The earth has been arched with graves, the last lodgings of mortals, and the bottom of the ocean paved with the bones of men\*. Human nature was at first confined to one pair, but how soon and how wide did it spread! How inconceivably numerous

\* No spot on earth but has supply'd a grave;  
And human skulls the spacious ocean pave.

Young's *Last Day*, Book II.

numerous are the sons of *Adam*? How many different nations on our globe contain many millions of men even in one generation! And how many generations have succeeded one another in the long run of near six thousand years! Let imagination call up this vast army; children that just light upon our globe and then wing their flight into an unknown world; the gray-headed that have had a long journey thro' life; the blooming youth and the middle-aged, let them pass in review before us from all countries and from all ages; and how vast and astonishing the multitude! If the posterity of one man, *Abraham*, by one son was, according to the divine promise, as the stars of Heaven or as the sand by the sea-shore, innumerable, what numbers can compute the multitudes that have sprung from all the Patriarchs, the sons of *Adam* and *Noah*! But what is become of them all? Alas! they are turned into earth, their original element; they are all imprisoned in the grave except the present generation, and we are dropping one after another in a quick succession into that place appointed for all living. There has not been perhaps a moment of time for five thousand years but what some one or other has sunk into the mansions of the dead; and in some fatal hours, by the sword of war or the devouring jaws of earthquakes, thousands have been cut off and swept away at once, and left in one huge promiscuous carnage. The greatest number of mankind beyond

yond comparison are sleeping under ground. There lies Beauty mouldering into dust, rotting into stench and loathsomeness, and feeding the vilest worms. There lies the Head that once wore a crown as low and contemptible as the meanest beggar. There lie the mighty Giants, the Heroes, and Conquerors, the *Samsons*, the *Ajax's*, the *Alexanders*, and the *Cæsars* of the world; there they lie stupid, senseless, and inactive, and unable to drive off the worms that riot on their marrow, and make their houses in those sockets where the eyes sparkled with living lustre. There lie the Wise and the Learned, as rotten, as helpless as the Fool. There lie some that we once conversed with, some that were our Friends, our Companions; and there lie our Fathers and Mothers, our Brothers and Sisters.

And shall they lie there always? Shall this body, this curious workmanship of Heaven so wonderfully and fearfully made, always lie in ruins, and never be repaired? Shall the wide-extended valleys of dry bones never more live? This we know, that "it is not a thing *impossible* with "God to raise the dead." He that could first form our bodies out of nothing, is certainly able to form them anew, and repair the wastes of time and death. But what is his *declared will* in this case? On this the matter turns; and this is fully revealed in my text. "The "hour is coming, when *all* that are in the "grave;" *all* that are dead, without exception, " shall

" shall bear the voice of the Son of God, and  
" shall come forth."

And for what *end* shall they come forth? O!  
for very different purposes; " some to the re-  
" surrection of *life*, and some to the resurrec-  
" tion of *damnation*."

And what is the ground of this vast *distinc-  
tion*? Or what is the difference in *character* be-  
tween those that shall receive so different a *doom*?  
It is this, " They that *have done good* shall rise  
" to life, and they that *have done evil*, to dam-  
" nation." It is this, and this only, that will  
then be the rule of distinction.

I would avoid all art in my method of hand-  
ling this subject, and intend only to illustrate  
the several parts of the text. " *All that are in*  
" the grave shall hear *his voice*, and shall come  
" forth; they that have *done well*, to the resur-  
" rection of *life*; and they that have *done evil*,  
" to the resurrection of *damnation*."

I. They that are in the grave shall hear *his  
voice*. The voice of the son of God here prob-  
ably means the sound of the arch-angel's  
trumpet, which is called *his voice*, because found-  
ed by his orders and attended with his all-  
quickenng power. This all-awakening call to  
the tenants of the grave we frequently find fore-  
told in scripture. I shall refer you to two plain  
passages. " Behold, says St Paul, I shew you  
" a mystery," an important and astonishing  
secret, " we shall not all sleep;" that is, man-  
kind

kind will not all be sleeping in death when that day comes, there will be a generation then alive upon earth; and though they cannot have a proper resurrection, yet they shall pass through a change equivalent to it. "We shall all be " changed, says he, in a moment, in the " twinkling of an eye, at the last *trump*, (for " the *trump* shall sound," it shall give the alarm; and no sooner is the awful clangor heard than all the living shall be transformed into immortals) " and the dead shall be raised incorruptible," and we, " who are then alive, shall be " changed (a):" this is all the difference, " they " shall be *raised*, and we shall be *changed*." This awful prelude of the trumpet is also mentioned in 1 *Thess.* iv. 15, 16. " We which are alive, and " remain unto the coming of the LORD, shall " not prevent them which are asleep;" that is, we shall not be beforehand with them in meeting our descending LORD, " for the LORD himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, " with the voice of the archangel, and with " the *trump* of GOD;" that is, with a godlike trump, such as it becomes his majesty to sound; " and the dead in CHRIST shall rise first;" that is, before the living shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the LORD in the air; and when they are risen, and the living transformed, they shall ascend together to the place of judgment. My Brethren, realize the majesty and terror of this universal alarm. When the dead are sleeping

(a) 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.

sleeping in the silent grave ; when the living are thoughtless and unapprehensive of the grand event, or intent on other pursuits ; some of them asleep in the dead of night ; some of them dissolved in sensual pleasures, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage ; some of them planning or executing schemes for riches or honours ; some in the very act of sin ; the generality stupid and careless about the concerns of eternity, and the dreadful day just at hand ; and a few here and there conversing with their God, and " looking for the glorious appearance of their LORD and SAVIOUR ;" when the course of nature runs on uniform and regular as usual, and infidel scoffers are taking umbrage from thence to ask, " Where " is the promise of his coming ? for since the " fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they " were from the beginning of the creation (b) : " in short, when there are no more visible appearances of this approaching day, than of the destruction of *Sodom* on that fine clear morning in which *Lot* fled away ; or of the deluge, when *Noah* entered into the ark : then, in that hour of unapprehensive security, then suddenly shall the heavens open over the astonished world ; then shall the all-alarming clangor break over their heads like a clap of thunder in a clear sky. Immediately the living turn their gazing eyes upon the amazing phenomenon : a few hear the long-expected sound with rapture,

(b) 2 Peter iii. 4.

ture, and lift up their heads with joy, assured that "the day of their redemption is come," while the thoughtless world are struck with the wildest horror and consternation. In the same instant the sound reaches all the mansions of the dead, and in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they are raised, and the living are changed. This call will be as animating to all the sons of men as that to a single person, "*Lazarus, come forth.*" O what a surprize will this be to the thoughtless world! Should this alarm burst over our heads this moment into what a terror would it strike many in this assembly? Such will be the terror, such the consternation, when it actually comes to pass. Sinners will be the same timorous, self-condemned creatures then as they are now. And then they will not be able to stop their ears, who are deaf to all the gentler calls of the gospel now. Then the trump of God will constrain them to hear and fear, to whom the ministers of CHRIST now preach in vain. Then they must *all* hear, for,

II. My text tells you, "ALL that are in the grave, *all* without exception, shall hear his voice." Now the voice of Mercy calls, Reason pleads, Conscience warns, but multitudes will not hear. But this is a voice which shall, which must reach every one of the millions of mankind, and not one of them will be able to stop his ears. Infants and Giants, Kings and Subjects,

Subjects, all ranks, all ages of mankind shall hear the call. The living shall start and be *changed*, and the dead *rise* at the sound. The dust that was once alive and formed a human body, whether it flies in the air, floats in the ocean, or vegetates on earth, shall hear the new-creating fiat. Wherever the fragments of the human frame are scattered, this all-penetrating call shall reach, and speak them into life. We may consider this voice as a summons not only to dead bodies to rise, but to the souls that once animated them to appear, and be re-united to them, whether in Heaven or Hell. To the *Grave* the call will be, "*Arise, ye Dead, and come to Judgment;*" to *Heaven*, "*Ye Spirits of just men made perfect,*" "*descend to the world whence you originally came, and assume your new-formed bodies;*" to *Hell*, "*Come forth and appear, ye damned Ghosts, ye Prisoners of darkness, and be again united to the bodies in which you once sinned, that in them you may now suffer.*" Thus will this summons spread through every corner of the universe; and Heaven, Earth and Hell, and all their inhabitants shall hear and obey. Devils, as well as the sinners of our race, will tremble at the sound; for now they know they can plead no more as they once did, "*Torment us not before the time;*" for the time is come, and they must mingle with the prisoners at the bar. And now when all that are in the grave hear this all-quickening voice,

III. "They

III. "They shall come forth." Now methinks I see, I hear the earth heaving, charnel-houses rattling, tombs bursting, graves opening. Now the nations under ground begin to stir. There is a noise and a shaking among the dry bones. The dust is all alive, and in motion, and the globe breaks and trembles, as with an earthquake, while this vast army is working its way through and bursting into life. The ruins of human bodies are scattered far and wide, and have passed through many and surprising transformations. A limb in one country, and another in another; here the Head and there the Trunk, and the ocean rolling between\*. Multitudes have sunk in a watery grave, been swallowed up by the monsters of the deep, and transformed into a part of their flesh. Multitudes have been eaten by beasts and birds of prey, and incorporated with them; and some have been devoured by their fellow-men in the rage of a desperate hunger, or of unnatural cannibal appetite, and digested into a part of them. Multitudes have mouldered into dust, and this dust has been blown about by winds, and washed away with water, or it has petrified into stone, or been burnt into brick to form dwellings for their posterity; or it has grown up in grain, trees, plants, and other vegetables, which are the support of man and beast, and

VOL. II.

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\* This was the fate of *Pompey*, who was slain on the *African* shore. His Body was left there, and his Head carried over the *Mediterranean* to *Julius Cæsar*.

are transformed into their flesh and blood. But through all these various transformations and changes not one particle that was essential to one human body has been lost, or incorporated with another human body, so as to become an essential part of it. And as to those particles that were not essential, they are not necessary to the identity of the body or of the person; and therefore we need not suppose they will be raised again. The omniscient God knows how to collect, distinguish, and compound all those scattered and mingled seeds of our mortal bodies. And now, at the sound of the trumpet, they shall all be collected, wherever they were scattered; all properly sorted and united, however they were confused; atom to its fellow-atom, bone to its fellow-bone. Now methinks you may see the air darkened with fragments of bodies flying from country to country to meet and join their proper parts:

———— “ Scatter'd limbs, and all

The various bones obsequious to the call

Self-mov'd advance; the neck perhaps to meet

The distant head, the distant legs the feet.

Dreadful to view, see thro' the dusky sky

Fragments of bodies in confusion fly,

To distant regions journeying, there to claim

Deserted members, and compleat the frame—

The severed head and trunk shall join once more,

Tho' realms now rise between, and oceans roar.

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The trumpet's sound each vagrant mote shall hear;

Or fixt in earth, or if afloat in air

Obeys the signal, wafted in the wind,

And not one sleeping atom lag behind"—\*

All hear; and now, in fairer prospect shewn,

Limb clings to limb, and bone rejoins its bone.—†

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Then,

\* *YOUNG'S Last Day, Book II.*

† These two last lines are taken from a Poem which is a lively Imitation of Dr YOUNG, intitled, *The Day of Judgment*, ascribed to Mr *Ógileie*, a promising young genius of *Aberdeen* in *Scotland*, not above nineteen years of age, as I was informed, when he composed this Poem. The lines preceding those quoted are as follow.

O'er boiling waves the severed members swim,  
 Each breeze is loaded with a broken limb:  
 The living atoms, with peculiar care,  
 Drawn from their cells, come flying thro' the air,  
 Where'er they lurk'd, thro' ages undecay'd,  
 Deep in the rock, or cloth'd some smiling mead;  
 Or in the lily's snowy bosom grew,  
 Or ting'd the saphire with its lovely blue;  
 Or in some purling stream refresh'd the plains;  
 Or form'd the mountain's adamantine veins;  
 Or gayly sporting in the breathing spring,  
 Pertum'd the whisp'ring Zephyr's balmy wing.  
 All hear, &c.

The thought seems to be borrowed from Mr *Addison's* fine Latin Poem on the *Resurrection*, in which are the following beautiful lines.

Jam pulvis varias terræ dispersa per oras,  
 Sive inter venas teneri concreta metalli,  
 Sensim dirigit, seu sese immiscuit herbis,  
 Explicita est; molem rursus coalescit in unam  
 Divisum Funus, sparso prior alligat artus  
 Junctura, aptanturq; iterum coeuntia membra.

Then, my Brethren, your dust and mine shall be re-animated and organized; " and " though after our skin worms destroy these " bodies, yet in our flesh shall we see God (c)."

And what a vast improvement will the frail nature of man then receive? Our bodies will then be substantially the same; but how different in qualities, in strength, in agility, in capacities for pleasure or pain, in beauty or deformity, in glory or terror, according to the moral character of the persons to whom they belong? Matter, we know, is capable of prodigious alterations and refinements; and there it will appear in the highest perfection. The bodies of the saints will be formed glorious, incorruptible, without the seeds of sickness and death. The glorified body of CHRIST, which is undoubtedly carried to the highest perfection that matter is capable of, will be the *pattern* after which they shall be formed. " He will " change our vile body, says St *Paul*, that it " may be fashioned like unto his glorious " body (d)." " Flesh and blood," in their present state of grossness and frailty, " cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth " corruption inherit incorruption. But this " corruptible body must put on incorruption; " and this mortal must put on immortality (e)." And how vast the change, how high the improvement from its present state! " It was sown " in

(c) Job xix. 16.

(d) Phil. iii. 21.

(e) 1 Cor. xv. 50, 53.

" in corruption, it shall be raised in incorruption ; it was sown in dishonour, it shall be raised in glory ; it was sown in weakness, it shall be raised in power (f)," &c. Then will the body be able to bear up under the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory : it will no longer be a clog or an incumbrance to the soul, but a proper instrument and assistant in all the exalted services and enjoyments of the heavenly state.

The bodies of the wicked will also be improved, but their improvements will all be terrible and vindictive. Their capacities will be enlarged, but it will be that they may be capable of greater misery. They will be strengthened, but it will be that they may bear the heavier load of torment. Their sensations will be more quick and strong, but it will be that they may feel the more exquisite pain. They will be raised immortal, that they may not be consumed by everlasting fire, or escape punishment by dissolution or annihilation. In short, their augmented strength, their enlarged capacities, and their immortality will be their eternal curse ; and they would willingly exchange them for the fleeting duration of a fading flower, or the faint sensations of an infant. The only power they would rejoice in is that of self-annihilation.

And now when the bodies are compleatly formed and fit to be inhabited, the souls that once animated them, being collected from Hea-

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(f) Ver. 42, 43.

ven and Hell, re-enter and take possession of their old mansions. They are united in bonds, which shall never more be dissolved; and the mouldering tabernacles are now become everlasting habitations.

And with what joy will the spirits of the righteous welcome their old companions from their long sleep in the dust, and congratulate their glorious resurrection! How will they rejoice to re-enter their old habitations, now so compleatly repaired and highly improved? to find those bodies which were once their incumbrance, once frail and mortal, in which they were imprisoned and languished, once their temptation, tainted with the seeds of sin, now their assistants and co-partners in the business of Heaven, now vigorous, incorruptible, and immortal, now free from all corrupt mixtures, and shining in all the beauties of perfect holiness. In these bodies they once served their God with honest though feeble efforts, conflicted with sin and temptation, and passed through all the united trials and hardships of mortality and the christian life. But now they are united to them for more exalted and blissful purposes. The lungs that were wont to heave with penitential sighs and groans shall now shout forth their joys and the praises of their God and SAVIOUR. The heart that was once broken with sorrows shall now be bound up forever, and overflow with immortal pleasures. Those very eyes, that were wont to run down with tears

and

and to behold many a tragical sight, shall now " behold the King in his beauty," shall behold the Saviour whom, though unseen, they loved, and all the glories of Heaven, and " God shall " wipe away all their tears." All the senses which were once avenues of pain shall now be inlets of the most exalted pleasure. In short, every organ, every member shall be employed in the most noble services and enjoyments, instead of the fordid and laborious drudgery and the painful sufferings of the present state. Blessed change indeed! Rejoice, ye children of God, in the prospect of it.

