

DISCOURSES

DELIVERED IN

MURRAY STREET CHURCH

ON SABBATH EVENINGS,

DURING THE MONTHS OF

MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY, 1830.

BY

DR. SPRING	DR. CARNAHAN
DR. COX	DR. WOODBRIDGE
DR. SKINNER	DR. RICE
DR. DE WITT	DR. WOODS
DR. MILLER	DR. WAYLAND
DR. SPRAGUE	DR. SNODGRASS
DR. GRIFFIN.	

NEW YORK:
HENRY C. SLEIGHT, CLINTON-HALL.

PRINTED BY SLEIGHT AND ROBINSON.

1830.

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the eighth day of November, Anno Domini 1830, in the fifty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, William D. Snodgrass, of the said district, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

“Discourses delivered in Murray street Church, on Sabbath evenings, during the months of March, April, and May, 1830. By Dr. Spring, Dr. Cox, Dr. Skinner, Dr. De Witt, Dr. Miller, Dr. Sprague, Dr. Carnahan, Dr. Woodbridge, Dr. Rice, Dr. Woods, Dr. Wayland, Dr. Snodgrass, Dr. Griffin.”

In conformity to the act of Congress of the United States, entitled “An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;” and also to an act, entitled “An act supplementary to an act, entitled An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of maps, charts, and books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints.”

FREDERICK I. BETTS,

Clerk of the Southern District of New York.

DISCOURSE XIII.

GOD EXALTED AND CREATURES HUMBLD BY THE GOSPEL.

That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.—
1 COR. i. 31.

THAT part of the argument in support of divine revelation which is assigned to me, is drawn from “The effect of the Gospel in exalting the Creator and in humbling the creature:” not in *degrading* the creature;—in abasing the pride of man, in bringing sinners to repentance and self-condemnation and a willingness to be saved by free grace, and in laying the whole holy creation in sweet humility at the feet of a discovered God.

I have nothing to do with those unhappy men, if such there are,—those moral monsters,—who deny the being of a God. And if there is a God, we must suppose him connected with the visible universe as its author and upholder, and not, like the supreme god of

the Brahmins, in a state of eternal repose and indifference, for in no other way are we led to the belief of his existence but by arguing from effects to their cause. If the things which we see are not the productions of his power, we have no proof of his existence. If there is a God, we must suppose him wise and just and good; for every denier of revelation who is not an atheist or a semi-atheist, holds that this is evident from his works and from reason. If there is a God thus wise and good, who has given being to a rational offspring, and fitted up a world for their habitation, and makes all nature contribute to their support and comfort, we must suppose him to have an interest in their happiness. If he has an interest in their happiness, and is himself wise and holy, we must suppose that he would seek to found their happiness upon holy order,—the exercise of benevolence and justice; for without this foundation no social happiness can exist. If he is their Creator, and so their Proprietor, with a right of course to control them, and if he wishes to found their happiness upon holy order, we must conclude that he would put them under law. And if they are under law, that law must be enforced by penalties; for without a penalty it is no law, but mere advice. And if they are to obey, they must be influenced by motives drawn from the character of the Lawgiver and from their relations to him. And if they are to be influenced by such motives, it is of infinite importance that he should be manifested to them in all his relations and in

all the glories of his character. If he seeks their highest happiness, he will fill the universe with the knowledge of his perfections; for these constitute the highest objective ground of creature happiness; and a sight of them assures creatures that the universe is safe, that all things will issue well, and leads them to that communion with the Eternal Mind in which their highest blessedness consists. As then God loves righteousness,—as he wishes to enforce a holy and benignant moral government,—as he regards the happiness of his creatures, he must seek to fill the universe with the manifestations of his glory, and thus exalt himself and sink them into reverence and adoration.

That men are sinners I shall assume. Every page of history, every glance of the eye, every report of an enlightened conscience attests it. If then there is any salvation for them, it must be by grace, that is, by favour to the ill-deserving. And such a salvation cannot fail to exalt God and humble the sinner.

None will deny that the world are proud. But lest some should shelter a favourite principle under this name, I will define the thing proscribed. Pride is the selfish erection of our own will, our own wisdom, our own honour, our own power, our own importance, against the rights of God and his creatures. This has done more than any other thing to arm the world against its Maker. “Only by pride cometh contention.” It has been the cause of more than half the strife that has agitated the universe. A salvation then from sin

must put down pride. A salvation sent to struggle against the pride of a world, must meet its vital throb and break its heart by overwhelming it with shame and everlasting contempt.

In any system of salvation then which should come from heaven, it might be expected that its main tendency would be to confound the pride of man, to humble sinners, and to glorify God. If you can find a system professing to come from God, which puts honour upon him by bringing out his perfections to view,—by supporting his rights, his claims, his government; which abases pride, and brings sinners to a spirit the most self-condemning, the most ready to justify God, full of adoring views of his free grace and their eternal and infinite indebtedness; you have found a system which accords with the truth of things, which is friendly to the interests of the universe, and must have emanated, not from an impudent imposture, but from the eternal source of truth and love.

The tendency of the Gospel to exalt God and humble the creature, appears,

- I. In its outward administration;
- II. In its texture;
- III. In its application.

I. In its outward administration. This includes, (1.) The humble appearance of Christ in our world: born of an obscure parent,—born in a manger,—brought up at the trade of a carpenter,—in his public ministry not having where to lay his head,—supported by the

charity of his female followers,—in his highest triumph riding into his royal city on “the foal of an ass,”—sorting with fishermen,—“despised and rejected of men,”—arraigned before Pilate,—beaten and spit upon in the Pretorium,—condemned to the death of a Roman slave,—and crucified between two malefactors.

All this belonged indeed to his atonement, but it answered other ends. It stained the “pride” of human “glory,” and taught his disciples to contemn it, and to say, “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world.” It taught them humility and self-denial, by throwing upon them the influence of an humble and self-denying religion, of which “the cross of Christ” is every where put for the armorial ensign. It attacked the pride of man in its most sensible part, and with the penetrating weapon of a living example of humility. It “made foolish the wisdom of this world.”

When we understand the reasons of this humble appearance of Christ, we see in it the wisdom of God; but had it been left to us beforehand, we should have assigned him the most magnificent state. Thus *did* the wisdom of man pronounce. The Jews expected their Messiah to appear as a mighty conqueror, to break their Roman yoke and raise them to the dominion of the world. But God confounded the wisdom of men. And why was this deemed a good? Because men vainly conceived that they could discover every

thing relating to God and duty and a future state, and were too proud to learn of him, and arrayed their wisdom against the religion of heaven. The Jewish rabbins and Grecian philosophers did this. Such an exhibition of weakness in one who claimed divine honours and came to found a new religion, was to "the Jews a stumbling block" and to "the Greeks foolishness." Modern infidels and Socinians do this. They will march right over any doctrine which their boasted wisdom condemns, whatever the word of God may say. Indeed the pride of man, showing itself in lofty pretensions to the omniscience of wisdom, was seen to be the most intrepid and unyielding enemy which the religion of heaven had to encounter. It therefore was a main point in the outset to overwhelm this enemy with convictions of his own ignorance and folly and of the far superior wisdom of God.

In all these proud pretensions reason aspires to a place for which it was never designed. It is not its province to penetrate the mysteries of the universe by its own ken, but to work up into judgments materials furnished by information. It is the eye, but it cannot see without light. Its business is not to discover intuitively the secrets of the divine mind, but to examine the furnished proofs of the being and perfections of God and of the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures; and having digested these, to study the contents of the Bible, and to believe unhesitatingly what is there revealed. How can reason discover the unrevealed mind

of God? It must be omniscient or inspired to discover the unexpressed mind of a creature. But this it never pretends to do. The only mind in the universe which it dares to subject to its ordeal, is the Infinite Mind. Now between us and God there is infinitely more distance than between your child and the Emperor of China. Put that child then to tell, without any information, what are the character and thoughts and purposes of the Emperor of China; and how would he succeed? But you say, God has revealed himself in his works. Allow that he has in part, yet nothing there shows the manner of his existing, the details of his law, with what severity he will punish, whether or on what conditions he will pardon, what are his decrees respecting the formation of the human character, and many other things. If reason can discover these, it not only is the eye, but forms the light itself. Supposing your child had evidence that the Emperor of China is wise and good, how could he know, without information, a thousand of his personal matters, the laws of his empire, with what severity he will punish, whether or on what conditions he will pardon, and a million of things respecting the regulation of trade, the internal police, and the complicated interests of a vast empire? But no kingdom does reason presume to scan by its own light, but that which comprehends all worlds. In no other science but that which relates to the incomprehensible God and to the interests and government of the universe, does it attempt to build on its own inde-