But how shall I glance a thought upon the dreadful case of the wicked in that tremendous day? While their bodies burst from their graves the miserable spectacles of horror and deformity, see the millions of gloomy ghosts that once animated them rise like pillars of smoke from the bottomless pit! and with what reluctance and anguish do they re-enter their old habitations! O what a dreadful meeting! what shocking salutations! " And must I be chained " to thee again, (may the guilty Soul say) O " thou accursed, polluted Body, thou system " of deformity and terror! In thee I once " sinned, by thee I was once ensnared, de- " based, and ruined: to gratify thy vile lusts " and appetites I neglected my own immortal " interets, degraded my native dignity, and " made myself miserable forever. And hast " thou now met me to torment me forever?

“ O that thou hadst still slept in the dust and  
“ never been repaired again! Let me rather  
“ be condemned to animate a toad or serpent  
“ than that odious body once defiled with sin  
“ and the instrument of my guilty pleasures,  
“ now made strong and immortal to torment  
“ me with strong immortal pains. Once in-  
“ deed I received sensations of pleasure from  
“ thee, but now thou art transformed into an  
“ engine of torture. No more shall I through  
“ thine eyes behold the chearful light of the  
“ day and the beautiful prospect of nature, but  
“ the thick glooms of Hell, grim and ghastly  
“ ghosts, Heaven at an impassable distance,  
“ and all the horrid sights of wo in the infer-  
“ nal regions. No more shall thine ears charm  
“ me with the harmony of sounds, but terrify  
“ and distress me with the echo of eternal  
“ groans, and the thunder of almighty ven-  
“ geance. No more shall the gratification of  
“ thine appetites afford me pleasure, but thine  
“ appetites, forever hungry, forever unsatisfied,  
“ shall eternally torment me with their eager  
“ importunate cravings. No more shall thy  
“ tongue be employed in mirth, and jest, and  
“ song, but complain, and groan, and blas-  
“ pheme and roar forever. Thy feet that once  
“ walked in the flowery enchanted paths of sin  
“ must now walk on the dismal burning soil  
“ of Hell. O my wretched companion! I  
“ parted with thee with pain and reluctance in  
“ the struggles of death, but now I meet thee  
“ with

“ with greater terror and agony. Return to  
“ thy bed in the dust ; there sleep and rot, and  
“ let me never see thy shocking visage more.”  
In vain the petition ! the reluctant Soul must  
enter its prison, from whence it shall never  
more be dismissed. And if we might indulge  
imagination so far we might suppose the Body  
begins to recriminate in such language as this ;  
“ Come, guilty Soul, enter thy old mansion ;  
“ if it be horrible and shocking it is owing to  
“ thyself. Was not the animal frame, the  
“ brutal nature, subjected to thy government,  
“ who art a rational principle ? Instead of be-  
“ ing debased by me it became thee to have  
“ not only retained the dignity of thy nature,  
“ but to have exalted mine by noble employ-  
“ ments, and gratifications worthy an earthy  
“ body united to an immortal spirit. Thou  
“ mightest have restrained my members from  
“ being the instruments of sin, and made  
“ them the instruments of righteousness. My  
“ knees would have bowed at the throne of  
“ grace, but thou didst not affect that posture.  
“ Mine eyes would have read, and mine ears  
“ heard the word of life, but thou wouldst  
“ not set them to that employ, or wouldst not  
“ attend to it. And now it is but just the  
“ body thou didst prostitute to sin should be  
“ the instrument of thy punishment. Indeed  
“ fain would I relapse into senseless earth as I  
“ was, and continue in that insensibility for-  
“ ever. But didst thou not hear the all-rousing  
“ trumpet just now ? did it not even shake the  
“ foundations

“ foundations of thy infernal prison? It was  
 “ that call that awakened me and summoned  
 “ me to meet thee, and I could not resist.  
 “ Therefore come, miserable Soul, take pos-  
 “ session of this frame, and let us prepare for  
 “ everlasting burnings. O that it were now  
 “ possible *to die!* O that we could be again  
 “ separated, and never be united more! Vain  
 “ wish; the weight of mountains, the pangs  
 “ of Hell, the flames of unquenchable fire,  
 “ can never dissolve these chains which now  
 “ bind us together \*!”

O! Sirs, what a shocking interview is this!  
 O the glorious, dreadful morning of the resur-  
 rection!

\* The Rev. Mr *John Reynolds*, in his Poem intitled *Death's  
 Vision*, introduces the Soul speaking against the Body, and after-  
 wards checking its censures, and turning them upon itself, in a  
 vein of thought not unlike that of Mr *Davies*.

Go, tempter, go, as thou hast been  
 A quick extinguisher of heav'nly fires †  
 A source of black enormity and sin,  
 Thou cramp of sacred motions and desires †  
 How brave and bless'd am I,  
 Unfetter'd from thy company;  
 Thou enemy of my joys and me!  
 But pardon that I thus  
 Unconsciously accuse!  
 How much more cruel have I been to thee †  
 “ 'Twas cruel I oblig'd thee to obey  
 “ The wilful dictates of my guilty sway.”

*The Editor.*

rection! What scenes of unknown joy and terror will then open! Methinks we must always have it in prospect; it must even now engage our thoughts, and fill us with trembling solicitude, and make it the great object of our labour and pursuit to share in the resurrection of the just.

But for what ends do these sleeping multitudes rise? For what purposes do they come forth? My text will tell you,

IV. They shall come forth, "some to the resurrection of life, and some to the resurrection of damnation." They are summoned from their graves to stand at the bar, and brought out of prison by angelic guards to pass their last trial. And as in this impartial trial they will be found to be persons of very different characters, the righteous Judge of the earth will accordingly pronounce their different doom.

See a glorious "multitude, which none can number," openly acquitted, pronounced blessed, and welcomed "into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world." Now they enter upon a state which deserves the name of *life*. They are all vital, all active, all glorious, all happy. They "shine brighter than the stars in the firmament, like the sun forever and ever." All their faculties overflow with happiness. They mingle with the glorious company of angels; they behold that

that Saviour whom unseen they loved; they dwell in eternal intimacy with the Father of their spirits; they are employed with ever-new and growing delight in the exalted services of the heavenly sanctuary. They shall never more fear nor feel the least touch of sorrow, pain, or any kind of misery, but shall be as happy as their natures can admit through an immortal duration. What a glorious new creation is here! what illustrious creatures formed of the dust! And shall any of us join in this happy company? O! shall any of us, feeble, dying, sinful creatures share in their glory and happiness? This is a most interesting enquiry, and I would have you think of it with trembling anxiety, and I shall presently answer it in its place.

The prospect would be delightful if our charity could hope that this will be the happy end of all the sons of men. But, alas! multitudes, and we have reason to fear the far greater number shall come forth, not to the resurrection of life but to the resurrection of damnation. *Damnation!* what terror is in the sound. If audacious sinners in our world make light of it, and pray for it on every trifling occasion, their infernal brethren that feel its tremendous import are not so hardy, but tremble and groan, and can trifle with it no more.

Let us realize the miserable doom of this class of mankind. See them bursting into life from their subterranean dungeons, hideous shapes

shapes of deformity and terror, expressive of the vindictive design for which their bodies are repaired, and of the boisterous and malignant passions that ravage their souls. Horror throbs through every vein, and glares wild and furious in their eyes. Every joint trembles, and every countenance looks down-cast and gloomy. Now they see that tremendous day of which they were warned in vain, and shudder at those terrors of which they once made light. They immediately know the grand business of the day, and the dreadful purpose for which they are roused from their slumbers in the grave; to be tried, to be convicted, to be condemned, and to be dragged away to execution. Conscience has been anticipating the trial in a separate state; and no sooner is the soul united to the body than immediately conscience ascends its throne in the breast, and begins to accuse, to convict, to pass sentence, to upbraid, and to torment. The sinner is condemned, condemned at his own tribunal, before he arrives at the bar of his judge. The first act of consciousness in his new state of existence is a conviction that he is a condemned, an irrevocably condemned creature. He enters the court, knowing beforehand how it will go with him. When he finds himself ordered to the *left hand* of his Judge, when he hears the dreadful sentence thundered out against him, "Depart, " from me accursed," it was but what he expected. Now he can flatter himself with vain hopes,

hopes, and shut his eyes against the light of conviction, but then he will not be able to hope better; then he *must* know the worst of his case. The formality of the judicial trial is necessary for the conviction of the world, but not for his; his own conscience has already determined his condition. However, to convince others of the justice of his doom, he is dragged and guarded from his grave to the judgment-seat by fierce unrelenting devils, now his tempters, but then his tormentors. With what horror does he view the burning throne and the frowning face of his judge, that JESUS whom he once disregarded in spite of all his dying love and the salvation he offered! How does he wish for a covering of rocks and mountains to conceal him from his angry eye! but all in vain. Appear he must. He is ordered to the *left* among the trembling criminals, and now the trial comes on. All his evil deeds and all his omissions of duty are now produced against him. All the mercies he abused, all the chastisements he despised, all the means of grace he neglected or misimproved, every sinful, and even every idle word, nay his most secret thoughts and dispositions are all exposed, and brought into judgment against him. And when the judge puts it to him, "Is it not so, "sinner? Are not these charges true?" conscience obliges him to confess and cry out, *Guilty! guilty!* And now the trembling criminal being plainly convicted, and left without  
all

all plea and all excuse, the supreme Judge in stern majesty and inexorable justice thunders out the dreadful sentence, "Depart from me, thou cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels (g)." O tremendous doom! every word is big with terror, and shoots a thunder-bolt through the heart. "DEPART: away from my presence; I cannot bear so loathsome a sight. I once invited thee to come to me that thou mightest have life, but thou wouldst not regard the invitation, and now thou shalt never hear that inviting voice more. Depart FROM ME; from me, the only fountain of happiness, the only proper good for an immortal mind." But, "LORD," (we may suppose the criminal to say) "if I must depart, *blefs* me before I go." "No, says the angry Judge, depart ACCURSED; depart with my eternal and heavy curse upon thee; the curse of that power that made thee; a curse dreadfully efficacious, that blasts whatever it falls upon like flashes of consuming, irresistible lightning." "But if I must go away under thy curse, (the criminal may be supposed to say) let that be all my punishment; let me depart to some agreeable, or at least tolerable recess, where I may meet with something to mitigate the curse." "No, depart INTO FIRE; there burn in all the excruciating tortures of that outrageous ele-  
ment."

(g) Matt. xxv. 41.

“ment.” “But, LORD, if I must make my bed in fire, O let it be a transient blaze that will soon burn itself out, and put an end to my torment.” “No, depart into EVER-LASTING fire; there burn without consuming, and be tormented without end.” “But, LORD, grant me (cries the poor wretch) at least the mitigation of friendly, entertaining, and sympathizing company; or if this cannot be granted, grant me this small, this almost no request, to be doomed to some solitary corner in Hell, where I shall be punished only by my own conscience and thine immediate hand; but O deliver me from these malicious, tormenting devils; banish me into some apartment in the infernal pit far from their society.” “No, depart into everlasting fire prepared FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS: thou must make one of their wretched crew forever: thou didst join with them in sinning, and now must share in their punishment: thou didst submit to them as thy tempters, and now thou must submit to them as thy tormentors.”

Sentence being pronounced it is immediately executed. “These shall go away into everlasting punishment (b).” Devils drag them away to the pit, and push them down headlong. There they are confined in chains of darkness, and in a lake burning with fire and brimstone, FOREVER, FOREVER! In that dreadful

(b) Matt. xxv. 46.

ful word lies the emphasis of torment: it is an Hell in Hell. If they might be but released from pain, though it were by annihilation, after they have wept away ten thousand millions of ages in extremity of pain it would be some mitigation, some encouragement; but, alas! when as many millions of ages are passed as the stars of Heaven, or the sands on the seashore, or the atoms of dust in this huge globe of earth, their punishment is as far from an end as when the sentence was first pronounced upon them. FOREVER! there is no exhausting of that word; and when it is affixt to the highest degree of misery the terror of the sound is utterly insupportable. See, Sirs, what depends upon time, that span of time we enjoy in this fleeting life. Eternity! awful, all-important eternity depends upon it.

All this while conscience tears the sinner's heart with the most tormenting reflections.

“ O what a fair opportunity I once had for  
 “ salvation, had I improved it! I was warned  
 “ of the consequences of a life of sin and care-  
 “ lessness: I was told of the necessity of faith,  
 “ repentance, and universal holiness of heart  
 “ and life; I enjoyed a sufficient space for re-  
 “ pentance, and all the necessary means of sal-  
 “ vation, but, fool that I was, I neglected all,  
 “ I abused all; I refused to part with my sins;  
 “ I refused to engage seriously in religion, and  
 “ to seek GOD in earnest; and now I am lost  
 “ forever without hope. O! for one of those

VOL. II.

X

“ months,

“ months, one of those weeks, or even so  
 “ much as one of those days or hours I once  
 “ trifled away! with what earnestness, with  
 “ what solicitude would I improve it! But all  
 “ my opportunities are past, beyond recovery,  
 “ and not a moment shall be given me for this  
 “ purpose any more. O what a fool was I to  
 “ sell my soul for such trifles! to set so light by  
 “ Heaven, and fall into Hell through meer  
 “ neglect and carelessness!” Ye impenitent,  
 unthinking sinners, though you may now be  
 able to silence or drown the clamours of your  
 consciences, yet the time, or rather the dread  
 eternity is coming, when they *will* speak in  
 spite of you; when they will speak home, and  
 be felt by the most hardened and remorseless  
 heart. Therefore now regard their warnings  
 while they may be the means of your recovery.

You and I, my Brethren, are concerned in  
 the solemn transaction of the day I have been  
 describing. You and I shall either be changed  
 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, or  
 while mouldering in the grave we shall hear  
 the voice of the Son of God, and “ come forth,  
 “ either to the resurrection of life or to the re-  
 “ surrection of damnation.” And which, my  
 Brethren, shall be our doom? Can we fore-  
 know it at this distance of time? I proposed it  
 to your enquiry already, whether you have any  
 good reason to hope you shall be of that happy  
 number who shall rise to life? And now I pro-  
 pose it again with this counter-part, Have you  
 any

any evidences to hope you shall not be of that wretched numerous multitude who shall rise to damnation? If there be an enquiry within the compass of human knowledge that demands your solicitous thought, certainly it is this. Methinks you cannot enjoy one moment's ease or security while this is undetermined. And is it an answerable enquiry? Can we now know what are the present distinguishing characters of those who shall then receive so different a doom? Yes, my text determines the point; for,

V. "They that *have done good* shall come forth " to the resurrection of life, and they that *have done evil* to the resurrection of damnation." These are the grounds of the distinction that shall then be made in the final states of men, *doing good* and *doing evil*. And certainly this distinction is perceivable now; *to do good* and *to do evil* are not so much alike as that it should be impossible to distinguish between them. Let us then see what is implied in these characters, and to whom of us they respectively belong.

I. What is it to do good? This implies, 1st, An honest endeavour to keep all GOD'S commandments; I say, *all* his commandments with regard to GOD, our neighbours, and ourselves, whether easy or difficult, whether fashionable or not, whether agreeable to our natural constitution or not, whether enjoining the performance of duty or forbidding the

commission of sin, whether regarding the heart or the outward practice. I say an uniform, impartial regard to all God's commandments, of whatever kind, in all circumstances, and at all times, is implied in doing good; for if we do *any* thing because God commands it we will endeavour to do *every* thing that he commands, because where the reason of our conduct is the same our conduct itself will be the same. I do not mean that good men in the present state *perfectly* keep the commandments of God in every thing, or indeed in any thing; but I mean that universal obedience is their *best* endeavour. Their character is in some measure uniform and all of a piece; that is, they do not place all their religion in obedience to some commands which may be agreeable to them, as though that would make atonement for their neglect of others; but like *David* " they " are for having a respect, and indeed have a " respect to all God's commandments (i)." My Brethren, try yourselves by this test.