pendent discoveries. The anatomist does not presume to tell you how a man ought to be made, but with all submission proceeds to examine the animal system which God has exposed to his view. In all the natural sciences reason can make discoveries, but how? merely by examining the facts which God has spread out before it, and from them inferring a more general fact or law, and then arguing from that law to explain other phenomena not susceptible of examination. Here are the analysis and synthesis of the Newtonian school, the only organs of discovery known to philosophy.

And why does man act so differently in this case from what he does in all others? Because in other sciences he wishes to obtain accurate knowledge; in this, relief to his conscience and fears and mortified pride. He does not like God, and wishes to modify him after his own taste, and *insists* on doing this, and is self-sufficient enough to think that he can do it without mistake, and will by no means consent to owe allegiance to a God that is not after his own mind. Thus the heathen, because "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge," changed his glory "into an image made like to corruptible man." The process in both cases is alike, and the motive is exactly the same.

(2.) Another way in which the outward administration of the Gospel took the pride of the world, was in the weakness of the instruments employed, the simplicity of their preaching, and their triumphant success. Instead of angels or Jewish doctors or Grecian philo-

sophers, Christ chose fishermen and publicans and tent-makers to breast an embattled world,—the bigotry of priests, the pride of philosophers, the interest of shrine-makers, the policy of kings, and the impetuous current of the carnal heart. And as temples fell and churches rose before them, he selected the materials of the church and of the ministry, not from the “wise” and “mighty” and “noble,” but from the “foolish,” the “weak,” the “base,” the “despised,” “to confound” and “bring to nought” the noble, wise, and mighty; “that no flesh should glory in his presence;” that none might say, I was selected because I was great or wise,—thus exalting worldly distinctions and hiding the free grace of God; that none might say; My own hand hath done it; “that the excellency of the power” might “be of God and not of” man; that the *supernatural* power of God might appear and attest the truth of the Gospel; and that his sovereignty might be shown in the distributions of his grace. For reasons such as these, Jesus himself “rejoiced in spirit and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”

In the opening of the first Epistle to the church in Corinth, (a proud city in the heart of Greece,) the apostle had occasion to touch on most of these points. He tells them that Christ sent him “to preach the Gospel, not with the wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ

should be made of none effect." To have come to them with the flourish of oratory or the accuracies of philosophical language, (by which some of the heads of the faction opposed to the apostle in that church are thought to have been distinguished;) or to have come with independent reasonings after the manner of philosophy; would have lowered down the authority of the Gospel, and dimmed its evidence by casting some of the praise of its success on the manner. It would have been less adapted to the multitude, and indeed to the humble, whose faith was to rest, not on the wisdom of men, but on the word of God. This "preaching of the cross," in manner as well as in matter, was foolishness to the proud rabbins and philosophers; but it proved the power and wisdom of God in accomplishing that reformation and salvation which neither Judaism nor philosophy ever achieved. Standing on the pinnacle of success, with half the known world at his feet, the apostle sublimely challenged all Jewry and Greece to show what they had done. "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." This was sufficiently humbling to the pride of Pharisees and the opinionated wisdom of Greece, and covered with disgrace those overweening systems which hid from the world the true knowledge of God.

Thus the outward administration of the Gospel rebuked the self-sufficiency of human reason and the arrogant calculations of human power, by showing the world that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men;" and by thundering in the ears of audacious pride, "If any man—seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise."

II. The same tendency appears in the texture of the Gospel. This is noticed in our text and the preceding verse. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."

(1.) Our wisdom. Instead of ignorant and prejudiced reason, on which the wise men of the world proudly rested for the discovery of God, Christ, the great Prophet of the world, was appointed to lay open the secrets of the Eternal Mind and to bring "life and immortality to light;" and instead of arraying their wisdom against the revelation of God, believers love to put themselves to school to Christ as little children, and to "learn" of him who is "meek and lowly in heart." Seneca, one of the best of the philosophers, and the tutor and victim of Nero, lived in Rome while Paul was there; but they belonged to two different worlds.