2. To do good in an acceptable manner presupposes a change of nature and a new principle. Our nature is so corrupted that nothing really and formally good can be performed by us till it be renewed. To confirm this I shall only refer you to *Eph.* ii. 10. and *Ezek.* xxxvi. 26, 27. where being created in CHRIST JESUS to good works and receiving a new heart of flesh are mentioned as prerequisites to our walking

(i) Psalm cxix. 6.

walking in God's statutes. As for the principle of obedience "it is the love of God (*k*);" that is, we must obey God because we love him; we must do good because we delight to do good; otherwise it is all hypocrisy, constraint, or selfishness, and cannot be acceptable to God. Here again, my Brethren, look into your hearts and examine what is the principle of your obedience, and whether ever you have been made new creatures.

3. I must add, especially as we live under the gospel, that your dependence for life must not be upon the good you do, but entirely upon the righteousness of JESUS CHRIST. After you have done all you must acknowledge you are but unprofitable servants, and renounce all your works in point of merit, while you abound in them in point of practice (*l*). This is an essential characteristic of evangelical obedience, and without it you cannot expect to have a resurrection to eternal life and blessedness.

I might enlarge upon this head, but time will not permit, and I hope these three characters may suffice to shew you what is implied in doing good. Let us now proceed to the opposite character.

2. What it is to do evil? This implies such things as these. The habitual neglect of well-doing, or the performance of duties in a languid, formal manner, or without a right principle,

X 3

principle,

(*k*) 1 John v. 3.(*l*) Phil. iii. 7, 8.

principle, and the wilful indulgence of any one sin; the secret love of sin, though not suffered to break forth into the outward practice. Here it is evident at first sight that profane sinners, drunkards, swearers, defrauders, avowed neglecters of religion, &c. have this dismal brand upon them, that they are such as do evil. Nay, all such who are in their natural state, without regeneration, whatever their outside be, must be ranked in this class, "for that which is born of the flesh is flesh (*m*); and they that are in the flesh cannot please God, nor be rightly subject to his law (*n*)."

And now who is for life and who for damnation among you? These characters are intended to make the distinction among you, and I pray you apply them for that purpose.

As for such of you who amid all your lamented infirmities are endeavouring honestly to do good, and grieved at heart that you can do no more, you also must die; you must die, and feed the worms in the dust. But you shall rise gloriously improved, rise to an immortal life, and in all the terrors and consternation of that last day you will be secure, serene, and undisturbed. The almighty Judge will be your friend, and that is enough. Let this thought disarm the king of terrors, and give you courage to look down into the grave, and forward to the great rising day. O what an happy immortality opens its glorious prospects beyond the ken

(*m*) John iii. 6.

(*n*) Rom. viii. 7, 8.

ken of fight before you! and after a few struggles more in this state of warfare, and resting awhile in the bed of death at the regions of eternal blessedness you will arrive, and take up your residence there forever.

But are there not some here who are conscious that these favourable characters do not belong to them? that know that well-doing is not the business of their life, but that they are workers of iniquity? I tell you plainly, and with all the authority the word of God can give, that if you continue such you shall rise to damnation. That will undoubtedly be your doom, unless you are greatly changed and reformed in heart and life. And will this be no excitement to vigorous endeavour? Are you proof against the energy of such a consideration? Ye careless sinners, awake out of your security and prepare for death and judgment! this fleeting life is all the time you have for preparation, and can you trifle it away? Your All, your eternal All is set upon the single cast of life, and you must stand the hazard of the dye. You can make but one experiment, and if that fail through your sloth or mismanagement you are irrecoverably undone forever. Therefore, by the dread authority of the great God, by the terrors of death, and the great rising day, by the joys of Heaven, and the torments of Hell, and by the value of your immortal souls, I intreat, I charge, I adjure you to awake out of your security, and improve the precious moments of

X 4

life.

life. The world is dying all around you. And can you rest easy in such a world while unprepared for eternity? Awake to righteousness now at the gentle call of the gospel, before the last trumpet give you an alarm of another kind.



S E R M O N



# S E R M O N XX.

## The univerval Judgment.



A C T S XVII. 30, 31.

*And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men every where to repent; because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in Righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised him from the Dead.*



THE present state is the infancy of human nature, and all the events of time, even those that make such noise, and determine the fate of kingdoms, are but the little affairs of children. But if we look forwards and trace human nature to maturity, we meet with events vast, interesting, and majestic, and such as nothing but divine authority can render credible to us, who are so apt to judge of things by what we see, To one of those scenes I would direct your attention this day; I mean the solemn, tremendous, and glorious scene of the univerval Judgment. You

You have sometimes seen a stately building in ruins; come now and view the ruins of a demolished world. You have often seen a feeble mortal struggling in the agonies of death, and his shattered frame dissolved; come now and view universal nature labouring and agonizing in her last convulsions, and her well-compacted system dissolved. You have heard of earthquakes here and there that have laid *Lisbon, Palermo*, and a few other cities in ruins; come now and feel the tremors and convulsions of the whole globe, that blend cities and countries, oceans and continents, mountains, plains and valleys in one promiscuous heap. You have a thousand times beheld the moon walking in brightness and the sun shining in his strength; now look and see the sun turned into darkness, and the moon into blood.

It is our lot to live in an age of confusion, blood and slaughter; an age in which our attention is engaged by the clash of arms, the clangor of trumpets, the roar of artillery, and the dubious fate of kingdoms; but draw off your thoughts from these objects for an hour, and fix them upon objects more solemn and interesting; come view

————— “ A scene that yields  
A louder trumpet, and more dreadful fields;  
The World alarm'd, both Earth and Heaven o'erthrown,  
And gasping Nature's last tremendous groan;  
Death's ancient sceptre broke, the teeming Tomb,  
The righteous Judge, and man's eternal Doom †.”

Such

† *YOUNG'S Last Day, Book I.*

Such a scene there certainly is before us, for St Paul tells us that " God hath given assurance " to all men that he will judge the world in " righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained ;" and that his resurrection, the resurrection of him who is God and Man, is a demonstrative proof of it.

My text is the conclusion of St Paul's defence or sermon before the famous court of *Areopagus* in the learned and philosophical city of *Athens*. In this august and polite assembly he speaks with the boldness and in the evangelical strain of an apostle of CHRIST. He first inculcates upon them the great truths of natural Religion, and labours faithfully, though in a very genteel and inoffensive manner, to reform them from that stupid idolatry and superstition into which even this learned and philosophical city was sunk, though a *Socrates*, a *Plato*, and the most celebrated sages and moralists of pagan antiquity had lived and taught in it. Afterwards in the close of his discourse he introduces the glorious peculiarities of Christianity, particularly the great duty of Repentance from evangelical motives, the Resurrection of the Dead, and the final Judgment. But no sooner has he entered upon this subject than he is interrupted, and seems to have broken off abruptly ; for when he has just hinted at the then unpopular doctrine of the Resurrection of the Dead we are told " some mocked " and others put it off to another hearing, " We " will hear thee again of this matter."

In

In those dark times of ignorance which preceded the publication of the Gospel, God seemed to *wink* or connive at the idolatry and various forms of wickedness that had overspread the world; that is, he seemed to *over-look* † or take no notice of them, so as either to punish them or to give the nation explicit calls to repentance. But now, says St *Paul*, the case is altered. Now the gospel is published through the world, and therefore God will no longer seem to connive at the wickedness and impenitence of mankind, but publishes his great mandate to a rebel world, explicitly and loudly "*commanding all men every where to repent*;" and he now gives them particular motives and encouragements to this duty.

One motive of the greatest weight, which was never so clearly or extensively published before, is the doctrine of the universal Judgment. This the connection implies: "He now commandeth all men to repent, *because* he hath appointed a day for judging all men." And surely the prospect of a judgment must be a strong motive to sinners to repent. This, if any thing, will rouse them from their thoughtless security, and bring them to repentance. Repentance should, and one would think must be as extensive as this reason for it. This St *Paul* intimates. "He now commandeth *all men to repent*," because he hath given assurance to *all men* "that he has appointed a  
" day

† ὑπερβλέπω.

“ day to judge the world.” Wherever the gospel publishes the doctrine of a future judgment there it requires all men to repent ; and wherever it requires repentance there it enforces the command with this alarming doctrine.

“ GOD has given assurance to all men,” that is, to all that hear the gospel, that he has appointed a day for this great purpose, and that JESUS CHRIST, god-man, is to preside in person in this majestic solemnity. He has given assurance of this ; that is, sufficient ground of faith ; and the assurance consists in this, that “ he hath raised him from the dead.”

The Resurrection of CHRIST gives assurance of this in several respects. It is a specimen and a pledge of a general Resurrection, that grand preparative for the Judgment. It is an incontestible proof of his divine mission ; for God would never work so unprecedented a miracle in favour of an impostor. It is also an authentic attestation of all our LORD'S claims, and he expressly claimed the authority of supreme Judge as delegated to him by the Father : “ the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son (a).”

There is a peculiar fitness and propriety in this constitution. It is fit that a world placed under the administration of a Mediator should have a mediatorial Judge. It is fit this high office should be conferred upon him as an honorary reward for his important services and  
extreme

(a) John v. 22.

treme abasement. "Because he humbled himself, therefore GOD hath highly exalted him (b)." It is fit that creatures clothed with bodies should be judged by a man clothed in a body like themselves. Hence it is said that "all judgment is given to the son, *because* he "is the son of man (c)." This would seem a strange reason did we not understand it in this light. Indeed was JESUS CHRIST man *only* he would be infinitely unequal to the office of universal Judge; but he is GOD and Man, "IMMANUEL, GOD with us," and thus is he the fittest person in the universe for the work. It is also fit that CHRIST should be the supreme Judge, as it will be a great encouragement to his people for their Mediator to execute this office; and it may be added, that hereby the condemnation of the wicked will be rendered more conspicuously just, for if a Mediator, a Saviour, the Friend of Sinners condemns them they must be worthy of condemnation indeed.

Let us now enter upon the majestic scene. But, alas! what images shall I use to represent it? Nothing that we have seen, nothing that we have heard, nothing that has ever happened on the stage of time can furnish us with proper illustrations. All is low and groveling, all is faint and obscure, that ever the sun shone upon, when compared with the grand phænomena of that day; and we are so accustomed to low and little objects that it is impossible we should

(b) Phil. ii. 8,9.

(c) John v. 27.

should ever raise our thoughts to a suitable pitch of elevation. Ere long we shall be the amazed spectators of these majestic wonders, and our eyes and our ears will be our instructors. But now it is necessary we should have such ideas of them as may affect our hearts and prepare us for them. Let us therefore present to our view those representations which divine Revelation, our only guide in this case, gives us of the person of the Judge, and the manner of his appearance; of the Resurrection of the dead, and the Transformation of the living; of the universal Convention of all the sons of men before the supreme tribunal; of their Separation to the right and left hand of the Judge, according to their characters; of the judicial Process itself; of the decisive sentence; of its Execution; and of the Conflagration of the world.

As to the *person of the Judge* the psalmist tells you, "God is Judge himself (*d*).<sup>2</sup>" Yet CHRIST tells us, "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, and that he hath given him authority to execute judgment because he is the Son of man (*e*).<sup>3</sup>" It is therefore CHRIST JESUS, God-man, as I observed, who shall sustain this high character; and for the reasons already alledged it is most fit it should be devolved upon him. Being God and Man all the advantages of divinity and humanity center in him,

(*d*) Psalm l. 6.

(*e*) John v. 22, 27.

him, and render him more fit for this office than if he were God only, or Man only. This is the august Judge before whom we must stand, and the prospect may inspire us with reverence, joy, and terror.

As for the *manner of his appearance* it will be such as becomes the dignity of his person and office. He will shine in all the uncreated glories of the Godhead, and in all the gentler glories of a perfect Man. His attendants will add a dignity to the grand appearance, and the sympathy of nature will increase the solemnity and terror of the day. Let his own word describe him. "The son of man shall come in  
 " his glory and in the glory of his Father, and  
 " all the holy angels with him; and then shall  
 " he sit upon the throne of his glory (f)."  
 " The LORD JESUS shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire,  
 " taking vengeance on them that know not  
 " GOD, and that obey not the Gospel of our  
 " LORD JESUS CHRIST (g)." And not only will the Angels, those illustrious ministers of the court of Heaven, attend upon that solemn occasion, but also all the Saints who had left the world from *Adam* to that day; for "those  
 " that sleep in JESUS, says *St Paul*, will God  
 " bring with him (b)." The grand imagery in *Daniel's* vision is applicable to this day, and perhaps to this it primarily refers. "I beheld  
 " till

(f) *Matt.* xxv. 31. and xvi. 27. (g) *2 Thes.* i. 7, 8.

(b) *1 Thes.* iv. 14.

" till the thrones were cast down," or rather  
*set up*\*, " and the Ancient of days did sit, whose  
 " garment was white as snow, and the hair of  
 " his head like the pure wool. His throne was  
 " like fiery flame, and his wheels as burning  
 " fire. A fiery stream issued, and came forth  
 " from before him: thousand thousands mi-  
 " nistered unto him, and ten thousand times  
 " ten thousand stood before him (i)." Perhaps  
 our LORD may exhibit himself to the whole  
 world upon this grand occasion in the same glo-  
 rious form in which he was seen by his favourite  
*John*, " clothed with a garment down to  
 " the foot, and girt about the breasts with a  
 " golden girdle: his head and his hairs white  
 " like wool, as white as snow: his eyes as a  
 " flame of fire: his feet like unto fine brass,  
 " as if they burned in a furnace: his voice as  
 " the found of many waters, and his counte-  
 " nance as the sun shining in his strength (k)."

Another image of inimitable majesty and ter-  
 ror the same writer gives us, when he says, " I  
 " saw a great white throne and him that sat on  
 " it, from whose face the earth and the heaven  
 " fled away, and there was found no place for  
 " them." Astonishing! what an image is this!  
 the stable earth and heaven cannot bear the  
 VOL. II. Y majesty

\* This sense is most agreeable to the connection, and the ori-  
 ginal word will bear it, יָסַדָּם signifies to *pitch down* or *place*, as  
 well as to *throw down*, or *demolish*. And the LXX translate it,  
 οἱ θρόνοι ἐτεθεσαν, " the thrones were *put up*, or *fixed*."

(i) Dan. vii. 9, 10.

(k) Rev. i. 13, &c.

majesty and terror of his look : they fly away affrighted, and seek a place to hide themselves, but no place is found to shelter them ; every region through the immensity of space lies open before him (1) \*.

This is the Judge before whom we must stand ; and this is the manner of his appearance. But is this the babe of *Bethlehem* that lay and wept in a manger ? Is this the supposed son of the carpenter, the despised *Galilean* ? Is this the man of sorrows ? Is this he that was arrested, was condemned, was buffeted, was spit upon, was crowned with thorns, was executed as a criminal and a slave upon the cross ? Yes, it is he ; the very  
same

(1) Rev. xx. 11.

\* This is the picture drawn by the pencil of Inspiration. We may now contemplate the imagery of a fine human pen.

————— From his great abode  
Full on a whirlwind rides the dreadful GOD :  
The tempest's rattling winds, the fiery car,  
Ten thousand hosts his ministers of war ;  
The flaming Cherubim attend his flight,  
And Heav'n's foundations groan beneath the weight.  
Thro' all the skies his forky lightnings play,  
And radiant splendors round his head display.  
From his bright eyes affrighted worlds retire ;  
He speaks in thunder, and he breathes in fire.  
Garments of heavenly light array the GOD ;  
His throne a bright consolidated cloud —  
Support me, Heaven ! I shudder with affright ;  
I quake, I sink with terror at the sight !