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he

hath declared him." "No man knoweth—who the Father is but the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him." Christ is called "the Word," because it is by him that God expresses all his mind. It was he that built the universe, "and without him was not any thing made that was made." It was he that governed the world from the beginning, and the providence of God is the providence of the Mediatorial King. He gave the law at Sinai. He sent out his Spirit to indite the Old Testament and the New, and to illumine by his influence the minds of men. By his incarnation, life, ministry, and mediatorial work, he has thrown God upon every eye. He came out to be thus, "the image of the invisible God;" and the only God known to our world is the God that shines "in the face of Jesus Christ." He imparts all the practical wisdom which his people possess.

Thus the Gospel admits none of the powers of discovery so proudly claimed by ancient and modern magi, but brings the whole world, like Mary, to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear his words.

(2.) Our righteousness. Under the first covenant justification was the judicial act of pronouncing one just; and the ground of it was a perfect personal holiness or righteousness. The terms justification and righteousness are transferred to things under the new covenant very unlike the other, but bearing some analogy to them. Justification now means the *treating* of a sinner as just, by his pardon and acceptance to

eternal life; and that which is the ground of this gracious justification is called his righteousness.

There is nothing to which men more strongly adhere than to the claims of their own merit. They even expect wages from God for services rendered, and say with Bellarmin, "Give unto us, O Lord, for we have given unto thee." This self-righteousness is at war with truth and justice, and must be put down before the sinner will consent to receive, or God can consistently bestow, salvation by grace. The whole texture of the Gospel is fitted to put down this arrogant pretender, to annihilate the last lurking pride of man, to cover sin with eternal disgrace, to vindicate the rights and claims of God, to sustain his empire over a subject universe, and to manifest all his glory in the highest conceivable degree.

To accomplish these ends, God took the ground that he would not pardon a single sinner till Christ had died in his stead; that he would not deal out to one of Adam's race, either a crown of glory or a cup of water, but as the reward of the perfect obedience of his Son; and that he would deliver neither the pardon nor the positive good but to the intercession of the Mediator. How these resolutions supported the law and condemned sin and abased pride, I am now to show.

[1.] The atonement. "Think not," said Christ, "that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one

title shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." The prophet had said, "He will magnify the law and make it honourable."

Christ died in our stead to answer, so far as the law is concerned, the very end of our punishment. What is the end of punishment as the law is concerned? To go back a step further, why is a penalty annexed to a law? It is to make it law rather than advice. Without a penalty it would have no commanding authority. The empire of the law against murder rests on the assurance which all draw from the penalty, that if they murder they shall die. And why is the penalty executed? For the same reason for which it was annexed; for if not executed it is nothing. Why is that murderer executed? to give empire to the law by convincing all that if they murder they shall die. Supposing one has murdered and his brother offers to die in his stead, and does die by the direction of the king; are not the spectators as much convinced that if they murder they shall die, as though the criminal himself had suffered? To dispense pardon to all reformed murderers from generation to generation, and to offer it beforehand on that condition to all the murderers of a world, without exacting any equivalent for their punishment, would annihilate the law against murder. If we were to be pardoned, it was necessary that some other measure, as expressive as our punishment, should be taken to convince the universe that God was determined to support his law by executing its penalty on future transgressors.

The execution of his beloved Son expressly in our stead, by a stroke laid on by the Lawgiver, because by the Lawgiver he was commanded to receive it, made this impression as strongly as it could have been made by the eternal perdition of all Adam's race. And this solemn declaration, that sin should not go unpunished, loudly "condemned sin in the flesh."

[2.] The obedience of Christ. The original principle on which God set out in his government over this world, was not to issue a single positive good, after man was set out in existence, but as the reward of a perfect obedience; for all was forfeited by a single transgression. It would put more abundant honour on the law to preserve this principle under the dispensation of grace. Accordingly arrangements were made for Christ to be placed under law, and perfectly to obey it, and in reward of his obedience to receive all the positive blessings intended for the human race in both worlds, including all that was necessary for a state of probation. So the man who labours in your field, is content to receive his wages in garments for his children, which he could by no means wear himself. To all these blessings, as soon as he had fulfilled his obedience, he had a covenant right, and took them out of the hands of pure Godhead, and held them by a mediatorial claim; and these, together with the Church itself, and I may add, the universe, constitute the inheritance of the "Heir of all things." Every morsel of food which we receive belongs to the mediatorial estate, and comes to us

because first given to him ; and it ought to be the sweeter to us on that account. Not a shower descends upon the fields,—not a stalk of barley waves in the harvest, but sends forth a voice, “Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you : be ashamed and confounded for your own ways.” A title to heaven and all the privileges of sonship come in this way. The “First-born” inherits the whole estate by his own right, and we come in under him as “joint-heirs.” Because he lives we live also. He arose and ascended by his own right ; but he came out of the grave as the head drawing the members after him, and has gone to prepare a place for us.

This is the great doctrine of justification by grace, which makes so conspicuous a figure in the New Testament, and is so abasing to the pride of man.

[3.] The intercession of Christ. As the high priest entered once a year into the holy place with “the blood of goats and calves,” and with the names of the twelve tribes upon his heart, to intercede for them before the Lord ; so Christ, “by his own blood,” has entered “into heaven itself,” there “to appear in the presence of God for us.” There “he ever liveth to make intercession” for us : that is, his desires, and the silent influences of his atonement and obedience, (the latter involving his covenant claims,) continually rise up before the throne. This is only carrying out the same respect for the law so conspicuous in the two preceding measures.

But the soul-humbling and God-exalting process is not yet ended. Not only are the atonement, obedience, and intercession of Christ thus provided, in a way to support the rights and claims and government of God, to condemn sin, and cover pride with eternal confusion; but no man is allowed to share in this salvation until, from the bottom of his heart, he has approved of all these measures and all their expressions; until he has taken back all his proud speeches against God and bent his imperious head to his Maker's feet, and owned that he never had any cause to rise up so loftily against his Creator; until, with his face in the dust, he has justified God in condemning him to eternal infamy, and has heartily approved of the whole character and government of him whom he has always called a tyrant; until he feels that the air is too good for him to breathe, and the dust is too good for him to wrap himself in, and that he deserves nothing but everlasting shame and contempt; until he is willing to come down on his knees as a beggar and ask for a crumb to keep him from starving, and to be saved by free grace and for the righteousness of another; until he feels it sweet to be thus abased, and covets it more than he does the throne of an arch-angel; until he exalts God above every other object and gives him all the glory of his salvation.

Even pardon itself buries the sinner still lower in the dust. "That thou mayst remember and be confounded and never open thy mouth any more because

of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God."

This is none of that poverty of spirit which involves degradation. It is only viewing things according to truth. Holiness cannot fail to feel thus in a creature that has sinned. If holiness is dignity, this abasement of a soul that has been found in arms against infinite goodness and dying love, outtops the dignity of kings.

The pardon and acceptance connected with this temper, are that justification by faith which holds so high a place in the Christian system, and which confessedly strips all the glory from the sinner and gives it to God.

III. The same tendency of the Gospel appears in its application. Christ is made of God unto us *sanctification*, "that, according as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord."

As the race were condemned by the law to the curse of eternal abandonment, the Spirit could not come to men without the mediation of Christ. By his atonement he made it consistent with the honour of the law to set this curse aside, and as the reward of his obedience he obtained this positive good for men. He told his disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you." "For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." But when he ascended on high, among his other gifts he received this for men, "that the Lord God might dwell among them." And within ten days

he sent out "the Lord" the "Spirit" to abide in the Church forever. As he had given bonds for the payment of the price, he received this purchased good in Eden, and applied it to the sanctification of all the saints of the Old Testament. This is the origin of all the holiness that has ever been found in our world since the fall.

The heathen philosophers depended on the self-determining power of the will for all their personal virtue, and on their self-taught ethics for the reformation of the world. And even many who have been baptised have contended earnestly for this independence of the human will. In opposition to all these proud aspirations, the Gospel casts the world for sanctification on the Spirit of God and the purchase of Christ.