*The Day of Judgment, a Poem,  
a little varied.*

same JESUS of Nazareth. But O how changed! how deservedly exalted! Let heaven and earth congratulate his advancement. Now let his enemies appear, and shew their usual contempt, and malignity. Now, *Pilate*, condemn the King of the Jews as an usurper. Now, ye Jews, raise the clamour, "Crucify him, crucify him."

"Now bow the knee in scorn, present the reed;

"Now tell the scourg'd impostor he must bleed." †

Now, ye Deists and Infidels, dispute his Divinity and the truth of his Religion if you can. Now, ye hypocritical Christians, try to impose upon him with your idle pretences. Now despise his grace, laugh at his threatenings, and make light of his displeasure if you are able. Ah! now their courage fails, and terrors surround them like armed men. Now "they hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and say to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;" for the Lamb that once bled as a sacrifice for sin now appears in all the terrors of a lion; and "the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand (m)?" O! could they now hide themselves in the bottom of the ocean, or in some rock that

Y 2 bears

† *YOUNG'S Last Day*, Book II.

(m) *Rev. vi. 15.*

bears the weight of mountains, how happy would they think themselves. But, alas!

“ Seas cast the monsters forth to meet their doom,  
 “ And rocks but prison up for wrath to come.” \*

While the Judge is descending the parties to be judged will be summoned to appear. But where are they? They are all asleep in their dusty beds, except the then generation. And how shall they be roused from their long sleep of thousands of years? Why “ the LORD himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, “ with the voice of the archangel, and with “ the trump of God (n).” “ The trumpet shall “ sound,” and they that are then alive shall not pass into eternity through the beaten road of Death, but “ at the last trumpet they shall be “ changed,” changed into immortals, “ in a “ moment, in the twinkling of an eye (o).” Now all the millions of mankind of whatever country and nation, whether they expected this tremendous day or not, all suddenly feel a shock through their whole frames, while they are instantaneously metamorphosed in every limb, and the pulse of immortality begins to beat strong in every part. Now also the slumberers under ground begin to stir, to rouse, and spring to life. Now see graves opening, tombs bursting, charnel-houses rattling, the earth

\* *Young's Last Day*, Book I.

(n) 1 Thes. iv. 16.

(o) 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.

earth heaving, and all alive, while these subterranean armies are bursting their way through. See clouds of human dust and broken bones darkening the air, and flying from country to country over intervening continents and oceans to meet their kindred fragments, and repair the shattered frame with pieces collected from a thousand different quarters, whither they were blown by winds, or washed by water. See what millions start up in company in the spots where *Nineveh*, *Babylon*, *Jerusalem*, *Rome*, and *London* once stood! Whole armies spring to life in fields where they once lost their lives in battle, and were left unburied; in fields which fattened with their blood produced a thousand harvests, and now produce a crop of men. See a succession of thousands of years rising in crowds from grave-yards round the places where they once attended, in order to prepare for this decisive day. Nay, graves yawn, and swarms burst into life under palaces and buildings of pride and pleasure, in fields and forests, in thousands of places where graves were never suspected. How are the living surprised to find men starting into life under their feet, or just beside them; some perhaps just beginning to stir, and heave the ground; others half risen, and others quite disengaged from the encumbrance of earth and standing upright before them! What multitudes that had slept in a watry grave now emerge from rivers and seas and oceans, and throw them into a tumult! Now appear to

the view of all the world the *Goliaths*, the *Anakims*, and the other Giants of ancient times, and now the millions of infants, those little particles of life, start up at once, perhaps in full maturity, or perhaps in the lowest class of mankind, dwarfs of immortality. "The dead, small and great, will arise to stand before God; and the sea shall give up the dead which were in it (*p*)."  
 "Now the many that sleep in the dust shall awake and come forth; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt (*q*)."  
 "Now the hour is come when all that are in the grave shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done well, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation (*r*)."  
 "Though after our skin worms destroy this body, yet in our flesh shall we see God, whom we shall see for ourselves, and these eyes shall behold him and not another (*s*)."  
 "Then this corruptible [body] shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality (*t*)."

As the characters, and consequently the doom of mankind will be very different, so we may reasonably suppose they will rise in very different forms of glory or dishonour, of beauty  
 or

(*p*) Rev. xx. 12, 13.

(*q*) Dan. xii. 2.

(*r*) John v. 28.

(*s*) Job xix. 26, 27.

(*t*) 1 Cor. xv. 53.

or deformity. Their bodies indeed will all be improved to the highest degree, all made vigorous, capacious, and immortal. But here lies the difference: the bodies of the righteous will be strengthened to bear "an exceeding great" and eternal weight of glory," but those of the wicked will be strengthened to sustain an heavier load of misery; their strength will be but meer strength to suffer, an horrid capacity of greater pain. The immortality of the righteous will be the duration of their happiness, but that of the wicked of their misery: their immortality, the highest privilege of their nature, will be their heaviest curse; and they would willingly exchange their duration with an insect of a day, or a fading flower. The bodies of the righteous will "shine as the sun," and as the stars in the firmament forever and "ever;" but those of the wicked will be grim and shocking, and ugly, and hateful as Hell. The bodies of the righteous will be fit mansions for their heavenly spirits to inhabit, and every feature will speak the noble and delightful passions that agreeably work within; but the wicked will be but spirits of Hell clothed in material bodies; and malice, rage, despair, and all the infernal passions will lower in their countenances, and cast a dismal gloom around them. O! they will be nothing else but shapes of deformity and terror! they will look like  
the

the natives of Hell, and spread horror around them with every look †.

With what reluctance may we suppose will the souls of the wicked enter again into a state of union with these shocking forms, that will be everlasting engines of torture to them as they once were instruments of sin! But O with what joy will the souls of the righteous return to their old habitations in which they once served their God with honest, though feeble, endeavours, now so gloriously repaired and improved! How will they congratulate the resurrection of their old companions from their long sleep in death, now made fit to share with them in the sublime employments and fruitions of Heaven! Every organ will be an instrument of service and an inlet of pleasure, and the soul shall no longer be encumbered, but assisted by this union to the body. O what surprising creatures can omnipotence raise from the dust! To what an high degree of beauty can the Almighty refine the offspring of the earth!

† How weak, how pale, how haggard, how obscene,  
 What more than death in ev'ry face and mien!  
 With what distress, and glaring of affright  
 They shock the heart, and turn away the sight!  
 In gloomy orbs their trembling eye-balls roll,  
 And tell the horrid secrets of the soul.  
 Each gesture mourns, each look is black with care,  
 And every groan is laden with despair.

YOUNG'S *Last Day*, Book III.

earth! and into what miracles of glory and blessedness can he form them! \*

Now the Judge is come, the judgment-seat is erected, the dead are raised. And what follows? Why the universal convention of all the sons of men before the judgment-seat. The place of judgment will probably be the extensive region of the air, the most capacious for the reception of such a multitude; for St Paul tells us the saints shall "be caught up together" in the clouds to meet the LORD in the air (u).<sup>u</sup> And that the air will be the place of judicature perhaps may be intimated when our LORD is represented as coming in the clouds, and sitting upon a cloudy throne. These expressions can hardly be understood literally, for clouds which consist of vapours and rarefied particles of water seem vere improper materials for a chariot of state, or a throne of Judgment, but they may very properly intimate that CHRIST will make his appearance, and hold his court in the region of the clouds; that is, in the air; and perhaps

\* Mark, on the right, how amiable a grace!  
 Their Maker's image fresh in ev'ry face!  
 What purple bloom my ravish'd soul admires,  
 And their eyes sparkling with immortal fires!  
 Triumphant beauty! charms that rise above  
 This world, and in blest angels kindle love!—  
 O! the transcendent glories of the Just! "

YOUNG'S *Last Day*, Book III.

(u) 1 Thess. iv. 17.

perhaps that the rays of light and majestic darkness shall be so blended around him as to form the appearance of a cloud to the view of the wondrous and gazing world.

To this upper region, from whence our globe will lie open to view far and wide, will the sons of men be convened. And they will be gathered together by the ministry of angels, the officers of this grand court. "The Son of man, when he comes in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory, shall send forth his angels with a great sound of the trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, and from one end of Heaven to the other (x)." Their ministry also extends to the wicked, whom they will drag away to judgment and execution, and separate from the righteous. For "in the end of the world, says CHRIST, the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them that work iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth (y)."

What an august convocation, what a vast assembly is this! See flights of Angels darting round the globe from east to west, from pole to pole, gathering up here and there the scattered saints, choosing them out from among the crowd of the ungodly, and bearing them aloft on their wings "to meet their LORD in the air!"

while

(x) Matt. xxiv. 30, 31.

(y) Matt. xiii. 40, 41, 42.

while the wretched crowd look and gaze, and stretch their hands, and would mount up along with them; but alas! they must be left behind, and wait for another kind of convoy; a convoy of cruel, unrelenting Devils, who shall snatch them up as their prey with malignant joy, and place them before the flaming tribunal. Now all the sons of men meet in one immense assembly. *Adam* beholds the long line of his posterity, and they behold their common father. Now *Europeans* and *Asiatics*, the swarthy sons of *Africa*, and the savages of *America* mingle together. *Christians*, *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and *Pagans*, the Learned and the Ignorant, Kings and Subjects, Rich and Poor, Free and Bond, form one promiscuous crowd. Now all the vast armies that conquered or fell under *Xerxes*, *Darius*, *Alexander*, *Cæsar*, *Scipio*, *Tamerlane*, *Marlborough*, and other illustrious warriors, unite in one vast army. There, in short, all the successive inhabitants of the earth for thousands of years appear in one assembly. And how inconceivably great must the number be! When the inhabitants of but one county are met together you are struck with the survey. Were all the inhabitants of a kingdom convened in one place how much more striking would be the sight! Were all the inhabitants of all the kingdoms of the earth convened in one general rendezvous how astonishing and vast would be the multitude! But what is even this vast multitude compared with the long succession

succession of generations that have peopled the globe, in all ages, and in all countries, from the first commencement of time to the last day! Here numbers fail, and our thoughts are lost in the immense survey. The extensive region of the air is very properly chosen as the place of judgment, for this globe would not be sufficient for such a multitude to stand upon. In that prodigious assembly, my Brethren, you and I must mingle. And we shall not be lost in the crowd, nor escape the notice of our Judge, but his eye will be as particularly fixed upon every one as though there were but one before him.

To increase the number, and add a majesty and terror to the assembly the fallen Angels also make their appearance at the bar. This they have long expected with horror as the period when their consummate misery is to commence. When CHRIST in the form of a Servant exercised a godlike power over them in the days of his residence upon earth they almost mistook his first coming as a Saviour for his second coming as their Judge, and therefore they expostulated, " Art thou come to torment us before the time (z) ?" that is to say, We expect thou wilt at last appear to torment us, but we did not expect thy coming so soon. Agreeable to this St *Peter* tells us, " God spared not the angels that sinned but cast them down to Hell, and delivered them as prisoners into chains  
" of

(z) Matt. viii. 29.

" of darkness to be *reserved* unto judgment (z)." To the same purpose St *Jude* speaks, " The " Angels which kept not their first estate, but " left their own habitation, he hath *reserved* in " everlasting chains under darkness unto the " judgment of the great day (a)." What horribly majestic figures will these be! and what a dreadful appearance will they make at the bar! Angels and Archangels, Thrones, and Dominions, and Principalities, and Powers blasted, stripped of their primæval glories, and lying in ruins; yet majestic even in ruins, gigantic forms of terror and deformity, great though degraded, horribly illustrious, angels fallen, gods undeified and deposed\*.

Now the Judge is seated, and anxious millions stand before him waiting their doom. As yet there is no separation made between them, but Men and Devils, Saints and Sinners, are promiscuously blended together. But see! at the order of the Judge the crowd is all in motion;

(z) 2 Peter ii. 4.

(a) Jude 6.

\* ————— the foe of God and man,  
From his dark den, blaspheming, drags his chain,  
And rears his brazen front, with thunder scarr'd;  
Receives his sentence, and begins his hell.  
All vengeance *past*, now seems abundant grace!  
Like meteors in a stormy sky, how roll  
His baleful eyes! he curses whom he dreads,  
And deems it the first moment of his fall.

YOUNG'S *Night Thoughts*, N<sup>o</sup> IX.

tion; they part, they sort together according to their character, and divide to the *right* and *left*. " When all nations are gathered before " the Son of man," himself has told us, " he " shall separate them one from another as a " shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; " and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, " but the goats on the left (b)." And O what strange separations are now made! what multitudes that once ranked themselves among the faints, and were highly esteemed for their piety by others as well as themselves, are now banished from among them, and placed with the trembling criminals on the *left* hand! And how many poor honest-hearted, doubting, desponding souls, whose foreboding fears had often placed them there, now find themselves, to their agreeable surprise, stationed on the *right* hand of their Judge, who smiles upon them! What connections are now broken! what hearts torn asunder! what intimate companions, what dear relations parted forever! neighbour from neighbour, masters from servants, friend from friend, parents from children, husband from wife; those who were but one flesh, and who lay in one another's bosoms, must part forever. Those that lived in the same country, who sustained the same denomination, who worshipped in the same place, who lived under one roof, who lay in the same womb, and sucked the same breasts, must now part forever. And

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(b) Matt. xxv. 32, 33;

is there no separation likely to be made then in our families or in our congregation? Is it likely we shall all be placed in a body upon the *right* hand? Are all the members of our families prepared for that glorious station? Alas! are there not some families among us who it is to be feared shall all be sent off to the *left* hand without so much as one exception? for who are those miserable multitudes on the left hand? There, through the medium of Revelation, I see the Drunkard, the Swearer, the Whoremonger, the Liar, the Defrauder, and the various classes of profane, profligate Sinners. There I see the Unbeliever, the Impenitent, the lukewarm Formalist, and the various classes of Hypocrites and Half-christians. There I see the "Families that call not upon God's Name," and whole nations that forget him. And O what vast multitudes, what millions of millions of millions do all these make! And do not some, alas! do not many of you belong to one or other of these classes of sinners whom God, and CHRIST, and Scripture, and Conscience conspire to condemn? If so, to the *left* hand you must depart among Devils and trembling criminals whose guilty minds forebode their doom before the judicial process begins. But who are those glorious immortals upon the *right* hand? They are those who now mourn over their sins, resist and forsake them; they are those who have surrendered themselves entirely to God through JESUS CHRIST, who have  
heartily

heartily complied with the method of salvation revealed in the Gospel; who have been formed *new* creatures by the almighty power of God; who make it the most earnest persevering endeavour of their lives to work out their own salvation, and to live righteously, soberly, and godly in the world. These are some of the principal lineaments of their character who shall have their safe and honourable station at the right hand of the sovereign Judge? And is not this the prevailing character of some of you? I hope and believe it is. Through the medium of scripture Revelation then I see you in that blessed station. And O! I would make an appointment with you this day to meet you there. Yes, let us this day appoint the time and place where we shall meet after the separation and dispersion that Death will make among us; and let it be at the *right* hand of the Judge at the last day. If I be so happy as to obtain some humble place there, I shall look out for you, my dear people. There I shall expect your company, that we may ascend together to join in the more exalted services and enjoyments of Heaven as we have frequently in the humbler forms of worship in the Church on earth. But O! when I think what unexpected separations will then be made, I tremble lest I should miss some of you there. And are not you afraid lest you should miss some of your friends, or some of your families there? or that you should then see them move  
off

off to the *left* hand, and looking back with eagerness upon you as if they would say, "This is my doom through your carelessness; had you but acted a faithful part towards me, while conversant with you or under your care, I might now have had my place among the faints." O! how could you bear such significant piercing looks from a Child, a Servant, or a Friend? Therefore now do all in your power to "convert sinners from the error of their way, and to save their souls from death."

When we entered upon this practical digression we left all things ready for the judicial process. And now the trial begins. Now "God judges the secrets of men by JESUS CHRIST (c)." All the works of all the sons of men will then be tried; "for, says St Paul, we must all appear before the judgment-seat of CHRIST, that every man may receive the things done in the body according to what he hath done, whether it be good or whether it be evil (d)." St John in his vision "saw the dead judged according to their works (e)." These works immediately refer to the actions of the life, but they may also include the inward temper, and thoughts of the soul, and the words of the lips; for all these shall be brought into judgment. "God, says Solomon, will bring every work into judgment, and every secret thing,

VOL. II. Z " whether

(c) Rom. ii. 16. (d) 2 Cor. v. 10.

(e) Rev. xx. 12, 13.

" whether it be good or whether it be evil (f)."  
 And though we are too apt to think our words are free, he that is to be our Judge has told us, that " for every idle word which men shall " speak they shall give an account in the day " of judgment; for by thy words," as well as thy actions, " thou shalt be justified, and by " thy words thou shalt be condemned (g)."

What strange discoveries will this trial make? what noble dispositions that never shone in full beauty to mortal eyes; what generous purposes crushed in embryo for want of power to execute them; what pious and noble actions concealed under the veil of modesty, or misconstrued by ignorance and prejudice; what affectionate aspirations, what devout exercises of heart which lay open only to the eyes of omniscience are now brought to full light, and receive the approbation of the supreme Judge before the assembled universe? But on the other hand, what works of shame and darkness, what hidden things of dishonesty, what dire secrets of treachery, hypocrisy, lewdness, and various forms of wickedness artfully and industriously concealed from human sight, what horrid exploits of sin now burst to light in all their hellish colours to the confusion of the guilty, and the astonishment and horror of the universe? Surely the history of mankind must then appear like the Annals of Hell, or the Biography of Devils! Then the mask of dissimulation will

(f) Eccles. xii, 14.

(g) Matt. xii. 36, 37.

will be torn off. Clouded characters will clear up, and men as well as things will appear in their true light. Their hearts will be as it were turned outwards, and all their secrets exposed to full view. The design of the judicial enquiry will not be to inform the omniscient Judge, but to convince all worlds of the justice of his proceedings; and this design renders it necessary that all these things should be laid open to their sight, that they may see the grounds upon which he passes sentence. And may not the prospect of such a discovery fill some of you with horror? for many of your actions, and especially of your thoughts, will not bear the light. How would it confound you, if they were now all published, even in the small circle of your acquaintance? How then can you bear to have them all fully exposed before God, Angels, and Men? Will it not confound you with shame, and make you objects of everlasting contempt to all worlds?

These are the facts to be tried. But by what rule shall they be tried? From the goodness and justice of God we may conclude that men will be judged by some Rule *known* to them, or which at least it was in their power to know. Now the light of reason, the law of nature, or conscience is an universal rule, and universally known, or at least knowable by all the sons of men, Heathens and Mahometans as well as Jews and Christians: and therefore all mankind shall be judged by this rule. This

the consciences of all now forebode; " for when  
 " the Gentiles which have not the law do by  
 " nature the things contained in the law, these  
 " not having the law, are a law unto them-  
 " selves, which shew the works of the law  
 " written in their hearts, their conscience also  
 " bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean-  
 " while accusing or else excusing one ano-  
 " ther (b)." By this rule their consciences now  
 acquit or condemn them, because they know  
 that by this rule they shall then be judged: this  
 seems to be a kind of innate presentiment of  
 human nature. As the Heathens were invin-  
 cibly ignorant of every rule but this they shall  
 be judged by this only. But as to those parts  
 of the world that enjoyed or might enjoy the  
 advantages of Revelation, whether by Tradi-  
 tion with the *Ante-Mosaic* world, or in the  
 writings of *Moses* and the Prophets with the  
 Jews, or in the clearer dispensation of the Gos-  
 pel with the Christian world, they shall be  
 judged by this revealed law. And by how  
 much the more perfect the rule, by so much  
 the stricter will their account be. That which  
 would be an excusable infirmity in an *African*  
 or an *American Indian* may be an aggravated  
 crime in us who enjoy such superior advan-  
 tages. This is evident from the repeated de-  
 clarations of sacred writ. " As many as have  
 " sinned without the Law," that is, without  
 the written or revealed law, " shall also perish  
 " without

(b) Rom. ii. 14, 15.

“ without the Law ;” and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men according to my gospel (*i*). “ If I had not come and spoken unto them, says the blessed Jesus, they would not have had sin ;” that is, they would not have had sin so aggravated, or they would not have had the particular sin of unbelief in rejecting the Messiah : “ but now they have no cloak for their sin (*k*) ;” that is, now when they have had such abundant conviction they are utterly inexcusable. “ This,” says he, is the condemnation ;” that is, this is the occasion of the most aggravated condemnation, “ that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil (*l*).” “ That 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,” (observe, ignorance is no sufficient excuse except when invincible) “ shall be beaten with few stripes ; for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required (*m*).” Upon these maxims of eternal righteousness the Judge will proceed in pronouncing the doom of the world. And it was upon these principles he declared in the days of his flesh, “ that it should be more tolerable in

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“ the

(i) Rom. ii. 12, 16.

(k) John xv. 22.

(l) John iii. 19.

(m) Luke xii. 47, 48.

" the day of judgment for *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*,  
 " for *Tyre* and *Sidon*," than for those places  
 that enjoyed the advantages of his ministry,  
 and misimproved it (n). Whether upon these  
 principles sinners among us have not reason to  
 expect they will obtain an horrid precedence  
 among the millions of sinners in that day I  
 leave you to judge, and to tremble at the  
 thought.

There is another representation of this pro-  
 ceeding which we often meet with in the sacred  
 writings, in allusion to the forms of proceeding  
 in human courts. In courts of law law-books  
 are referred to, opened, and read for the direc-  
 tion of the judges, and sentence is passed accord-  
 ing to them. In allusion to this custom *Daniel*  
 in vision saw " the judgment set, and *the books*  
 " were opened (o)." And *St John* had the same  
 representation made to him ; " I saw the dead,  
 " says he, small and great, stand before God,  
 " and *the books were opened* ; and another *book*  
 " was opened, which is the book of life, and  
 " the dead were judged out of the things which  
 " were written in the books according to their  
 " works (p)."

Should we pursue this significant allusion  
 we may say, then will be opened the book of  
*the law of nature* ; and mankind will be tried  
 according to its precepts, and doomed accord-  
 ing to its sentence. This is a plain and vast  
 volume

(n) *Matt.* xi. 21, 24.(o) *Dan.* vii. 10.(p) *Rev.* xx. 12.

volume, open and legible now to all that can read their own hearts; that have eyes to look round upon the works of GOD, which shew his glory and their duty; and that have ears to hear the lectures which the sun, and moon, and all the works of creation read to them, night and day. Then too will be opened the book of *scripture-revelation*, in all its parts, both the *law of Moses* and the *gospel of CHRIST*; and according to it will those be judged who lived under one or other of these dispensations. Then it will appear that that neglected old-fashioned book called the *Bible* is not a romance, or a system of trifling truths, but the standard of life and death to all who had access to it. Then will also be opened the book of *God's remembrance*. In that are recorded all the thoughts, words, and actions, both good and bad, of all the sons of men; and now the immense account shall be publicly read before the assembled universe. Then likewise, as a counter-part to this, will be opened the book of *conscience*; conscience which, though unnoticed, writes our whole history as with an iron pen, and the point of a diamond\*. Then also,

Z 4

we

\* O treacherous Conscience! while she seems to sleep  
 On rose and myrtle, lull'd with Syren song;  
 While she seems, nodding o'er her charge, to drop  
 On headlong appetite the slackned rein,  
 And give us up to licence unrecall'd,

Unmark'd

we are expressly told, will be opened the *book of life* (g), in which are contained all the names of all the heirs of Heaven. This seems to be an allusion to those registers which are kept in cities or corporations of the names of all the citizens or members who have a right to the privileges of the society. And I know not what we can understand by it so properly as the perfect knowledge which the omniscient God has, and always had from eternity, of those on whom he purposed to bestow eternal life, and whom he has from eternity, as it were, registered as members of the general assembly and church of the first-born, who are *written* in Heaven, or as denizens of that blessed city. These having been all prepared by his grace in time shall be admitted into the new *Jerusalem* in that day of the LORD.

Farther,

Unmark'd — as from behind her secret stand  
 The fly Informer minutes ev'ry fault,  
 And her dread diary with horror fills —  
 Unnoted notes each moment misapply'd ;  
 In leaves more durable than leaves of brass,  
 Writes our whole history ; which Death shall read  
 In every pale offender's *private* ear ;  
 And Judgment *publish*, publish to more worlds  
 Than this ; and endless age in groans refund.  
 Such, Sinner, is that sleeper in thy breast ;  
 Such is her slumber ; and her vengeance such  
 For slighted counsel —————

YOUNG'S *Night Thoughts*, N<sup>o</sup> II.

(g) Rev. xx. 12.

Farther, the representation which the Scripture gives us of the proceedings of that day leads us to conceive of *witnesses* being produced to prove the facts. The omniscient judge will be a witness against the guilty. "I will come near to you to judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the Sorcerers, and against the Swearers, and against the Adulterers, and against those that oppress, and against those that fear not me, saith the LORD of Hosts (r)." And he will no doubt be a witness for his people, and attest their sincere piety, their interest in CHRIST, and those good dispositions or actions which were known only to him. Angels also who ministered to the heirs of salvation, and no doubt inspected the affairs of mankind will be witnesses. Devils too who once tempted will now become accusers. Conscience within will also be a witness. It shall acquit the righteous of many unjust imputations, and attest the sincerity of their hearts and their many good actions. But O it will be the most terrible witness against the ungodly! They will be witnesses against themselves (s), and this will render them self-tormentors. Conscience will re-echo to the voice of the judge, and cry, *Guilty, guilty*, to all his accusations. And who can make the wicked happy when they torment themselves? Who can acquit them when they are self-condemned? Conscience, whose evidence is now so often suppressed, will then  
" have

(r) Mal. iii. 5.

(s) Joshua xxiv. 22.

have full scope, and shall be regarded. Whom conscience condemns, the righteous judge will also condemn: "for if our hearts condemn us" God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth "all things (*t*)," knoweth many more grounds for condemning us than we, and therefore much more will he condemn us. In short, so full will be the evidence against the finner that the scripture, which is full of striking imagery to affect human nature, gives life to inanimate things upon this occasion and represents them as speaking. Stones and dust shall witness against the ungodly. The dust under the feet of their ministers shall witness against them (*u*). The stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it (*x*). The rust of their gold and silver shall be a witness against them, and shall eat their flesh as it were fire (*y*). Nay, the heavens shall reveal their iniquity, and the earth shall rise up against them (*z*). Heaven and Earth were *called* to witness that life and death were set before them (*a*); and now they will *give in* their evidence that they chose death. Thus God and all his Creatures, Heaven, Earth, and Hell rise up against them, accuse, and condemn them. And will not finners accuse and witness against one another? Undoubtedly they will. They who lived or conversed together upon earth,

(*t*) 1 John iii. 20.(*u*) Matt. x. 14.(*x*) Hab. ii. 11.(*y*) James v. 3.(*z*) Job xx. 27.(*a*) Deut. xxx. 19.

earth, and were spectators of each other's conduct, will then turn mutual witnesses against each other. O tremendous thought! that friend should inform and witness against friend, parents against children, and children against parents; ministers against their people, and people against their ministers! Alas! what a confounding testimony against each other must those give in who are now sinning together!

Thus the way is prepared for the passing of sentence. The case was always clear to the omniscient Judge, but now it is so fully discussed and attested by so many evidences that it is quite plain to the whole world of creatures who can judge only by such evidence, and for whose conviction the formality of a judicial process is appointed. How long a time this grand court will sit we cannot determine, nor has God thought fit to inform us; but when we consider how particular the trial will be, and the innumerable multitude to be tried, it seems reasonable to suppose it will be a long session. It is indeed often called a *day*; but it is evident a day in such cases does not signify a *natural* day, but the space of time allotted for transacting a business, though it be an hundred or even a thousand years. Creatures are incapable of viewing all things at once, and therefore since the trial, as I observed, is intended to convince them of the equity of the divine proceedings, it is proper the proceedings should be particular and leisurely, that they may have time to observe them. We

We are now come to the grand crisis upon which the eternal states of all mankind turn; I mean the passing the great decisive sentence. Heaven and earth is all silence and attention, while the Judge with smiles in his face and a voice sweeter than heavenly music turns to the glorious company on his right hand and pours all the joys of Heaven into their souls in that transporting sentence, of which he has graciously left us a copy, "COME, YE BLESSED OF MY FATHER; INHERIT THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD." Every word is full of emphasis, full of Heaven, and exactly agreeable to the desires of those to whom it is addressed. They desired, and longed, and languished to be near their LORD; and now their LORD invites them, COME, come near me, and dwell with me forever. There was nothing they desired so much as the blessing of God, nothing they feared so much as his curse, and now their fears are entirely removed and their desire fully accomplished, for the supreme Judge pronounces them BLESSED OF HIS FATHER. They were all poor in spirit, most of them poor in this world, and all sensible of their unworthiness. How agreeably then are they surprised to hear themselves invited to a KINGDOM, invited to INHERIT a kingdom as princes of the blood royal born to thrones and crowns. How will they be lost in wonder, joy, and praise, to find that the great God entertained thoughts of love

love towards them before they had a being or the world in which they dwelt had its foundation laid, and that he was PREPARING a kingdom for them while they were nothing, unknown even in idea except to himself. O! Brethren, dare any of us expect this sentence will be passed upon us? Methinks the very thought may overwhelm us. Methinks our feeble frames must be unable to bear up under the extatic hope of so sweetly oppressive a blessedness. O! if this be our sentence in that day, it is no matter what we suffer in the intermediate space; that sentence would compensate for all, and annihilate the sufferings of ten thousand years.

But hark! another sentence breaks from the mouth of the angry Judge like vengeful thunder. Nature gives a deep tremendous groan, the heavens lower and gather blackness, the earth trembles, and guilty millions sink with horror at the sound! And see! he whose words are works, whose fiat produced worlds out of nothing; he who could remand ten thousand worlds into nothing with a frown; he whose thunder quelled the insurrection of rebel-angels in Heaven, and hurled them headlong down, down, down to the dungeon of Hell; see, he turns to the guilty crowd on his left hand; his angry countenance discovers the righteous indignation that glows in his breast. His countenance bespeaks him inexorable, and that there is now no room for prayers and tears. Now the

the sweet, mild, mediatorial hour is past, and nothing appears but the majesty and terror of the *Judge*. Horror and darkness frown upon his brows, and vindictive lightnings flash from his eyes. And now (O! who can hear the dreadful sound!) he speaks, "DEPART FROM ME, YE CURSED, INTO EVERLASTING FIRE PREPARED FOR THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS." O the cutting emphasis of every word! DEPART. Depart from ME; from ME, the Author of all good, the Fountain of all happiness. Depart with my heavy all-consuming CURSE upon you. Depart into FIRE, into EVERLASTING fire, into everlasting fire PREPARED, furnished with fuel, and blown up into rage, prepared for THE DEVIL and HIS ANGELS, once your companions in sin, and now the companions and the executioners of your punishment.

Now the grand period is arrived in which the final everlasting states of mankind are unchangeably settled. From this all-important æra their happiness or misery runs on in one uniform uninterrupted tenor; no change, no gradation, but from glory to glory, in the scale of perfection, or from gulph to gulph in Hell. This is the day in which all the schemes of providence carried on for thousands of years terminate.