Nor is this all. In their spiritual death it finds nothing in them to aid their resurrection,—nothing but what is opposed to life,—and ascribes to God, not only the whole power, but a conquering power,—“the working of—*mighty* power;” as great as that “which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.” This casts them dead and helpless into the hands of a sovereign God, and leaves with him, in the most absolute sense, the decision of their fate. “Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy,” and whom he will he resigns to judicial hardness. He bestows salvation on whom he pleases, and withholds it from whom he pleases,—holding this reason over a

subject and trembling world, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?" No antecedent circumstance of disposition or purpose or virtue or wisdom or learning or station or birth or any other known thing in sinners themselves has the least influence. It is all of grace,—free, sovereign grace. For the discrimination he has a reason; but to hold them down to their place and to assert his absolute supremacy over them, he will not tell them what it is. "He giveth not account of any of his matters." Intrenched in infinite wisdom and rectitude, of which heaven and earth are filled with proofs, he will have them know that he will do what he will with his own without explaining himself to them; and their business is to submit in silent adoration. Thus he takes the highest possible stand of authority, and puts them down as low as sinners can lie under a sceptre of mercy; and makes them love to lie there and see him enthroned, and love to find their heaven in the dust.

Is it not for the order and happiness of a family that the rights of a wise and benevolent father should be admitted, and if government is any thing to the family, that they should be maintained? As God created all things for the gratification of his benevolence, the whole is his absolute property, and he has the most perfect right, while he respects the rights of creatures, to do what he will with his own universe. He is entitled to love, gratitude, and praise, and has a right to require these of his creatures, and to bind together and tranquil-

lize the universe by the exercise of his authority. And it is infinitely important to the harmony and happiness of the whole, and particularly to the union of creatures with him, that his rights should be fully admitted and maintained. And if ignorance and prejudice are not to be taken in as counsellors, the government of infinite wisdom and love ought to be absolute. And it serves all these purposes to inure creatures to submit to his providence without a question, and to his law with no other question than to ascertain his will. Upon this principle it was that in the commencement of his government over this world, he selected a tree and forbad all approach to that, with no other reason assigned than that it was his sovereign will: and if it was a small matter to legislate about, so much the better for that: the less the apparent reason for the prohibition, the more obvious the claim to unquestioning obedience.

Thus every part of the Gospel is calculated to abase the pride of man, to break and subdue and humble the sinner, to support the rights, the claims, the government of God, and to give all the glory to him. Whatever light or holiness or title to salvation we possess, comes from God through the Redeemer. We are ignorant and foolish, he is our wisdom; we are guilty, he is our righteousness; we are depraved, he is our sanctification; we are in bonds, he is our redemption. In every part the character of God appears most glorious, and that of man most deformed. And all this exhibition is made that God may be seen as he is,—that men

may know him and know their obligations to him, and grow up into eternal union with him,—and that all holy creatures may see his glory and take their proper place at his feet, and go in to constitute a united, happy, and glorious universe.

Whatever brings out God to view exalts him, abases sinners, and humbles and blesses the creation. Let us then see what and how much of God is revealed in the plan of salvation.

In the first place, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are brought out to view in their own proper and infinitely important characters; a distinction never whispered to the universe in any of his other works. In the next place, his inflexible resolution, at all hazards, to support his moral empire over the creation, comes out; disclosing his infinite attachment to all the principles of his law and to the happiness which it subserves, and thus manifesting his holiness, justice, and benevolence. In the next place, his amazing compassion and mercy and patience and condescension and accessibility and truth are brought to light: his power too, in subduing the carnal heart, in restraining, bounding, and defeating all the machinations of Satan, in conquering all his enemies and carrying their counsels headlong, in forcing them unwittingly to prop his throne and execute his decrees and help fill the universe with his glory.

But the wisdom elicited is that on which I wish chiefly to dwell. This wonderful plan of the incarna-

tion was the forming of a connecting link between finite and infinite natures, and filling up the whole chasm between God and us. It was bringing down the infinite God within the reach of creatures,—was bringing out the invisible God to the view of creatures,—was concentrating, as it were, the omnipresent God to a point and throwing all his glories from the face of Jesus Christ. It was laying out the divine perfections upon a human scale, and expressing them through human organs and amidst human relations,—the most intelligible way of exhibiting God to men. And the angels themselves, we are taught to believe, more familiarly apprehend God, and more easily hold intercourse with him, for this medium of vision and communion.