- "Great day! for which all other days were made;
- "For which earth rose from chaos; man from earth;
- "And an eternity, the date of gods,
- "Descended on poor earth-created man!"—\*

Time

\* *Young's Night Thoughts*, N<sup>o</sup> IX.

Time *was!* but is no more! Now all the sons of men enter upon a duration not to be measured by the revolutions of the sun, nor by days, and months, and years. Now eternity dawns, a day that shall never see an evening. And this terribly illustrious morning is solemnized with the *execution* of the sentence. No sooner is it passed than immediately the wicked "go away into everlasting punishment, " but the righteous into life eternal (c)." See the astonished thunder-struck multitude on the left hand with sullen horror and despair in their looks, writhing with agony, crying and wringing their hands, and glancing a wishful eye towards that heaven which they lost, dragged away by devils to the place of execution! see Hell expands her voracious jaws, and swallows them up! And now an eternal farewell to earth and all its enjoyments! Farewel to the cheerful light of Heaven! Farewel to hope, that sweet relief of affliction!

—— " Farewel happy fields,

" Where joy forever dwells! Hail horrors! hail

" Infernal world! and thou profoundest Hell,

" Receive thy new possessors!"—— \*

Heaven frowns upon them from above, the horrors of Hell spread far and wide around them, and conscience within preys upon their hearts. Conscience! O thou abused exasperated

(c) Matt. xxv. 46. \* MILTON, <sup>a</sup>Book II.

rated power that now sleepest in so many breasts, what severe ample revenge wilt thou then take upon those that now dare to do thee violence! O the dire reflections which memory will then suggest! the remembrance of mercies abused! of a Saviour slighted! of means and opportunities of salvation neglected and lost! this remembrance will sting the heart like a scorpion. But O eternity! eternity! with what horror will thy name circulate through the vaults of Hell! eternity in misery! no end to pain! no hope of an end! O this is the hell of Hell! this is the parent of despair! despair the direst ingredient of misery, the most tormenting passion which devils feel. But let us view a more delightful and illustrious scene.

See the bright and triumphant army marching up to their eternal home under the conduct of the Captain of their salvation, where they "shall ever be with the LORD (d)" as happy as their nature in its highest improvements is capable of being made. With what shouts of joy and triumph do they ascend! with what sublime hallelujahs do they crown their deliverer! with what wonder and joy, with what pleasing horror, like one that has narrowly escaped some tremendous precipice, do they look back upon what they once were! once mean, guilty, depraved, condemned sinners! afterwards imperfect, broken-hearted, sighing, weeping saints! but now innocent, holy, happy, glorious immortals!

"Are

(d) 1 Thes. iv. 17.

“ Are these the forms that moulder'd in the dust ?

“ O the transcendent glories of the just !” \*

Now with what pleasure and rapture do they look forward through the long, long prospect of immortality, and call it their own ! the duration not only of their existence but of their happiness and glory ! O shall any of us share in this immensely valuable privilege ! how immensely transporting the thought !

Shall we, who some few years ago were less  
Than worm, or mite, or shadow can express ;  
Were nothing ; shall we live, when every fire  
Of every star shall languish or expire ?  
When earth's no more, shall we survive above,  
And through the shining ranks of angels move ?  
Or, as before the throne of GOD we stand,  
See new worlds rolling from his mighty hand ?---  
All that has Being in full concert join,  
And celebrate the depths of love divine ! †

O what exploits, what miracles of power and grace are these ! But why do I darken such splendors with words without knowledge ? The language of mortals was formed for lower descriptions. “ Eye hath not seen, ear has not heard, nor have entered into the heart of man

VOL. II.

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\* YOUNG'S *Last Day*, Book III.

† YOUNG'S *Last Day*, Book II.

" the things that God hath laid up for them  
" that love him (e)."

And now when the inhabitants of our world, for whose sake it was formed, are all removed to other regions, and it is left a wide extended desert, what remains, but that it also meet its fate? It is fit so guilty a globe that had been the stage of sin for so many thousands of years, and which even supported the cross on which its Maker expired, should be made a monument of the divine displeasure, and either be laid in ruins, or refined by fire. And see! the universal blaze begins! " the heavens pass away  
" with a great noise; the elements melt with  
" fervent heat; the earth and the works that  
" are therein are burnt up (f)." Now stars rush from their orbits; comets glare; the earth trembles with convulsions; the *Alps*, the *Andes*, and all the lofty *peaks* or long extended ridges of mountains burst out into so many burning *Ætnas*, or thunder, and lighten, and smoke, and flame, and quake like *Sinai* when God descended upon it to publish his fiery law. Rocks melt and run down in torrents of flame; rivers, lakes, and oceans boil and evaporate. Sheets of fire and pillars of smoke; outrageous and insufferable thunders and lightnings burst, and bellow, and blaze, and involve the atmosphere from pole to pole\*. The whole globe

(e) 1 Cor. ii. 9.

(f) 2 Pet. iii. 10.

\* See all the formidable sons of Fire,

Eruptions, Earthquakes, Comets, Lightnings play

Their

globe is now dissolved into a shoreless ocean of liquid fire. And where now shall we find the places where cities stood, where armies fought, where mountains stretched their ridges, and reared their heads on high? Alas! they are all lost, and have left no traces behind them where they once stood. Where art thou, O my Country? Sunk with the rest, as a drop into the burning ocean. Where now are your houses, your lands, and those earthly possessions you were once so fond of? They are now where to be found. How sorry a portion for an immortal mind is such a dying world as this! And O!

“ How rich that God who can such charge defray,  
 “ And bear to fling ten thousand worlds away!” \*

Thus, my Brethren, I have given you a view of the solemnities of the last day which our world shall see. The view has indeed been but very faint and obscure; and such will be all our views and descriptions of it, till our eyes and our ears teach us better. Through these avenues you will at length receive your instructions. Yes, Brethren, those ears that now hear my voice shall hear the all-alarming clangor of the last trumpet, the decisive sentence from the mouth of the universal Judge, and

A a z the

Their various engines; all at once discharge  
 Their blazing magazines; and take by storm  
 This poor terrestrial citadel of man.

YOUNG'S *Night Thoughts*, N<sup>o</sup> IX.

\* YOUNG'S *Last Day*, Book III.

the horrid crash of falling worlds. These very eyes with which you now see one another shall yet see the descending judge, the assembled multitudes, and all the majestic phænomena of that day. And we shall not see them as indifferent spectators; no, *we* are as much concerned in this great transaction as any of the children of men. *We* must all appear before the judgment-seat, and receive our sentence according to the deeds done in the body. And if so, what are we doing that we are not more diligently preparing? Why does not the prospect affect us more? Why does it not transport the righteous with "joy unspeakable and full of glory (g)?" And why are not the "sinners in Zion afraid? Why does not fearfulness surprise the hypocrites (h)?" Can one of you be careless from this hour till you are in readiness for that tremendous day?

What do the sinners among you now think of Repentance? Repentance is the grand preparative for this awful day; and the apostle, as I observed, mentions the final judgment in my text as a powerful motive to repentance. And what will criminals think of Repentance when they see the Judge ascend his throne? Come, Sinners, look forward and see the flaming tribunal erected, your crimes exposed, your doom pronounced, and your hell begun; see an whole world demolished, and ravaged by boundless conflagration for your sins! With these

(g) 1 Peter i. 8.

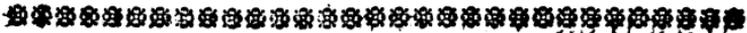
(h) Isaiah xxxiii. 14.

these objects before you I call you to repent. I call you? I retract the words: GOD, the great GOD whom Heaven and Earth obey, *commands* you to repent. Whatever be your characters, whether rich or poor, old or young, white or black, wherever you sit or stand, this command reaches you; "for GOD now commandeth" *all men every where to repent.*" You are this day bound to this duty by his authority. And dare you disobey with the prospect of all the awful solemnities of judgment before you in so near a view? O! methinks I have now brought you into such a situation that the often repeated but hitherto neglected call to repentance will be regarded by you. Repent you must, either upon Earth or in Hell. You must either spend your *time* or your *eternity* in repentance. It is absolutely unavoidable. Putting it off now does not remove the necessity, but will only render it the more bitter and severe hereafter. Which then do you choose? the tolerable, hopeful, medicinal repentance of the present life, or the intolerable, unprofitable, despairing repentance of Hell? Will you choose to spend time or eternity in this melancholy exercise? O! make the choice which GOD, which reason, which self-interest, which common sense recommend to you. Now repent at the command of GOD, "because he" hath appointed a day in which he will judge "the world in righteousness, by that man whom" he hath ordained, of which he hath given you "all full assurance in that he raised him from" the dead." AMEN.



# S E R M O N XXI.

The one Thing needful.



L U K E X. 41, 42.

*And* JESUS *answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many Things ; BUT ONE THING IS NEEDFUL. And Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.*

**F** O R what are we placed in this world? Is it to dwell here always? You cannot think so; when the millions of mankind that have appeared upon the stage of time are so many instances of the contrary. - The true notion therefore of the present state is that it is a state of preparation and trial for the eternal world; a state of education for our adult age. As Children are sent to school, and Youth bound out to trades to prepare them for business, and qualify them to live in the world, so we are placed here to prepare us for the grand business of immortality, the state of our maturity,

and to qualify us to live forever. And is there an heaven of the most perfect happiness and an hell of the most exquisite misery just before us, perhaps not a year or even a day distant from us? And is it the great design, the business and duty of the present state to obtain the one and escape the other? Then what are we doing? What is the world doing all around us? Are they acting as it becomes candidates for eternity? Are they indeed making that the principal object of their most zealous endeavours, which is the grand design, business, and duty of the present state? Are they minding this at all adventures whatever else they neglect? This is what we might expect from them as reasonable creatures, as creatures that love themselves, and have a strong innate desire of happiness. This a stranger to our world might charitably presume concerning them. But, alas! look upon the conduct of the world around you, or look nearer home, and where you are more nearly interested, upon your own conduct, and you will see this is not generally the case. No, instead of pursuing the one Thing needful the world is all in motion, all bustle and hurry, like ants upon a mole-hill, about other affairs. They are in a still higher degree than officious *Martba* "careful and troubled about many things." Now to recal you from this endless variety of vain pursuits and direct your endeavours to the proper object, I can think of no better expedient than to explain and inculcate upon

upon you the admonition of CHRIST to *Martha*, and his commendation of *Mary* upon this head.

*Martha* was the head of a little family, probably a widow, in a village near *Jerusalem*, called *Bethany*. Her brother and sister, *Lazarus* and *Mary*, lived along with her. And what is remarkable concerning this little family is that they were all Lovers of JESUS. And their love was not without returns on his side; for we are expressly told that "JESUS loved *Martha*," and her sister, and *Lazarus*." What an happy family is this! but O how rare in the world! This was a convenient place of retirement to JESUS after the labours and fatigues of his ministry in the city: and here we often find him. Though spent and exhausted with his public services, yet when he gets into the circle of a few friends in a private house he cannot be idle. He still instructs them with his heavenly discourse, and his conversation is a constant sermon. *Mary*, who was passionately devout and eager for instruction, would not let such a rare opportunity slip, but sits down at the feet of this great Teacher, which was the posture of the Jewish Pupils before their Masters\*, and eagerly catches every word from his lips, from which dropt knowledge sweeter than honey from the honey-comb. Though she is solicitous for the comfort of her heavenly guest, yet

\* Hence St Paul's expression, that he was brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*.

yet she makes no great stir to provide for him an elegant or sumptuous entertainment; for she knew his happiness did not consist in luxurious eating and drinking; it was his "meat" and his drink to do the will of his Father; and as for the sustenance of his body, plain food was most acceptable to him. He was not willing that any should lose their souls by losing opportunities of instruction, while they were making sumptuous provision for him. *Mary* was also so deeply engaged about her salvation that she was nobly careless about the little deficiencies of entertainments. The body and all its supports and gratifications appeared of very small importance to her when compared with the immortal soul. O! if that be but fed with the words of eternal life it is enough. All this she did with *CHRIST'S* warm approbation, and therefore her conduct is an example worthy of our imitation. And if it were imitated it would happily reform that pride, luxury, excessive delicacy, and multiform extravagance which have crept in upon us under the ingratiating names of Politeness, Decency, Hospitality, good Oeconomy, and I know not what. These guilty superfluities and refinements render the life of some a course of idolatry to so sordid a god as their bellies, and that of others a course of busy, laborious, and expensive trifling. But to return.

*Martha*, though a pious woman, yet like too many among us, was too solicitous about these

these things. She seemed more concerned to maintain her reputation for good Oeconomy and Hospitality than to improve in divine knowledge at every opportunity, and to entertain her guest rather as a Gentleman than as a divine Teacher and the Saviour of souls. Hence, instead of sitting at his feet with her sister in the posture of a humble disciple, she was busy in making preparations, and her mind was *distracted* with the cares of her family. As moderate labour and care about earthly things is lawful, and even a duty, persons are not readily suspicious or easily convinced of their guilty excesses in these labours and cares. Hence *Martha* is so far from condemning herself on this account that she blames her devout sister for not following her example. Nay, she has the confidence to complain to CHRIST himself of her neglect, and that in language too that sounds somewhat rude and irreverent. "Carest thou not that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" Art thou so partial as to suffer her to devolve all the trouble upon me while she sits idle at thy feet?

JESUS turns upon her with just severity, and throws the blame where it should lie. "*Martha, Martha,*" there is a vehemence and pungency in the repetition, "*Martha, Martha,* thou art careful and troubled about many things." "Thy worldly mind has many objects, and many objects excite many cares and troubles; fruitless troubles and useless cares. Thy rest-  
" less

" less mind is scattered among a thousand  
 " things, and tossed from one to another with  
 " an endless variety of anxieties. But let me  
 " collect thy thoughts and cares to one point,  
 " a point where they should all terminate:  
 " ONE THING IS NEEDFUL:" " and therefore  
 " dropping thy excessive care about *many* things  
 " make this *one Thing* the great object of thy  
 " pursuit. This one thing is what thy sister is  
 " now attending to, while thou art vainly care-  
 " ful about many things, and therefore instead  
 " of blaming her conduct I must approve it.  
 " She has made the best choice, for she " hath  
 " chosen that good part, which shall not be ta-  
 " ken away from her. " After all thy care  
 " and labour the things of this vain world  
 " must be given up at last, and lost forever.  
 " But *Mary* hath made a wiser choice, the  
 " portion she hath chosen shall be hers forever;  
 " it shall never be taken away from her."  
 " But what does CHRIST mean by this *one*  
*Thing* which alone is needful?

I answer, We may learn what he meant by  
 the occasion and circumstances of his speaking.  
 He mentions this one thing in an admonition  
 to *Martba* for excessive worldly care and the  
 neglect of an opportunity for promoting her  
 salvation; and he expressly opposes this *one*  
 thing to the *many* things which engrossed her  
 care, and therefore it must mean something  
 different from and superior to all the pursuits  
 of time. This one thing is that which *Mary*  
 was

was so much concerned about while attentively listening to his instructions. And what can that be but Salvation as the end, and Holiness, as the means, or a proper care of the soul? This is that which is opposite and superior to the many cares of life. This is that which *Mary* was attending to and pursuing; and I may add, this is that good part which *Mary* had chosen, which should never be taken away from her; for that good part which *Mary* had chosen seems intended by CHRIST to explain what he meant by the one thing needful. Therefore the ONE THING NEEDFUL must mean the salvation of the soul, and an earnest application to the means necessary to obtain this end above all other things in the world. To be holy in order to be happy; to pray, to hear, to meditate, and use all the means of grace appointed to produce or cherish holiness in us; to use these means with constancy, frequency, earnestness, and zeal; to use them diligently whatever else be neglected, or to make all other things give way in comparison of this; this I apprehend is the *one Thing needful* which CHRIST here intends: this is that which is absolutely necessary, necessary above all other things, and necessary forever. The end, namely, salvation, will be granted by all to be necessary, and the necessity of the end renders the means also necessary. If it be necessary you should be forever happy, and escape everlasting misery, it is necessary you should be holy; for you can no  
more

more be saved without holiness than you can be healthy without health, see without light, or live without food. And if holiness be necessary, then the earnest use of the means appointed for the production and improvement of holiness in us must be necessary too; for you can no more expect to become holy without the use of these means than to reap without sowing, or become truly virtuous and good by chance or fatality. To be holy in order to be happy, and to use all the means of grace in order to be holy, is therefore the one thing needful.

But why is this concern which is so complex called *one* thing?

I answer: Though salvation and holiness include various ingredients, and though the means of grace are various, yet they may be all taken collectively and called one thing; that is, one great business, one important object of pursuit, in which all our endeavours and aims should center and terminate. It is also said to be *one* in opposition to the *many* things that are the objects of a worldly mind. This world owes its variety in a great measure to contradiction and inconsistency. There is no harmony or unity in the earthly objects of mens pursuits, nor in the means they use to secure them. Riches, honours, and pleasures generally clash. If a man will be rich he must restrain himself in the pleasures of gratifying his eager appetites, and perhaps use some mean artifices

artifices that may stain his honour. If he would be honourable he must often be prodigal of his riches, and abstain from some sordid pleasures. If he would have the full enjoyment of sensual pleasures he must often squander away his riches, and injure his honour to procure them. The lusts of men as well as their objects are also various and contradictory. Covetousness and Sensuality, Pride and Tranquillity, Envy and the Love of ease, and a thousand jarring passions maintain a constant fight in the sinner's breast. The means for gratifying these lusts are likewise contrary; sometimes truth, sometimes falsehood, sometimes indolence, sometimes action and labour are necessary. In these things there is no unity of design, no consistency of means, but the sinner is properly *distracted*, drawn this way and that, tossed from wave to wave, and there is no steadiness or uniformity in his pursuits. But the work of salvation is *one*, the means and the end correspond, and the means are consistent one with another, and therefore the whole, though consisting of many parts, may be said to be *one*.

It may also be called the *one thing needful*, to intimate that this is needful *above* all other things. It is a common form of speech to say of that which is necessary *above* all other things, that it is the *one* or *only* thing necessary: so we may understand this passage. There are what we call the *necessaries of life*, such as food and raiment; there are also necessary callings and

and necessary labours. All these are necessary in a *lower* sense; necessary in their proper place. But in *comparison* of the great work of our salvation they are all unnecessary; if we be but saved we may do very well without them all. This is so necessary that nothing else deserves to be called necessary in comparison of it.

This shews you also not only why this is called *one* thing, but why or in what sense it is said to be *necessary*. It is of *absolute* and *incomparable* necessity. There is no absolute necessity to our happiness that we should be rich or honourable; nay, there is no absolute necessity that we should live in this world at all, for we may live infinitely more happy in another. And if life itself be not absolutely necessary, then much less are food, or raiment, or health, or any of those things which in a lower sense we call the necessaries of life. In comparison of this they are all needless. I add farther, this one thing may be said to be necessary, because it is necessary *always*, or *forever*. The necessaries of this life we cannot want long, for we must soon remove into a world where there is no room for them, but holiness and salvation we shall find needful *always*; needful under the calamities of life, needful in the agonies of death, needful in the world of spirits, needful millions of ages hence, needful to all eternity, and without it we are eternally undone. This is a necessity indeed! a necessity in comparison of which all other necessaries are but superfluities. I

I hope by this short explication I have cleared the way through your understandings to your hearts, and to your hearts I would now address myself. However solemnly I may speak upon this interesting subject you will have more reason to blame me for the deficiency than for the excess of my zeal and solemnity. I hope I have entered this sacred place to-day with a sincere desire to do some service to your immortal souls before I leave it. And may I not hope you have come here with a desire to receive some advantage? If not, you may number this seeming act of religion among the sins of your life, you have come here to-day to sin away these sacred hours in hypocrisy, and a profane mockery of the great God. But if you are willing to receive any benefit hear attentively, hear that your souls may live.

My first request to you is \*, that you would make this passage the test of your characters, and seriously enquire whether you have lived in the world, as those that really and practically believe that this is the one thing of absolute necessity? Are not all the joys of Heaven and your immortal souls worth the little pains of seriously putting this short question to your consciences? Review your life, look into your

VOL. II.

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hearts,

\* Many of the following sentiments, as to the substance of them, are borrowed from Mr *Baxter's* excellent Discourse, intitled, *A Saint or a Brute*; and I know no better pattern for a Minister to follow in his address to sinners than that flaming and successful preacher.

hearts, and enquire has this one thing lain more upon your hearts than all other things together? Has this been above all other things the object of your most vehement desire, your most earnest endeavours, and eager pursuit? I do not ask whether you have *heard* or *read* that this one thing is necessary, or whether you have sometimes *talked* about it. I do not ask whether you have paid to God the compliment of appearing in his house once a week, or of performing him a little lip-service morning and evening in your families, or in your closets, after you have served yourselves and the world all the rest of your time without one affectionate thought of God. Nor do I enquire whether in a pang of horror after the commission of some gross sin you have tried to make conscience easy by a few prayers and tears, of which you form an opiate to cast you again into a dead sleep in sin. I do not ask you whether you have performed many actions that are materially good, and abstained from many sins. All this you may have done, and yet have neglected the *one thing needful* all your lives.

But I ask you whether this one thing needful has been habitually uppermost in your hearts, the favourite object of your desires, the prize of your most vigorous endeavours, the supreme happiness of your souls, and the principal object of your concern above all things in the world? Sirs! you may now hear this question with stupid unconcern and indifferency, but I must

must tell you you will find another day how much depended upon it. In that day it will be found that the main difference between true Christians and the various classes of sinners is this: GOD, CHRIST, Holiness, and the concerns of Eternity are habitually uppermost in the heart of the former; but to the latter they are generally but things by the by, and the world engrosses the vigour of their souls, and is the principal concern of their lives. To serve GOD, to obtain his favour, and to be happy forever in his love, is the main business of the Saint, to which all the concerns of the world and the flesh must give way; but to live in ease, in reputation, in pleasure or riches, or to gratify himself in the pursuit and enjoyment of some created good, this is the main concern of the sinner. The one has made an hearty resignation of himself and all that he is and has to GOD through JESUS CHRIST: he serves him with the best, and thinks nothing too good for him. But the other has his exceptions and reserves: he will serve GOD, provided it may consist with his ease, and pleasure, and temporal interest: he will serve GOD with a bended knee and the external forms of devotion, but with the vigour of his spirit he serves the world and his flesh. This is the grand difference between a true Christian and the various forms of Half-christians and Hypocrites. And certainly this is a difference that may be discerned. The tenor of a man's practice and

the object of his love, especially of his highest love and practical esteem, must certainly be very distinguishable from a thing by the by, and from the object of a languid passion or meer speculation. Therefore if you make but an impartial trial you have reason to hope you will make a just discovery of your true character : or if you cannot make the discovery yourselves call in the assistance of others. Ask not your worldly and sensual neighbours, for they are but poor judges, and they will flatter you in self-defence ; but ask your pious friends whether you have spoke and acted like persons that practically made this the one thing needful. They can tell you what subject you talked most seriously about, what pursuit seemed to lie most upon your hearts, and chiefly to exhaust your activity. Brethren, I beseech you by one means or other to bring this matter to an issue, and let it hang in suspense no longer. Why are you so indifferent how this matter stands with you? Is it because you imagine you may be true Christians and obtain salvation however this matter be with you? But be not deceived : " no man can serve two masters," whose commands are contrary ; and " ye cannot serve GOD and Mammon" with a service equally devoted to both. " If any man love " the world" with supreme affections " the love " of the Father is not in him (a)." " Be not " deceived, GOD is not mocked ; whatsoever a " man

(a) 1 John ii. 15.

" man soweth that shall he reap; if you sow to the  
 " flesh, of the flesh you shall reap corruption:  
 " a miserable harvest indeed! But if you sow  
 " to the spirit you shall of the spirit reap ever-  
 " lasting life (b)." Therefore you may be sure  
 that " if you live after the flesh you shall die,"  
 and that you can never enjoy the *one thing need-*  
*ful* unless you mind and pursue it above all  
 other things.

But I shall not urge you any farther to try  
 yourselves by this test. I take it for granted  
 the consciences of some of you have determined  
 the matter, and that you are plainly convicted  
 of having hitherto neglected the one thing  
 needful. Allow me then honestly to expose  
 your conduct in its proper colours, and tell you  
 what you have been doing while you were busy  
 about other things and neglecting this one  
 thing needful.

1. However well you have improved your  
 time for other purposes you have lost it all, un-  
 less you have improved it in securing the one  
 thing needful. The proper notion of time is,  
 that it is a space for repentance. Time is given  
 us to prepare for eternity. If this is done we  
 have lived long enough, and the great end of  
 time and life is answered, whatever else be un-  
 done. But if this be undone you have lived  
 in vain, and all your time is lost, however bu-  
 sily and successfully you have pursued other  
 things. Though you have studied yourselves

B b 3

pale

(b) Gal. vi. 7, 8.

pale to furnish your minds with knowledge ; though you have spent the night and the day in heaping up riches, or climbing up to the pinnacle of honour, and not lost an hour that might be turned to your advantage, yet you have been most wretchedly fooling away your time, and lost it all, if you have not laid it out in securing the one thing needful. And, believe me, time is a precious thing. So it will appear in a dying hour, or in the eternal world, to the greatest spendthrift of time among you. Then, O for a year, or even a week or a day, to secure that *one thing* which you are now neglecting. And will you now waste your time while you enjoy it? Shall so precious a blessing be lost? By this calculation how many days, how many years have you lost forever? for is not that lost which is spent in crossing the end for which it was given you? Time was given you to secure an eternity of happiness, but you have spent it in adding sin to sin, and consequently in treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. And is not your time then a thousand times worse than lost? Let me tell you, if you continue in this course to the end you will wish a thousand times either that you never had one hour's time given you or that you had made a better use of it.

2. Whatever else you have been doing you have lost your labour with your time, if you have not laboured above all things for this one thing needful. No doubt you have been busy  
about

about something all your life, but you might as well have been idle. You have been busy in doing nothing. You have perhaps toiled thro' many anxious and laborious days, and your nights have shared in the anxieties and labours of your days. But if you have not laboured for the one thing necessary all your labour and all the fruits of it are lost. Indeed God may have made use of you for the good of his Church or of your country, as we make use of thorns and briars to stop a breach, or of useless wood for firing to warm our families, but as to any lasting and solid advantage to yourselves all your labour has been lost.

But this is not all. Not only your secular labour is lost, but all your toil and pains, if you have used any in the duties of Religion, are lost likewise. Your reading, and hearing, and praying, and communicating, all your serious thoughts of death and eternity, all your struggles with particular lusts and temptations, all the kind offices you have done to mankind, all are lost, since you have performed them by halves with a lukewarm heart, and have not made the *one thing needful* your great business and pursuit. All these things will not save you, and what is that religion good for which will not save your souls? What do those religious endeavours avail which will suffer you to fall into Hell after all? Certainly such Religion is vain.

And now, my Hearers, do you believe this,

B b 4

or

do you not? If you do, will you, dare you still go on in the same course? If you do not believe it let me reason the matter with you a little. You will not believe that all the labour and pains you have taken all your life have been quite lost: no, you now enjoy the fruits of them. But shew me now if you can what you have gotten by all the stir you have made that will follow you one step beyond the grave, or that you can call your own to-morrow? Where is that sure immortal acquisition that you can carry with you into the eternal world? Were you to die this hour would it afford you any pleasure to reflect that you have lived a merry life and had a satiety of sensual pleasures, or that you have laboured for Riches and Honours, and perhaps acquired them? Will this reflection afford you pleasure or pain? Will this abate the agony of eternal pain, or make up for the loss of Heaven which you wilfully incurred by an over-eager pursuit of these perishing vanities?

Do you not see the extravagant folly, the distracted phrenzy of such a conduct? Alas! while you are neglecting the *one thing needful* what are you doing but spending your time and labour in laborious idleness, honourably debasing yourselves, delightfully tormenting yourselves, wisely befooling yourselves, and frugally impoverishing and ruining yourselves forever? A child or an idiot riding upon a staff, building their mimic houses, or playing with a feather,

feather, are not so foolish as you in your conduct, while you are so seriously pursuing the affairs of time and neglecting those of eternity. But,

3. This is not all: all your labour and pains have not only been lost while you have neglected this one thing, but you have taken pains to ruin yourselves, and laboured hard all your lives for your own destruction. To this you will immediately answer, "GOD forbid we should do any thing to hurt ourselves! we were far from having any such design." But the question is not what was your design? but what is the unavoidable consequence of your conduct, according to the nature of things, and the unchangeable constitution of Heaven? Whatever you design in going on in sin, "the wages of sin is Death," eternal death. You may indulge a carnal mind and walk after the flesh, and yet hope no bad consequence will follow; but GOD has told you that "to be carnally minded is Death," and that if you live after the flesh you shall die. The Robber on the highway has no design to be hanged, but this does not render him a jot safer. Therefore design what you will it is certain you are positively destroying yourselves while your labours about other things hinder you from pursuing the one thing needful. And does not this thought shock you, that you should be acting the part of enemies against yourselves, the most pernicious and deadly enemies to yourselves in the whole universe? No  
enemy

enemy in the whole universe could do you that injury without your consent which you are doing to yourselves. To tempt you to sin is all the devil can do, but the temptation alone can do you no injury, it is consenting to it that ruins you; and this consent is your own voluntary act. All the Devils in Hell could not force you to sin without your consent, and therefore all the Devils in Hell do not injure you as you do yourselves. God has not given them so much power over you as he has given you over yourselves, and this power you abuse to your own destruction.

O in what a distracted state is the world of the ungodly! If any other men be their enemy how do they resent it? But they are their own worst enemies, and yet never fall out with themselves. If another occasion them a disappointment in their pursuits, defraud them of an expected good, or lay schemes to make them miserable, what sullen grudge, what keen revenge, what flaming resentments immediately rise in their breasts against him? And yet they are all their lives disinheriting themselves of the heavenly inheritance, laying a train to blow up all their own hopes, and heaping a mountain of guilt upon themselves to sink them into the bottomless pit, and all this while they think they are the best friends to themselves, and consulting their own interest. As for the devil, the common enemy of mankind, they abhor him, and bless themselves from him. But they are  
are

are worse to themselves than devils, and yet never fall out with themselves for it.

This, Sinners, may seem an harsh representation of your conduct, but alas! it is true. And if it be so shocking to you to hear it, what must it be to be guilty of it? And O think what must be the consequences of such a conduct, such unnatural suicide!