By the union of two infinitely dissimilar natures in one Person, the wisdom of God contrived to make an infinite Person mortal; and by that means found out a way to punish sin and let the sinner go unpunished; to support his law without executing its penalty on the transgressor, and even to give it more authority than though it had been literally executed.

He confounded the wisdom of men by the triumphs of that very weakness which provoked their contempt, and by making, in various ways, the most unpromising means lead to the most splendid success.

He so shaped the Gospel, that, in every part, it should be at war with pride, and touch it in every tender spot, and call into the field every arm of that foe, and exhibit it before heaven and earth in the hideous

attitude of warring against all the love and authority of the Gospel. A system so calculated to cause that atrocious enemy to writhe under unwelcome authority, under unbearable humiliations, under overwhelming disgrace,—to rage and blaspheme and assault the heavens,—was fitted to make a thorough experiment upon the human character and upon the nature of sin, and to bring out both in a way to set off, before a wondering universe, the double glory of justice and mercy.

He pressed into the service of his cause all the agents in the wicked world ;—the policy of kings, the pride of philosophers, the craft of priests, and the very ferocity of bloody persecution. “The wrath of man shall praise” him, either by stringing a harp in heaven or by lighting the fires of his justice in hell. The sins of the elect shall praise him. The more one of that number has dishonoured God, the more God will be honoured in his salvation.

He defeated all the stratagems of Satan and effectually bruised the serpent’s head. The greatest dishonour cast upon God, was made to redound to his greatest glory : the greatest contempt cast upon his law, was made the occasion of the greatest honour done to the law. Satan meant to rob God of the glory of creating the human race ; but by the instrumentality of that very foe, God obtained more glory by the human race than angels, men, or devils ever thought of. Satan aimed to ruin a world which God, in all its virgin loveliness, had reared ; but God will raise up, from the

ashes of the old, the new heavens and new earth, in more than their original glory. Satan envied a race made to fill the place of his legions in heaven ; but that very nature which he sought to destroy, is advanced to the throne of the universe. He thought to make men his slaves ; they will be his judges and sentence him to endless torment. Elect man is a gainer by his own ruin. His sin is made the occasion of higher advances in holiness ; for to whom much is forgiven the same loveth much. His misery is made the occasion of his greater blessedness ; for a taste of wretchedness gives a higher relish for happiness, and the great object of enjoyment is more fully revealed, and he will be forever transported with gratitude to his Redeemer. He has become more sensibly dependant on God for holiness and happiness, because he receives both as the purchase of Christ, and because he has been raised from the depths of sin and misery. By means of his union with the incarnate Son, he is brought into a closer union with God : "That they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.—I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." When Satan had nailed the Saviour to the cross, he thought he had triumphed ; but he only pulled the building down upon his own head. The weapons with which Christ went forth were like the sling and the stone, they were poverty, reproaches, sufferings, and death. He prevailed by becoming weak, and conquered by dying. As the

head of Goliath was severed by his own sword, so Christ prevailed against his giant enemy by the cross; "and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them *in it.*" In a word, God has made the seduction, sin, and ruin of man the occasion of all the good resulting from the work of redemption.

And finally, the wisdom of God appears in that capital measure to vindicate his own impartiality, the appointment of the Friend and Brother of man to be his Judge. "The Father—hath given him authority to execute judgment also *because he is the Son of man.*"

In view only of a small part of this wonderful plan, the apostle exclaims, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God. How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." The very angels "desire to look into" these "things." Indeed we are expressly told that God "created *all* things by Jesus Christ, *to the intent* that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known *by the Church* the manifold wisdom of God." This then was the design of creation,—that the divine wisdom, (which is intellect and knowledge directed to practical ends by moral attributes,) might be manifested to the angels, and by a parity of reason to the whole creation, by the work of redemption. This shows that the wisdom here unfolded is greater than the angels possess, and greater than they see displayed in

any other world. They are put to school on this planet, in distinction from all other worlds which they visit, to learn "the manifold wisdom of God."