4. If you have hitherto neglected the *one thing needful* you have unmanned yourselves, acted beneath and contrary to your reason, and in plain terms behaved as if you had been out of your senses. If you have the use of your reason it must certainly tell you for what it was given to you. And I beseech you tell me what was it given to you for but to serve the God that made you, to secure his favour, to prepare for your eternal state, and to enjoy the supreme good as your portion? Can you once think your reason, that *divinæ particula auræ*, was given you for such low purposes as the contrivances, labours, and pursuits of this vain life, and to make you a more ingenious sort of Brutes? He was master of an unusual share of reason who said, "There is very little difference  
 " between having reason and having none, if  
 " we had nothing to do with it but cunningly  
 " to lay up for our food, and make provision  
 " for this corruptible flesh, and had not ano-  
 " ther life to mind." Therefore I may safely affirm that you have cast away your reason, and acted as if you were out of your wits, if  
 you

you have not employed your rational powers in the pursuit of the *one thing needful*. Where was your reason when your dying flesh was preferred to your immortal spirits? Was reason your guide when you chose the trash of this perishing world, and sought it more than the favour of God and all the joys of Heaven? Can you pretend to common sense, when you might have had the pardon of sin, sanctifying grace, and a title to Heaven secured to you ere now? But you have neglected all, and instead of having a sure title to Heaven, or being prepared for it, you are fitted for destruction, and nothing else; and are only waiting for a fever or a flux, or some other executioner of divine vengeance to cut the thread of life and let you sink to Hell by your own weight. Thither you gravitate under the load of sin as naturally as a stone to the center, and you need no other weight to sink you down. What have you done all your life to make a wise man think you truly reasonable? Is that your reason to be wise to do evil, while to do good you have no knowledge; or to be ingenious and active about the trifles of time, while you neglect that great work for which you were created and redeemed? Can you be wise and yet not consider your latter end? Nay, can you pretend to so much as common sense, while you sell your eternal salvation for the sordid pleasures of a few flying years? Have you common sense, when you will not keep yourselves out of everlasting

lasting fire? What can a madman do worse than wilfully destroy himself? And this you are doing every day.

And yet these very persons are proud of their madness, and are apt to fling the charge of folly upon others, especially if they observe some poor weak creatures, though it be but one in five hundred, fall into melancholy, or lose their reason for a time, while they are groaning under a sense of sin, and anxious about their eternal state; then what a clamour against Religion and Preciseness, as the ready way to make people run mad! then they even dare to publish their resolution that they will not read and pore so much upon these things, lest it should drive them out of their senses. O miserable mortals! is it possible they should be more dangerously mad than they are already! Do you lay out your reason, your strength, and time in pursuing vain shadows and in feeding a mortal body for the grave, while the important realities of the eternal world, and the salvation of your immortal souls are forgotten or neglected! Do you sell your Saviour with *Judas* for a little money, and change your part in GOD and Heaven for the sordid pleasures of sin which are but for a season! and are you afraid of seriously reflecting upon this course that you may reform it, for fear such thoughts should make you mad? What greater madness than this can you fear? Will you run from GOD, from CHRIST, from Mercy, from the  
Saints,

Saints, from Heaven itself, for fear of being mad? Alas! you are mad in the worse sense already. Will you run to Hell to prove yourselves in your senses? He was a wise and good man who said, "Though the loss of a man's  
 " understanding is a grievous affliction, and  
 " such as I hope God will never lay upon me,  
 " yet I had a thousand times rather go dis-  
 " tracted to *Bedlam* with the excessive care  
 " about my salvation than to be one of you  
 " that cast away the care of your salvation for  
 " fear of being distracted, and will go among  
 " the infernal *Bedlams* into Hell for fear of be-  
 " ing mad." Distraction in itself is not a moral evil, but a physical, like those disorders of body from which it often proceeds, and therefore is no object for punishment, and had you no capacity of understanding you would have a cloak for your sin; but your madness is your crime because it is voluntary, and therefore you must give an account for it to the supreme Judge.

It would be easy to offer many more considerations to expose the absurdity and danger of your conduct in neglecting the one thing necessary, but these must suffice for the present hour. And I only desire you to consider farther, if this be a just view of the conduct of such as are guilty of this neglect, in what a miserable, pitiable condition is the world in general. I have so often tried the utmost energy of my own words upon you with so little suc-  
 cess

cess as to many that I am grown quite weary of them. Allow me therefore for once to borrow the more striking and pungent words of one now in Heaven, of one who had more success than almost any of his contemporaries or successors in the important work of "convverting sinners from the error of their way, and saving souls from death;" I mean that incomparable preacher Mr *Baxter*, who sowed an immortal seed in his parish of *Kidderminster*, which grows and brings forth fruit to this day. His words have through the divine blessing been irresistible to thousands; and O that such of you, my dear Hearers, whose hearts may have been proof against mine, may not be so against his also!

— "Look upon this text of scripture, says he, and look also upon the course of the earth, and consider of the disagreement; and whether it be not still as before the flood, that "all the imaginations of man's heart are evil continually" (c)?" "Were it possible for a man to see the affections and motions of all the world at once as God seeth them, what a pitiful sight would it be? What a stir do they make, alas, poor souls! for they know not what! while they forget, or slight, or hate the *one thing needful*. What an heap of gadding ants should we see that do nothing but gather sticks and straws! Look among persons of every rank in city and  
country

(c) Gen. vi. 5.

" country and look into families about you,  
 " and see what trade it is they are most busily  
 " driving on, whether it be for Heaven or  
 " Earth? And whether you can discern by  
 " their care and labours that they understand  
 " what is the one thing necessary? They are  
 " as busy as bees, but not for honey, but in  
 " spinning such a spider's web as the besom of  
 " death will presently sweep down (*d*). They  
 " labour hard, but for what? " For the food  
 " that perisheth," but not for that " which  
 " endureth to everlasting life (*e*). " They  
 " are diligent seekers, but for what? Not first  
 " for G O D, his kingdom and righteousness,  
 " but for that which they might have had as  
 " an addition to their blessedness (*f*). They  
 " are still doing, but what are they doing?  
 " Even undoing themselves by running away  
 " from GOD to hunt after the perishing plea-  
 " sures of the world. Instead of providing  
 " for the life to come they are making " pro-  
 " vision for the flesh to fulfil its lusts (*g*)."  
 " Some of them hear the word of GOD, but  
 " they presently choke it " by the deceitfulness  
 " of riches and the cares of this life (*b*)."  
 " They " are careful and troubled about many  
 " many things;" but the *one thing* that should  
 " be all to them is cast by as if it were nothing.  
 " Providing for the flesh and minding the  
 " world is the employment of their lives.  
 " They

(*d*) Job viii. 14.

(*e*) John vi. 27.

(*f*) Matt. vi. 33.

(*g*) Rom. xiii. 14.

(*b*) Luke viii. 14.

“ They labour with a canine appetite for their  
 “ trash, but to holiness they have no appetite,  
 “ and are worse than indifferent to the things  
 “ that are indeed desirable. They have no  
 “ covetousness for the things which they are  
 “ commanded “ earnestly to covet (i).” They  
 “ have so little hunger and thirst after righte-  
 “ ousness that a very little or none will satisfy  
 “ them. Here they are pleading always for  
 “ moderation, and against *too much*, and *too*  
 “ *earnest*, and *too long* ; and all is too much  
 “ with them that is above stark naught, or dead  
 “ hypocrisy ; and all is too earnest and too  
 “ long that would make religion seem a busi-  
 “ ness, or engage them to seem serious in their  
 “ own profession, or put them past jest in the  
 “ worship of God and the matters of their  
 “ salvation. Let but their Children or Ser-  
 “ vants neglect their worldly business, (which  
 “ I confess they should not do) and they shall  
 “ hear of it with both their ears ; but if they  
 “ sin against God, or neglect his word or  
 “ worship, they shall meet with more patience  
 “ than *Eli*’s sons did ; a cold reproof is usually  
 “ the most ; and it is well if they be not en-  
 “ couraged in their sin : it is well if a Child or  
 “ Servant that begins to be serious for salvation  
 “ be not rebuked, derided, and hindered by  
 “ them. If on their days of labour they over-  
 “ sleep themselves they shall be sure to be called  
 “ up to work, (and good reason) but when do  
 VOL. II. C c “ they

(i). 1 Cor. xii. 31.

“ they call them up to prayer? When do they  
“ urge them to consider or converse upon the  
“ things that concern their everlasting life?  
“ The LORD’S own day which is appointed  
“ to be set apart for matters of this nature is  
“ wasted in idleness or worldly talk. Come at  
“ any time into their company and you may  
“ may talk enough, and too much of news,  
“ or of other mens matters, of their worldly  
“ business, sports, and pleasures, but about  
“ GOD and their salvation they have so little to  
“ say, and that so heartlessly and on the by  
“ as if they were things that belonged not to  
“ their care and duty, and no whit concerned  
“ them. Talk with them about the renova-  
“ tion of the soul, the nature of holiness, and  
“ the life to come, and you will find them al-  
“ most as dumb as a fish. The most under-  
“ stand not matters of this nature, nor much  
“ desire or care to understand them. If one  
“ would teach them personally they are too  
“ old to be catechized or to learn, though not  
“ too old to be ignorant of the matters they  
“ were made for and preserved for in the world.  
“ They are too wise to learn to be wise, and  
“ too good to be taught how to be good, tho’  
“ not too wise to follow the seducements of  
“ the devil and the world, nor too good to be  
“ the slaves of *Satan* and the despisers and ene-  
“ mies of goodness. If they do any thing  
“ which they call a serving of GOD it is some  
“ cold and heartless use of words to make  
“ themselves

“ themselves believe that for all their sins they  
 “ shall be saved; so that God will call that a  
 “ serving their sins and abomination, which  
 “ they call a serving of God. Some of them  
 “ will confess that holiness is good, but they  
 “ hope God will be merciful to them without  
 “ it; and some do so hate it that it is a dis-  
 “ pleasing irksome thing to them to hear any  
 “ serious discourse of holiness, and they detest  
 “ and deride those as fanatical, troublesome  
 “ Precisians that diligently seek the *one thing*  
 “ necessary: so that if the belief of the most may  
 “ be judged by their practices, we may confi-  
 “ dently say that they do not practically believe  
 “ that ever they shall be brought to judgment,  
 “ or that there is any Heaven or Hell to be  
 “ expected, and that their confession of the  
 “ truth of the Scriptures and the Articles of  
 “ the Christian faith are no proofs that they  
 “ heartily take them to be true. Who can be  
 “ such a stranger to the world as not to see  
 “ that this is the case of the greatest part of  
 “ men? And which is worst of all, they go  
 “ on in this course against all that can be said  
 “ to them, and will give no impartial confi-  
 “ derate hearing to the truth, which would re-  
 “ cover them to their wits, but live as if it  
 “ would be a felicity to them in Hell to think  
 “ that they came thither by wilful resolution,  
 “ and in despite of the remedy.”

This, Sinners, is a true representation of your case, drawn by one that well knew it

and lamented it. And what do you now think of it yourselves? What do you think will be the consequence of such a course? Is it safe to persist in it? or shall I be so happy as to bring you to a stand? Will you still go on, troubling yourselves with *many things*? or will you resolve for the future to mind the *one thing* needful above all? I beseech you come to some resolution. Time is on the wing, and does not allow you to hesitate in so plain and important an affair. Do you need any farther excitements? Then I shall try the force of one consideration more contained in my text, and that is *necessity*.

Remember *necessity*, the most pressing, absolute *necessity* enforces this care upon you. *One thing is needful*, absolutely needful, always needful, and needful above all other things. This, one would think, is such an argument as cannot but prevail. What exploits has necessity performed in the world? What arts has it discovered as the mother of invention? What labours, what fatigues, what sufferings has it undergone? What dangers has it encountered? What difficulties has it overcome? *Necessity* is a plea which you think will warrant you to do any thing and excuse any thing. Reasoning against *Necessity* is but reasoning against a Hurricane; it bears all before it. To obtain the necessaries of life, as they are called, how much will men do and suffer? Nay, with what hardships and perils will they not conflict for things that

that they imagine necessary, not to their life but to their ease, their honour, or pleasure? But what is this *necessity* when compared to that which I am now urging upon you? In comparison of this the most necessary of those things are but superfluities; for if your ease, or honour, or pleasure, or even your life in this world be not absolutely necessary, as they cannot be to the heirs of immortality, then certainly those things which you imagine necessary to your ease, your honour, your pleasure, or mortal life, are still less necessary. But O! to escape everlasting misery, and to secure everlasting salvation, this is the grand *necessity*! This will appear necessary in every point of your immortal duration, necessary when you have done with this world forever, and must leave all its cares, enjoyments, and pursuits behind you. And shall not this grand *necessity* prevail upon you to work out your salvation and make that your great business, when a far less *necessity*, a *necessity* that will last but a few years at most, sets you and the world around you upon such hard labours and eager pursuits for perishing vanities? All the *necessity* in the world is nothing in comparison of that which lies upon you to work out your salvation; and shall this have no weight? If you do not labour or contrive for "the bread that perisheth," you must beg or starve; but if you will not labour for "the bread that endureth unto everlasting life" you must burn in Hell forever. You must  
lie

lie in prison if your debts with men be not paid; but O! what is this to the prison of Hell, where you must be confined forever if your debts to the justice of God be not remitted, and you do not obtain an interest in the righteousness of CHRIST, which alone can make satisfaction for them? You must suffer hunger and nakedness unless you take care to provide food and raiment; but you must suffer eternal banishment from God and all the joys of his presence if you do not labour to secure the *one thing needful*. Without the riches of this world you may be rich in faith and heirs of the heavenly inheritance. Without earthly pleasures you may have joy unspeakable and full of glory in the love of God, and the expectation of the kingdom reserved in Heaven for you. Without health of body you may have happiness of spirit, and even without this mortal life you may enjoy eternal life. Without the things of the world you may live in want for a little while; but then you will soon be upon an equality with the greatest Princes. But without this *one thing needful* you are undone, absolutely undone. Though you were as rich as *Cræsus* you "are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and "blind, and naked." Your very being becomes a curse to you. It is your curse that you are a man, a reasonable creature. It had been infinitely better for you if you had been a toad or a snake, and so incapable of sin and of immortality, and consequently of punishment. O then let this grand *necessity* prevail with you!

I know you have other wants, which you should moderately labour to provide for, but O how small and of how short continuance! If life and all should be lost you may more than find all in Heaven. But if you miss of this *one thing* all the world cannot make up the loss.

Therefore, to conclude with the awakening and resistless words of the Author I before quoted, "Awake, you sluggish, careless souls! your house over your head is in a flame! the hand of God is lifted up! If you love yourselves prevent the stroke. Vengeance is at your backs, the wrath of God pursues your sin, and wo to you if he find it upon you when he overtaketh you." Away with it speedily! up and be gone! return to God! make CHRIST and mercy your friends in time if you love your lives! The Judge is coming! for all that you have heard of it so long, yet still you believe it not. You shall shortly see the majesty of his appearance and the dreadful glory of his face; and yet do you not begin to look about you, and make ready for such a day? Yea, before that day your separated souls shall begin to reap, as you have sowed here. Though now the partition that stands between you and the world to come do keep unbelievers strangers to the things that most concern them, yet Death will quickly find a portal to let you in; and then, Sinners, you will find such doings there as you little thought of, or did

" not

" not sensibly regard upon earth. Before your  
 " friends will have time enough to wrap up  
 " your pale corps in your winding sheet you  
 " will see and feel that which will tell you to  
 " the quick, that *one thing* was necessary. If  
 " you die without this one thing necessary, be-  
 " fore your friends can have finished your  
 " funerals, your souls will have taken up their  
 " places among Devils in endless torments and  
 " despair, and all the wealth, and honour, and  
 " pleasure that the world afforded you will  
 " not ease you. This is sad, but it is true,  
 " Sirs; for God hath spoken it. Up there-  
 " fore and bestir you for the life of your souls.  
 " Necessity will awake even the sluggard.  
 " Necessity we say will break through stone  
 " walls. The proudest will stoop to necessity.  
 " The most slothful will bestir themselves in  
 " necessity. The most careless will be indus-  
 " trious in necessity. Necessity will make men  
 " do any thing that is possible to be done.  
 " And is not necessity, the highest necessity,  
 " your own necessity, able to make you cast  
 " away your sins, and take up an holy and  
 " heavenly life. O poor souls! is there a  
 " greater necessity of your sin than of your  
 " salvation, and of pleasing your flesh for a  
 " little time than of pleasing the LORD and  
 " escaping everlasting misery?" O that you  
 would consider what I say! and the LORD  
 give you understanding in all things! AMEN.

*The End of the SECOND VOLUME.*



**PRESERVATION SERVICE**

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**SHELFMARK** *RC13A7886*

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