In short, all the perfections of God, (unless we are to except the exhibitions of his justice in hell,) are more displayed in this work than in any other work or in any other world, and perhaps more than in all other ways, and so far as we can see, more than could have been exhibited by any other means. The whole will form a constellation of glory the most dazzling that ever met a created eye,—a glory that will constitute by far the greater part of the happiness of the creation.

Why should you think that this grandest of all the exhibitions of God will be shut up in the nut-shell of a single world? Why should you thus degrade Christ and his work? Have we no revelation on this subject? We are distinctly enough told that all the worlds of which we have any knowledge were created in one week, and will be destroyed and renovated together. And why should not their inhabitants have at least some knowledge of the general judgment? We are told that all worlds without exception were made by the "First-born" and "Heir of all things," and that "without him was not any thing made that was made;"—that "all things were created by him and *for* him;"—and that in reward of his work on earth "all things are put under him," with the single exception of him that "put all things under him." And is it to

be believed that the worlds which the Redeemer made for his own purpose, and received as a part of his empire for his work on earth, will be kept in eternal ignorance of him and his work? that a family of worlds which were born and died together, will be eternally so severed by the common Parent, that no report of the miracle of the universe, wrought in this world, will ever reach the rest? that so little economy will be used in instructing the creation, as that a school, opened here at infinite expense, and capable of sending the highest lessons gratuitously to all worlds, and at which the whole universe might graduate, will be put under a bushel? If God "created *all* things by Jesus Christ, *to the intent*" that all heaven should take lessons of wisdom from this university, is it credible that other worlds, created expressly to subserve this institution, and known to be connected with its Head, should be excluded from the tuition? As this earth, (to use another figure) was erected only for a stage on which the Messiah might declare and act out the perfections of the Godhead, subservient worlds seem intended as seats in the great amphitheatre from which the amazed spectators may view the scene. Yes, they shall hear of Calvary. The wonderful report will travel from world to world until it reaches the utmost bounds of the creation, and will hold in perpetual astonishment and transport the whole family of God. That Gospel which creatures of the dust despise,—which infidel insects trample under foot,

—is the grandest means that God has employed, not merely to raise one world from pollution and shame and eternal despair, but to elevate and aggrandize and glorify the universe, and fill it with the highest blessedness that comes from God. And when creatures shall see the universe thus supremely blest, will they not look back to Eden and adore the wisdom that did not restrain the first transgression?

As the amazing story wanders to other planets and systems, this earth will become the centre of the creation. All worlds will gather around this sphere and send their exploring eyes to Calvary, to drink in the lessons of love, wisdom, and power which emanate from that school of the universe. And while all eyes are turned that way, I plant myself on the sacred mount, and in the centre of a boundless amphitheatre, enjoy the transports of worlds,—of all worlds but one. And as I see the whole holy creation wrapt in high and ecstatic contemplations, and filling their respective spheres with the songs of Bethlehem, I feel an irrepresible desire to call out infidels before the creation of God, and demand, What now think you of Christ? But not an infidel is to be found. The few that broke their way to hell through light that Bartimeus might have seen, are infidels no more. To that world I would send my voice, and say, Ye Porphyries, and Julians, and Voltaires, what now think you of the work of redemption? Ye abandoned men and women, who would have annihilated the Bible and the mar-

riage covenant, and turned the universe into a brothel, what think you of the Christian religion now?

There is another spot in the universe to which I wish to come. It is to the feet of the enthroned Lamb. O how will the redeemed companies collect together on the banks of heaven and recount the wondrous story, with all the history of their deliverances. And then, as they look up and see the nail-prints, with what ineffable gratitude will they cast their crowns at his feet and say, "Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." The elect angels, who are brought into a special relation to Christ as their Head, will rapturously join the song. Other holy creatures will perhaps be gathered home from new or renovated worlds in different periods of eternity, and their voices will join the concert. John had a vision of this heavenly oratorio. The redeemed began the song; the angels next struck in; and before they had done, the whole creation were employed in bursting praise. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy;—for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood,—and hast made us unto our God kings and priests.—And I beheld and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne,—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. And every creature

which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." O may I be there. Scatter those little things that kings call crowns, among those that will pick them up; but O may I be there and join in the song that celebrates my Redeemer's praise. Be that my heaven,—my eternal recreation and delight. Amen.